

# **AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BIOETHICS**

## **MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES TO AUTHORS**

### **Aims and scope:**

The *African Journal of Bioethics* (AJB) is a multidisciplinary platform dedicated to advancing scholarship, dialogue and capacity-building in the field of bioethics across the African continent and the Global South. Its central aim is to foster pan-African harmonisation of ethical standards in healthcare, research and emerging technologies, addressing the unique social, cultural and structural contexts that shape ethical decision-making in Africa. The journal welcomes original research articles, reviews, policy analyses, case analyses, commentary and book reviews exploring clinical and medical ethics, health systems governance, research ethics, environmental bioethics, artificial intelligence and digital health ethics, human rights principles, and ethical issues arising from global health emergencies. The journal also welcomes work on reproductive ethics, pandemic preparedness and emergency ethics, cultural and religious dimensions of bioethics, and professional ethics in the health sciences. The journal is intended for researchers, academics, students, policymakers, and practitioners interested in bioethics from across Africa and around the world.

### **Open Access:**

*African Journal of Bioethics* is an open access journal publishing under the CC BY 4.0 license. There are no Author Publication Fees payable to submit or publish in this journal.

All submissions should be written in English or French consistently. English-language abstracts, article titles, author names and keywords are required. Authors are, thus, advised to edit their works prior to submissions to make the review process a smooth exercise.

Authors should submit manuscripts in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx). All texts should be in Times New Roman font size 12 and in double spacing throughout. Margins should be 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides. Page numbers should be included at the bottom or top right.

At the time of submission, the work should not have been submitted for similar consideration elsewhere.

Each author should submit word-formatted documents. The documents should have the following main elements:

#### **Title Page**

Concise and descriptive title  
Full names and affiliations of all authors  
ORCID iDs (optional but encouraged)  
Corresponding author's email address

**Abstract**

A structured or unstructured abstract summarising the background, objectives, methods, results, and conclusions

**Keywords**

Provide four to six keywords that reflect the study's main concepts and disciplinary area.

**Main Text**

Depending on the type of article (original research, review, commentary, case analysis, etc.), the typical structure includes: Introduction, Methods (including ethical approval and informed consent procedures), Results/Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion.

- Declarations
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Conflict of Interest Declaration
- Funding Statement
- Ethics Approval
- Author contributions statement

**References**

Formatted according to APA (7th Edition) citation and referencing format.

**Tables, Figures, and Appendices**

Must be properly labelled, numbered sequentially, and submitted in high resolution.

Any use of AI / LLM assistance must be disclosed in the submitted manuscript.

Authors should use APA (7th Edition) in organising their citations and references consistently.

**Key requirements include:**

**In-text citations:** Author, date format

e.g., (Moyo & Kaba, 2021)

**Reference list:** Alphabetical order, hanging indentation, full bibliographic details

**DOIs:** Include DOIs for journal articles where available

**Secondary data:** Must include data source and access details

Authors must ensure that all references are accurate, complete, and cited consistently.

**Book:** Beauchamp, Tom L. and James F. Childress. 2019. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 8th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Chapter in an Edited Volume:** Kass, Leon R. 2002. "L'Chaim and Its Limits: Why Not Immortality?" Pp. 304-20 in *The Future of Human Nature*, edited by Jürgen Habermas. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

**Journal Article:** Callahan, Daniel. 1973. "The WHO Definition of 'Health.'" *Hastings Center Studies* 1(3):77-87.

**Journal Article (more recent):** Emanuel, Ezekiel J., David Wendler, and Christine Grady. 2000. "What Makes Clinical Research Ethical?" *Journal of the American Medical Association* 283(20):2701-11.

**Multiple Authors (more than three):** Faden, Ruth R., Tom L. Beauchamp, Nancy M.P. King, et al. 1986. *A History and Theory of Informed Consent*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Note: APA style uses author-date in-text citations and arranges the reference list alphabetically. Journal titles are not abbreviated, and edition information goes after the title for books.

### **Manuscript Length and Settings:**

Abstract length should be between 150 and 250 words.

- Original Research Articles (4,000–7,000 words)
- Review Articles (5,000–8,000 words)
- Short Communications (1,500–3,000 words)
- Case Analyses (2,000–4,000 words)
- Perspective Articles (2,000–3,500 words)
- Policy Analysis (3,000–5,000 words)
- Policy Briefs (1,500–3,000 words)
- Methodology Papers (3,000–5,000 words)
- Practice Reports (2,000–4,000 words)
- Creative Works with Ethical Commentary (500–2,000 words)
- Book Reviews (800–1,500 words), Commentaries (1,500–3,000 words), and Letters to the Editor (600–800 words).

Authors have a responsibility to sort out copyright issues for all materials used in their works and that originally do not belong to them. Such materials include images, maps and other forms of illustrations.

All illustrations used in the manuscripts regardless of whether they are tables, maps or images should be labelled as Figures and numbered in ascending order consistently.

Authors should not put their names, institutional affiliations, or email addresses in the main documents that are uploaded in the submission system. In other words, the documents should hide author identity to ensure double-blind peer review.

Submissions may regrettably be denied or returned back to authors if the above guidelines are not adhered to.

## **Editorial Board:**

The African Journal of Bioethics is overseen by an editorial team committed to advancing ethical scholarship across Africa.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Mercury Shitindo, Africa Bioethics Network (Kenya) / University of Zaragoza (Spain)

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To achieve this goal of high visibility for all its published material, all *AJB* contributors must ideally have an ORCID ID number and be registered on the ScienceOpen platform. If a contributor does not have either of these, they can obtain them in minutes.

The ORCID system raises the visibility of your published research to people looking for research on its topic, it makes it easier for people searching for such research to find yours. ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier (an ORCID iD) that you own and control, and that distinguishes you from every other researcher. You can connect your iD with your professional information, affiliations, grants, publications, peer review, and more.

Here are instructions for gaining an ORCID, given by ORCID, at <https://orcid.org/register>. Alternatively, our publisher Pluto Journals has a 2 minute 42 second video instructing how to register with ScienceOpen [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSc\\_vc-wQaU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSc_vc-wQaU) (which runs our submission platform, and once registered it indicates ways to make your manuscript more easily visible to people searching on the topics of your research), to obtain an ORCID number.

### **Manuscript Submission:**

All manuscripts must be submitted via the *AJB* ScienceOpen homepage. Before submitting, authors must have both a ScienceOpen account and an ORCID number (see “ORCID number registration and ScienceOpen” below for registration instructions). Once you have these, follow the steps below to submit your manuscript.

- i. Go to the *AJB* ScienceOpen homepage at [https://www.scienceopen.com/collection/Pluto\\_AJB](https://www.scienceopen.com/collection/Pluto_AJB) \_ Scroll over “My ScienceOpen” at the top of the page and select “Sign in” from the dropdown menu.
- ii. Enter your email and password and click “Log in”. You will be returned to the homepage in a logged-in state.
- iii. Click “Submit a manuscript” in the header of the homepage. An “Upload manuscript” page will open.

All manuscripts must be submitted as both a Word document and a PDF. The Word document is used for the peer review and editorial process; the PDF serves as a fixed record of what was originally submitted. Creating a PDF from Word takes only a few seconds: select “File” > “Export” > “Create PDF/XPS”.

On the “Upload manuscript” page, complete the following fields:

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x. **Abstract:** Enter your abstract (not exceeding 200 words, as per the Author Instructions above). You will be asked to enter this again in the form; this is used for indexing and online visibility purposes.

xi. **Keywords:** Enter up to 10 keywords relevant to your submission.

xii. **Disciplines:** Select the disciplines most relevant to your submission. This assists with online indexing and discoverability.

xiii. **Data availability, funder, and author agreements:** Select the appropriate data availability category, add funder information if applicable, and tick all relevant author agreement statements. Then click “Submit” to complete your submission.

Upon acceptance of your manuscript for publication, you will be asked to submit by email a short biographical note for each author.

## Peer Review:

Articles will be first subject to a desk-review for journal suitability, ethical compliance, and clarity. A double-anonymous blind review will be performed by at least two external reviewers. We will strive for an average time to first decision of 6- 8 weeks from point of submission.

Publication decisions will be made by the Editor-in-Chief. Authors may appeal a decision of Reject once only. Any final decision will rest with the Editor-in-Chief.

## Acceptance Rate

The journal’s acceptance rate averages **approximately 65–75%**, reflecting AJB’s commitment to maintaining rigorous peer review while supporting scholarly development and capacity building.

## Publication Frequency

AJB operates under a **quarterly publication framework**, with planned issues in:

- March
- June
- September
- December

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## **Ethics and Malpractice:**

### **Responsibilities of Editors**

Editors are responsible for:

- Ensuring fair and unbiased peer review
- Maintaining confidentiality of submitted manuscripts
- Avoiding conflicts of interest
- Making editorial decisions based solely on scholarly merit
- Issuing corrections, expressions of concern, or retractions where necessary

### **Responsibilities of Reviewers**

Reviewers are expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality of manuscripts under review
- Provide objective and constructive feedback
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Complete reviews within agreed timelines

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- All named authors on the articles should confirm that they have jointly participated in the research and writing of the article, and that no author has been omitted from the list of authors.
- We require authors to warrant that their articles are original, have not been previously published, and do not plagiarise or otherwise copy someone else's work without attribution. (If the article is a translation, we are happy to consider this for publication but the authors must inform the editors on submission.)

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### **Contact**

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