
Code of Ethics

Updated: October 10, 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to reflect Public Library of Science's ("PLOS") commitment to the highest standards of ethical and legal behavior. PLOS is committed to complying with all applicable laws, promoting honesty and integrity and maintaining the highest ethical standards in all its activities. PLOS requires directors, officers, and employees, contractors, freelancers and volunteers ("PLOS community") to observe high standards of professional and personal ethics in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. The PLOS community members must practice honesty, ethics and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and advancing PLOS's mission while complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Scope

This Code of Ethics establishes the framework for how we conduct ourselves and our activities. It sets out principles that the PLOS community is expected to follow in carrying out the work of the organization.

3. Governance

We will be guided by our mission to accelerate progress in science and medicine by leading a transformation in research communication. We are guided by following our core principles: open access, excellence, scientific integrity, breadth, cooperation, financial fairness, community engagement, internationalism, and science as a public resource. We will act in accordance with our fiduciary duties in governing our organization.

4. Responsible stewardship

We will manage our resources responsibly and prudently. We will concentrate our resources on our programs, including our online journals, but will invest appropriately in our management functions to ensure that we operate in a responsible and effective way.

5. Program evaluation

We are committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness. We will regularly review our effectiveness, be transparent about our successes and shortfalls, and incorporate lessons learned into future programs.

6. Financial reporting

We will fully and accurately record all transactions in accordance with applicable accounting, tax, and legal requirements.

7. Fundraising

We will, in our fundraising efforts, comply with applicable laws and good fundraising practices. We will expend funds consistent with donor intent.

8. Openness and disclosure

We will encourage our PLOS community members to bring forward concerns about ethical, legal and policy compliance. We will provide accurate and timely information to the public, the media, and our other stakeholders. We will respond promptly to appropriate requests for information.

9. Compliance

We will comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with our conflict of interest, whistleblower and other internal policies.

10. Government interactions

We will cooperate with government authorities and respond promptly and fully to appropriate government requests for information. We will provide accurate information to government authority and not obstruct, influence, or impede the request for information.

11. Working environment

In line with our core principles, we are committed to a working environment that values respect, fairness, and integrity.

12. Privacy and confidentiality

We will respect our customer, donor and other constituents' privacy in accordance with applicable laws. We will protect our confidential information and carry out our confidentiality obligations to others.

13. Authorized actions

We will make commitments, expenditures and public statements only in accordance with proper internal authorization and protocols.

14. Other policies; changes

This Code of Ethics states guiding principles for the PLOS community. We maintain specific policies regarding a number of topics. Nothing in this Code of Ethics limits, qualifies, or otherwise affects those policies.

15. Forms and Related Information

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)

[PLOS Speak Up Helpline Link](#)

16. Questions

Please contact the PLOS Legal Department at legal@plos.org if you have questions about this policy.