

PART I: EDITORIAL POLICY

1. Journal Mission and Scope

Studies in Business and Economics (SBE) is a peer-reviewed, open access journal published by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania. The journal is committed to publishing high-quality theoretical and empirical research in the general fields of Economics and Business. Its mission is twofold: to raise the international visibility and dissemination reach of academic work, and to promote the transfer of scientific knowledge across disciplines including Economics, Business, Management, Marketing, International Business, Accounting, Banking & Finance, and Business Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility.

All editorial decisions are based exclusively on scholarly merit and are not influenced by authors' nationality, institutional affiliation, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, religion, or any other non-academic consideration. The journal upholds the principles of accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusivity at every stage of the publication process, in accordance with the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing jointly issued by COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, and WAME.

2. Authorship and Contributorship Policy

SBE adheres to the authorship criteria recommended by COPE, requiring that each listed author has:

- Made a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the work, or to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data;
- Participated in drafting or critically revising the manuscript;
- Approved the final version to be published;
- Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Individuals who contributed to the research but do not meet all four criteria should be acknowledged in an Acknowledgements section rather than listed as authors. Guest authorship, ghost authorship, and honorary authorship are not permitted and constitute a form of research misconduct.

All authors must be listed in the submission system. Any changes to the authorship, including additions, deletions, or reordering, after initial submission require written justification signed by all authors and are subject to approval by the Editor-in-Chief. Such changes will not be made after a manuscript has been accepted.

Further guidance: [COPE Authorship and Contributorship Resources](#) |

3. Conflicts of Interest

All authors, reviewers, and editors are required to disclose any financial, personal, or professional relationships that could be perceived as influencing their work or judgment. A conflict of interest exists when a primary interest, such as the validity of research findings, may be influenced by a secondary interest, such as financial gain or personal relationships.

Authors

Authors must declare all funding sources and any financial or non-financial interests that could be construed as influencing the results or interpretation of the manuscript. Declarations must be submitted at the time of manuscript submission via the online system.

Reviewers

Reviewers must decline invitations if they have any direct personal, financial, or professional relationship with the authors, have recently collaborated with any author, or hold strong prior opinions about the work that could impair objectivity. Any potential conflict must be declared to the editorial office immediately.

Editors

Members of the editorial board who have a conflict of interest with a submitted manuscript must recuse themselves from all editorial decisions relating to that manuscript and delegate responsibility to an independent editor.

Further guidance: [COPE Conflicts of Interest Resources](#)

4. Peer Review Policy

SBE operates a double-blind peer review process for all submitted manuscripts. Reviewers are selected on the basis of their subject-matter expertise, independence from the authors, and absence of conflicts of interest. A minimum of two external reviewers evaluate each manuscript. Divergent recommendations may lead to the invitation of a third reviewer.

Reviewers are volunteers and are not compensated. The journal thanks reviewers for their essential contribution to scientific quality. The editorial decision, which may be Accept, Minor Revision, Major Revision, or Reject, rests with the Editor-in-Chief, informed by but not bound solely by reviewer recommendations.

The journal does not guarantee acceptance of any submitted manuscript, and all submitted manuscripts must demonstrate sufficient originality, methodological rigor, and relevance to the journal's scope to proceed to review.

Full details of the review timeline, procedures, revision expectations, and escalation paths are described in the journal's Peer Review Procedure document.

Further guidance: [COPE Peer Review Resources](#) |

5. Data Sharing and Reproducibility

SBE encourages authors to make the data underlying their research findings publicly available wherever possible and ethically permissible. Authors are invited to deposit datasets in recognized open repositories (e.g., Zenodo, Figshare, OSF) and to include a data availability statement in their manuscripts.

Where full public data sharing is not possible due to confidentiality, legal, or ethical constraints, authors must clearly explain the reason in the data availability statement and describe any conditions under which access may be requested.

Authors of quantitative or empirical studies are expected to report their analyses with sufficient methodological transparency to allow independent replication, including details of data sources, sample construction, estimation methods, and software used.

Further guidance: [COPE Data Sharing Resources](#)

6. Ethical Oversight

Research involving human participants, personal data, or sensitive organizational information must have been conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards. Authors are expected to confirm compliance with relevant national and institutional ethical requirements in the Methods section of their manuscript.

Although SBE primarily publishes research in Economics and Business, fields where clinical or biological ethical frameworks (such as the Declaration of Helsinki) are less commonly invoked, research involving surveys, interviews, observations, or personal data must comply with the ethical principles of:

- Informed consent and voluntary participation of human subjects;
- Anonymization or confidentiality of participant data where appropriate;
- Approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent ethics committee where required by the institution or national law.

Authors must declare whether ethical approval was obtained and, if so, provide the approving body's name and reference number. Where ethical review was not required, this must also be stated.

Reference: [COPE Research Ethics Resources](#)

7. Intellectual Property and Plagiarism Policy

SBE takes originality and intellectual honesty seriously. All submitted manuscripts are screened for plagiarism using dedicated software prior to peer review. Manuscripts where text, data, images, or ideas have been reproduced without proper attribution, whether from external sources or the authors' own previous work, will be rejected.

Forms of misconduct addressed

- Plagiarism: presenting another's work, words, or ideas as one's own without attribution.
- Self-plagiarism / duplicate submission: submitting work previously published or under consideration elsewhere without disclosure. Redundant or overlapping publication is not permitted.
- Citation manipulation: fabricating references, citing sources that were not consulted, or selectively citing to inflate citation metrics.
- Data falsification or fabrication: altering or inventing data, results, or findings.

Authors must ensure that the submitted manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under review at any other journal simultaneously. A declaration to this effect is required at submission.

Further guidance: [COPE Intellectual Property Resources](#)

8. Copyright and Licensing

SBE is an open access journal. All published articles are made freely available to readers worldwide immediately upon publication, at no cost to readers.

Published articles are licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 3.0 \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0\)](#) licence. Under this licence, readers may freely share and redistribute the material in any medium or format, provided that appropriate credit is given, the material is not used for commercial purposes, and no derivative works are created.

Copyright is retained by the authors. The copyright holder is named in the full text (HTML and PDF) of all published articles. No article processing charges (APCs) or submission fees are levied on authors.

9. Archiving and Long-Term Digital Preservation

SBE is committed to ensuring the long-term accessibility and preservation of all published content. The journal's content is hosted and archived through its partnership with Paradigm Publishing Services (formerly Sciendo/De Gruyter), which provides digital preservation in line with industry standards.

The journal is registered with recognized archiving initiatives. Authors may also deposit accepted manuscripts in institutional repositories or subject-specific repositories in accordance with the journal's self-archiving policy.

10. Advertising and Revenue Policy

SBE does not accept paid advertising. The journal's primary revenue model is supported by its publisher, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, and through its publishing partnership with Paradigm Publishing Services. The journal does not charge article processing fees or submission fees.

No external revenue source, including potential sponsorships, supplements, or special issues, influences editorial decision-making. Editorial decisions are made solely on the scientific merit of manuscripts.

11. Direct Marketing

Any solicitation of manuscripts or communication conducted on behalf of SBE is accurate, targeted, and professional. The journal does not engage in unsolicited mass email campaigns or misleading promotional claims. All outreach accurately describes the journal's scope, peer review model, open access conditions, and publication standards.

12. Complaints, Appeals, Corrections, and Retractions

Complaints and Appeals

Authors who believe that an editorial decision was reached in error or that the review process was not conducted fairly may submit a written appeal to the Editor-in-Chief within 30 days of receiving the decision. Appeals must be clearly reasoned and must address

specific procedural or substantive concerns. Appeals based solely on disagreement with the reviewers' scientific judgment will not typically be upheld.

Complaints regarding editorial conduct, reviewer behavior, or other aspects of the publication process should be submitted in writing to the editorial office. All complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with COPE guidelines.

Further guidance: [COPE Complaints and Appeals Guidance](#)

Corrections and Retractions

In the event of errors identified after publication, SBE issues corrections, expressions of concern, or retractions as appropriate and in a timely manner, following COPE guidelines. Corrections address factual errors that do not affect the validity of the article's conclusions. Retractions are issued where findings are no longer reliable due to misconduct, honest error, or other integrity concerns.

Retraction notices are linked to the retracted article, state the reason(s) for retraction, and are clearly identified as retractions in all indexing systems and the online record. The original article is retained in the online archive, clearly watermarked as retracted.

Further guidance: [COPE Retraction Guidelines](#) | [COPE Post-Publication Discussion Resources](#)

13. Post-Publication Discussion

SBE welcomes scientific discourse following publication. Readers and researchers may submit Letters to the Editor or formal Comments addressing published articles. Such correspondence is subject to editorial review and may be published alongside a reply from the original authors where appropriate.

The journal does not currently post reviewer reports alongside published articles, but reserves the right to implement open review practices in future in accordance with evolving community standards.

PART II: PUBLICATION ETHICS STATEMENT

This Publication Ethics Statement sets out the ethical obligations of all parties involved in the publication of research in Studies in Business and Economics, authors, reviewers, editors, and the publisher. These standards are grounded in internationally recognised frameworks and guidelines, in particular:

- [COPE Core Practices \(Committee on Publication Ethics\)](#) — the primary ethical framework guiding this journal.
- [Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#) — COPE / DOAJ / OASPA / WAME (Version 4, 2022).
- [ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work](#) — authorship and contributorship standards.
- [WMA Declaration of Helsinki](#) — ethical principles for research involving human subjects, where applicable.
- [COPE Flowcharts and Case Studies](#) — operational guidance for handling specific ethics cases.

A. Duties and Responsibilities of Authors

A.1 Reporting Standards

Authors must present an accurate account of the research conducted and provide sufficient detail and references to permit replication. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are not acceptable.

A.2 Originality and Proper Attribution

Authors must ensure that submitted work is entirely original. Any work or words of others must be appropriately cited or quoted. Plagiarism in all its forms — including paraphrasing without attribution and translangual plagiarism — is unethical and unacceptable. Authors must not submit manuscripts currently under review at another journal or previously published elsewhere (in the same or a substantially similar form).

A.3 Multiple, Redundant, or Concurrent Submission

Submission of a manuscript to more than one journal simultaneously is unethical. Authors who discover material errors in submitted or published work are obligated to notify the editorial office promptly and cooperate with any correction or retraction process.

A.4 Authorship of the Paper

Only those who meet the authorship criteria defined in Section 2 of Part I should be listed as authors. Corresponding authors must ensure that all co-authors have reviewed and approved the manuscript before submission and consent to the submission to SBE.

A.5 Disclosure of Funding and Conflicts of Interest

All sources of financial support for the research must be disclosed. Authors must declare any financial or other relationships that could be perceived as influencing the work, including relationships with industry, government, or civil society organizations.

A.6 Research Involving Human Subjects

Research involving human participants, personal data, or any situation where participants could be identified must be conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards. Authors must confirm in the manuscript that informed consent was obtained where required, and that the study was approved by an ethics committee. In cases where ethical review was not required, a statement to that effect must be included.

A.7 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Manuscript Preparation

Authors who use AI-assisted tools (e.g., large language models) in the preparation of manuscripts must disclose this use in the methods or acknowledgements section. AI tools may not be listed as authors. Authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the submitted work, regardless of any AI assistance employed.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of Reviewers

B.1 Contribution to Editorial Decisions

Reviewers assist the editor in making editorial decisions and may also assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication and is a duty expected of all members of the academic community.

B.2 Promptness and Standards of Objectivity

Reviewers should decline invitations they cannot honor within the requested timeframe and should complete reviews within the agreed period. Reviews should be conducted objectively; personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Reviewers should express their views clearly and support them with appropriate arguments and references.

B.3 Confidentiality

Manuscripts received for review are confidential documents and must be treated as such. They must not be shared with or discussed with third parties (including colleagues) without prior authorization from the Editor-in-Chief. The content of reviews must also remain confidential.

B.4 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers must disclose any relationships, personal, financial, or professional, that could bias their evaluation of a manuscript. Reviewers should not evaluate manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest and should notify the editor immediately if they identify such a conflict after accepting a review invitation.

B.5 Acknowledgement of Sources

Reviewers should identify any published work relevant to the manuscript that has not been cited. They should also alert the editor if they notice any substantial similarity between the manuscript and any published paper or submitted manuscript of which they have personal knowledge.

C. Duties and Responsibilities of Editors

C.1 Fair Play

Editors evaluate manuscripts solely on their intellectual content, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political beliefs.

C.2 Confidentiality

Editors must not disclose information about submitted manuscripts to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

C.3 Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

Editors must recuse themselves from handling manuscripts in which they have a personal, financial, or professional conflict of interest. The Editor-in-Chief must not be listed as a co-author of any manuscript submitted to SBE during their tenure unless handled entirely by an independent Associate Editor.

C.4 Publication Decisions

The Editor-in-Chief of SBE is responsible for deciding which submitted manuscripts will be published, guided by the journal's policies and informed by reviewer assessments. The editor may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision but must base it on scholarly merit and the journal's editorial standards.

C.5 Handling Misconduct

Editors are obligated to take reasonable responsive measures when ethical complaints concerning submitted or published manuscripts are raised. Such measures should always include contacting the author(s) and may include escalation to the relevant institution(s) and retraction or correction of the published record. Editors should follow COPE flowcharts and guidance when managing allegations of misconduct.

COPE flowcharts for editors: [COPE Guidance and Tools](#)

D. Responsibilities of the Publisher

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, as the owner and publisher of SBE, is committed to upholding the editorial independence of the Editors-in-Chief and to providing the resources necessary for ethical scholarly publishing. The publisher supports the editorial team in handling alleged misconduct, issuing corrections and retractions, and maintaining the integrity of the scholarly record.

The publisher ensures long-term archiving of published content and maintains transparent business practices. The publisher does not allow commercial or financial considerations to influence editorial decisions.

Key References and Resources

COPE — Committee on Publication Ethics <https://publicationethics.org>

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (v4, 2022)

<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>

COPE Core Practices and Guidance <https://publicationethics.org/guidance>

ICMJE Recommendations <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>

WMA Declaration of Helsinki <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>

NISO Peer Review Terminology <https://peerreviewterminology.niso.org/>

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