

L'ERMA di BRETSCHNEIDER

Code of Ethics 2024

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Forewords / Preface

This document outlines the ethics principles and good practices applied by the publishing house *L'ERMA di Bretschneider* (hereafter L'ERMA) to the process of editing and publishing monographs, scientific journals, and other editorial content of scientific, educational, and outreach nature. L'ERMA is inspired by the ethical principles outlined by the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (hereinafter COPE), an international non-profit organization that aims to support publishers and editors in pursuing high standards of publishing ethics. Although COPE mainly provides guidelines and resources for publishers and editors of scientific journals, these can also be applied to the publication of monographs and other academic content.

I. *Research ethics and integrity*

L'ERMA publications respect the ethical principles of COPE, which are:

- Reliability; honesty, respect, and responsibility in all aspects of research;
- Care, accuracy, and excellence in research practice;
- Transparency, reproducibility, traceability, and open communication;-
- Attention and respect for all participants and research subjects

If they deem it appropriate, the editors of academic publications and products published by L'ERMA provide authors with specific guidelines and policies based on this document, relating to the principles of research integrity and ethics, according to their subjects and disciplines.

Whoever believes that research published by L'ERMA has not been conducted in line with these ethical practices is invited to raise the issue with the publisher at lerma@lerma.it.

Where possible, each report will be handled following COPE guidelines, and/or by submitting the matter to the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the publishing house and, if necessary, to the members of the Editorial Board of the publishing house.

II. *Publishing process*

L'ERMA is committed to respecting editorial independence and all its efforts are aimed at ensuring that this principle is not compromised by competing interests or any other influence. Erma adopts practices of non-discrimination of authors, editors, or reviewers based on personal characteristics or identity, with an ongoing commitment to remove any barriers to inclusion and to promote fairness at every stage of the publishing process.

L'ERMA welcomes authors of different backgrounds, races and ethnicities, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and disability to publish with them.

L'ERMA refuses the predatory practices of academic pseudo-publishers who pursue mere profit at the expense of the progress of research and the quality and scientific value of the works they publish.

A board of directors of L'ERMA oversees the publishing program. Members are selected based on their recognized scientific expertise, knowledge, skills, and their agreement with the ethical values of the publishing house. They independently approve publication contracts.

The roles of the board of Directors are the following:

- Initially, proposals for the editorial program of monographs are reviewed by the members of the editorial board, which has decision-making autonomy. Nevertheless, the members of the editorial board may consult experts in the field whenever they need to ensure the quality of the editorial product. To facilitate this process, the advisory boards of the different series sign the publication proposal together with a statement on the quality and scientific value of the publication.
- After a monograph that is not part of a series has been valued as worthy of being considered by L'ERMA, the publishing house sends the proposal and written sample from the manuscript to a minimum of two external and independent advice for and against the publication to the Board of Directors.
- The Editorial Board first and then the Board of Directors have the authority to solicit further revisions and suggestions before the draft is approved for publication and after the publishing contract is signed for further information on the development of the manuscript.
- Editorial decisions on manuscripts submitted to scientific journals are made by the journal's editors-in-chief and the journal's scientific committees and are based on independent peer-review reports. The Board of Directors is required to approve the acquisition by L'ERMA of an existing journal or the creation of a new journal. The Board of Directors may take action on changes in policy, ethics, or other matters affecting the running of scientific journals published by L'ERMA, but does not include decisions on the publication of individual articles.

Erma encourages and makes its internal expertise available so that all journals provide their editorial policies transparently through statements. Likewise, all information regarding editorial processes and decisions on the publication of monographs, both individual and in series, is made transparent and accessible.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the editors of the publishing house at lerma@lerma.it or the magazine of interest.

Abusive behaviour or submissions against L'ERMA staff and others involved in the publication process on behalf of the publishing house will not be tolerated.

This type of behaviour can be sanctioned, for instance, by the rejection of a manuscript or by objecting to clearly abusive comments during the peer review process.

III. Peer-review

Peer review is essential to maintain and guarantee the high-quality standards of L'ERMA's publications.

The commitment of the publishing house is therefore to:

- provide adequate systems and support to facilitate rigorous, fair, and effective peer review for all publications;
- invite editors of scientific series and journals and peer reviewers to familiarise themselves with these guidelines and those available on the publisher's website, which conform to the best practices of peer reviewing;
- ensure, through its drafting, that the peer review process is conducted following the principles of integrity described above and intervene in the event of fraudulent practices or manipulation;
- protect the confidentiality of persons involved in the peer review process when anonymity is an integral part of the review process for a given publication. The publishing house demands the same compliance with confidentiality agreements from publishing partners, authors, and peer reviewers for each published book or journal.

IV. Authors and Editors

Publication formats may have different standards to which authors conform depending on the different disciplines. In the absence of other guidelines, L'ERMA recommends that authors adhere to the following principles, which are also stated in the publication contracts that authors are asked to sign as soon as the Board has approved the project and started the production phase:

- conceptualization and planning of work, acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of research data;
- editing and/or critical revisions of works aimed at producing high-quality intellectual content;
- final 'Send-to-Press' approval of the version to be published;

- the assumption of responsibility for all aspects of the work and the assurance that questions concerning the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work have been adequately examined at the time of delivery.
- The specific responsibilities of editors and corresponding authors include:
- the editing of manuscripts and proofs, the management of reviews, and the resubmission of reviewed manuscripts until acceptance;
- signing the publishing contract of any co-authors or the publisher, with the proxy of the co-authors
- acting as spokesperson on behalf of all co-authors on issues related to publishing ethics, re-use of content, or availability of data, materials, resources, etc.

The publishing house supports authors in disputes over authorship and the acquisition and use of identifiers according to international industry standards (e.g. Open Researcher and Contributor ID - ORCID - and International Standard Name Identifier - ISNI -).

V. Affiliations

All affiliations of L'ERMA's publications must represent the institution(s) where the research presented was conducted and/or supported and/or approved. In the case of outreach content, each affiliation must represent the institution or institutions with which each author is affiliated.

VI. Freedom of speech and censorship

L'ERMA is fully committed to the promotion of the principle of freedom of speech and expression. The publishing house aims to disseminate knowledge to the widest possible audience and to serve the academic community. In this regard, L'ERMA is also inspired by the COPE Position Statement on Censorship (2018).

VII. Intellectual Property Protection and Plagiarism

L'ERMA does not tolerate plagiarism in any of its publications and reserves the right to verify the originality of works to be published by appropriate means. Contributions suspected of plagiarism, in whole or in part, are rejected. If plagiarism is discovered after publication, the Board of Directors of the publishing house shall take proportionate measures, such as withdrawing or requesting correction.

Plagiarism may occur concerning all types of sources and media, including:

- texts, illustrations, musical quotations, source code, etc;
- material downloaded from websites or taken from manuscripts or other media;

- published and unpublished material, including lectures, presentations, and grey literature.

Readers, reviewers, and editors are invited to report any suspected plagiarism by contacting the publisher by e-mail at lerma@lerma.it.

VIII. Duplication of publication

Duplicate or redundant publication, or 'self-plagiarism' occurs when a work, or parts of it, is published more than once by the author(s) without adequate cross-reference or justification for the overlap.

This can take place either in the same language or in a different language.

Substantial overlap between publications can only be accepted if:

- you believe that from an editorial point of view this strengthens the academic discourse;
- you have a clear endorsement from the original publication;
- the citation of the source has been included.

When authors submit a manuscript for publication as a stand-alone monograph, in a L'ERMA journal or series, these manuscripts must not have been submitted to another publishing house, accepted for publication or printing in another journal, series, or otherwise.

However, depositing a pre-print on the author's website, in an institutional repository, or a pre-print archive is permitted as it is not considered a previous publication or duplicate.

Readers, reviewers, and editors are encouraged to report any suspicion of duplication by contacting the publisher at lerma@lerma.it.

IX. Processing of personal data

Scientific research involving people must comply with the rules on the processing of personal data (EU Regulation 679/2016 and implementing Legislative Decree 101/2018) and comply with international ethical and legal standards for research. Authors are required to respect the privacy rights of participants and obtain consent for publication before submitting the manuscript.

X. Conflict of interests and financing

L'ERMA is committed to ensuring that its publications are free from undue influence. Authors, L'ERMA staff, editors, and reviewers of L'ERMA publications are required to

declare any potential competing interests that may interfere with the objectivity or integrity of a publication.

Conflicts of interest may arise in situations that are considered to unduly influence the submission, review, or publication of a work and may be financial, non-financial, professional, contractual, or personal in nature.

Anyone who suspects an undeclared conflict of interest regarding a work published or under consideration at L'ERMA must inform the publisher.

XI. *Calumny, defamation, and freedom of speech*

Freedom of speech is fundamental for an academic publisher. Erma ensures that no false statements are published that could damage the reputation of individuals, groups, or organizations.

XII. *Retractions and corrections*

Journal editors will handle retractions and corrections in line with the COPE guidelines on retractions. In case of author errors, the journal will publish a correction via the editor-in-chief. If the error(s) are due to the journal, the journal will correct itself by publishing an *erratum/errata corrige*.

Retractions usually concern articles with serious limitations due to unreliable results or conclusions, or that contain substantial plagiarism. Editors of journals that publish manuscripts that have already undergone review may make minor changes, such as typesetting or proofreading, but any substantial corrections will be made in line with the above retraction guidelines.

Exceptionally, the publishing house may be required to remove an article published online in compliance with legal obligations, such as in cases of defamation, violation of privacy, or confidentiality. In these circumstances, the removal of the article will coincide with a notice clearly stating the reason for the removal of the full article.

In the case of monographs, the reporting of any legal, ethical, or safety issues will be followed by immediate notification to the author and a commitment from the publishing house to investigate the circumstances. If the problem concerns the integrity or accuracy of the content itself, a correction or retraction and withdrawal from sale may be considered. If a piece of content is withdrawn, the integrity of other affiliated works (e.g. other volumes in a series) will still be preserved.

If a publication is found to be the result of research misconduct or fraud, it will be retracted or subjected to appropriate correction.

XIII. *Image manipulation, forgery, and fabrication*

When research data are collected or presented in the form of images, their modification may misrepresent the results obtained or their meaning. Modification of images is not permitted when it leads to falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of the results presented.

XIV. *Subsidiary licenses and rights*

L'ERMA grants licenses and subsidiary rights to third parties allowing the reproduction, reuse, or adaptation of the content, originally published by the publishing house, in different contexts, languages, and territories. However, this is subject to refusal of approval for publication in the event of doubts about the integrity and accuracy of the licensed edition.

XV. *Research data management*

L'ERMA supports the transparency and openness of data and other materials associated with research. Therefore, authors are encouraged to maintain accurate records of data generated in the context of a specific research activity, necessary to validate results. Where appropriate and allowed, the publisher encourages authors to:

- deposit the data in a repository, or appropriate storage location, for further sharing and use;
- indicate the repository in a data availability statement that authors may include in the paratext of their publication.

L'ERMA provides authors with guidance and support regarding the possibility of linking their research data to the publication, either on the publisher's platform or through third-party services.

XVI. *Integrity of records*

The publishing house maintains at least three records of its publications with the relevant bibliographic metadata, the first on its platform, the second in the L'ERMA catalogue (both in print and digital format), then in the Index of the National Library Service (ISBN print/USB digital), the third in the digital library of a bibliographic service aggregator.

In marketing activities, representations of scientific content published by L'ERMA are not altered or manipulated in any way.

When a product (chapter, article, monograph, or journal) is purchased or subscribed to, it is provided in its entirety to the customer, who has no right to alter its content in any way that does not comply with the terms of the license under which it was published.

XVII. Marketing communications via social media

Social media, press releases, and mailing lists are powerful tools to spread L'ERMA's publications and reach new readers. To follow best practices in the use of media, the publishing house uses the social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, X.

Any social media communication campaigns entrusted to third parties are always carried out in agreement with the Communication Office.

XVIII. Advertising

L'ERMA's business model is based on appropriate and targeted advertising. Editorial products and customer services are advertised through the online website and the annual publishing catalogue, available in both print and digital versions.

Where present, advertising must:

- be independent of editorial decisions on what L'ERMA publishes;
- be distinct from the content.

L'ERMA reserves the right to reject or remove any advertisement if it believes it conflicts with the Ethical Guidelines for Academic Research Publishing or its Code of Ethics. This is done under the guidelines of the Advertising Standards Authority.