



BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

for Diamond Open Access publishers

In DIAMAS, we seek to help institutional Open Access publishers improve their practices and the quality of their outputs. We will develop the Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional Publishing (EQSIP), which is expected to ensure the quality and transparency of governance, processes and workflows in institutional publishing.

Sign up for the project [newsletter](#) to stay tuned!

If you are a Diamond Open Access publisher, there is something that you can do now to get ready for EQSIP. Have a look at the self-assessment checklist below and try to answer the questions!

The checklist is part of the [DIAMAS Best practices report](#), based on an analysis of the existing quality evaluation criteria, best practices, and assessment systems in publishing¹ developed by international publishers associations, research funding organisations, international indexing databases, etc. The analysis has provided an initial input for EQSIP and the checklist captures the current best practice relevant for Open Access journals. EQSIP will offer more but all the important topics are already there, and you can see where you will need to align.²

¹ Check out the full list of the analysed documents: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7859247>.

² The checklist is divided into seven sections reflecting the seven core components of scholarly publishing outlined in the Diamond OA Action Plan, subsequently revised and modified by the DIAMAS project team.

The checklist consists of questions and is divided into seven sections.

- **Legal aspects and transparency**
- **Financial aspects and transparency**
- **Editorial quality, management and research integrity**
- **Open science practices**
- **Technical service efficiency**
- **Visibility, indexation, communication, marketing and impact**
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI): accessibility, gender equity, multilingualism**

Each question is accompanied with a set of icons indicating the type of action you as a publisher should take if the answer is “no”.

Actions to take if the answer is “no”



Adopt/amend your policy/regulations/procedures document



Display the information on the publisher's website



Display the information at the output (journal/book) level



Establish a documented procedure/workflow



Take technical action

Based on Ševkušić, Milica, & Kuchma, Iryna. (2023). DIAMAS deliverable: D3.1 IPSP Best Practices Quality evaluation criteria, best practices, and assessment systems for Institutional Publishing Service Providers (IPSPs)(Under review by the European Commission). Zenodo.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7859172>

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Project “Developing Institutional open Access publishing Models to Advance Scholarly communication”(DIAMAS), funded by the European Union under Grant agreement ID: 101058007

Legal aspects and transparency



Is there a document defining the ownership structure of your publishing operations and the published content? Is the information from this document publicly available on your website (e.g. as a document or a statement referring to the document)?



Is there a legal document on the institutional level that describes the publishing operations (e.g. a rulebook on publishing operations)? Is the information from this document publicly available on your website (e.g. as a document or a statement referring to the document)?



Is there a document on the institutional level that defines the structure and responsibilities of the bodies managing publishing operations (e.g. institutional publishing councils, advisory boards, editorial boards, editorial team, etc.)? Is the information from this document publicly available on your website (e.g. as a document or a statement referring to the document)?



Are the members of relevant scholarly communities involved in decision-making on the direction of the publishing service and the publishing operations (e.g. as members of editorial and advisory boards)?



Are the composition and constitution of the editorial bodies defined and publicly displayed (i.e. with the editorial team names, functions and roles; Editorial Board affiliations)? Are PIDs (such as ORCID) and/or links to institutional profiles provided to specify the identity and affiliation of the editorial bodies?



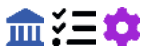
Are procedures for the selection of members of the managing and editorial bodies open and publicly available?



Is there a regular renewal of editorial bodies?



Do editors-in-chief have full authority over the entire editorial content of their journal and the timing of publication of that content? Is this editorial freedom included in any document governing publishing operations? Is this information publicly available on your website?



Is ownership of all correspondence and mailing lists (e.g. compiled on the online submission system) in the hands of a research organisation/university?



Do you regulate relations between authors and the publishing entity for the content (i.e. in the form of an agreement/contract and/or the licensing policy)? Who owns copyright on contributions (e.g. articles, books, etc.)? Is there any transfer or granting of rights (e.g. publishing rights)? Are authors allowed to retain copyright without restriction? Is the information about copyright and licensing publicly available on the website?



Do reviewers retain copyright of their reviews?



Do you publicly display the General Terms and Conditions of the use of the infrastructure or the publishing platform (or the Terms of Use/Service)?



Do you have a data protection policy and a privacy policy in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or equivalent provisions of other data protection law? Is the compliance with the GDPR indicated on the publishing entity's website, as well as on journal websites?

Hint: 'Writing a GDPR-Compliant Privacy Notice'. 2018. GDPR.Eu. 11 July 2018.
<https://gdpr.eu/privacy-notice/>.



Do you have a written environmental policy? Is the information from this document publicly available on your website (e.g. as a document or a statement referring to the document)?

More information: Mertens S, Brown A (2021) Environmental sustainability and scientific publishing: EASE manifesto. European Science Editing 47: e75625.
<https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e75625>



How easy is it to identify relevant contacts in the publishing entity? Is the publishing entity's name clearly displayed on the website? Can one contact you by telephone, email, and post?

Financial aspects and transparency



Do you have a clear OA policy that explains your OA business model and addresses the compliance with funder and institutional OA policies (if they exist)?



Do you indicate on the homepage your funding sources, in case you receive funds from outside the publishing institution?



Where relevant, do you have sponsor roles and responsibilities described, as well as relations between editors and the publisher, sponsoring societies, or journal owners?



Do you have formal, explicit, written policies for advertising in both print and online versions including the following: which types of advertisements will be considered; who makes decisions regarding accepting advertisements; whether they are linked to content or reader behaviour or are displayed at random; advertisements aren't related in any way to editorial decision making and are kept separate from the published content?



If you don't charge Article Processing Charges (APCs) and/or Book Processing Charges (BPCs), is this clearly stated on your website? In case you are charging Voluntary Author Contributions (VAC), is this information publicly available on your website or (preferably) at the journal level?



Do you keep track of your resources and costs, including the role of volunteer work?



Do you have a sustainability plan?

Editorial quality, editorial management and research integrity



Do you have written and publicly available editorial policies, including written job descriptions, specifically detailing components of editorial freedom, including the degree of control regarding editorial content, acceptance and publication, and advertising content; a mechanism to prevent inappropriate influence on the editor by others and to handle conflicts in an objective and transparent manner with the goal of conflict resolution and maintenance of trust?



Are editor roles and responsibilities (towards authors, reviewers, readers and the scientific community, journal owners/publishers, public) clearly described? Do editor roles include the selection of reviewers for the papers assigned to them, providing the authors with advice on how to improve their paper, and negotiating disagreements between authors and reviewers? Is this information publicly available?



Do editors monitor the turnaround time for every publishing stage from manuscript receipt to publication or rejection to ensure a reasonable response time to authors and reasonable publication time?



Do you display information about the mission (i.e. in a journal mission statement), aims and scope, as well as the languages in which manuscripts can be submitted, on the website?



Do you have a policy on publication ethics (for example, [COPE's Core Practice guidance](#)), addressing [authorship and contributorship](#), handling [complaints and appeals](#), handling [allegations of research misconduct](#), [conflicts of interest](#), [data sharing and reproducibility](#), [ethical oversight](#), [intellectual property](#), [post-publication discussions](#), [corrections and retractions](#)? Do these policies address plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others? Do you describe the standards or codes of ethics you use? Are these policies published on the publishing entity's website?



Do you have research integrity control procedures (e.g. similarity check, checks for falsification and fabrication of data, image manipulation, etc)? Do you provide responsible reporting guidelines to authors to enable reproducibility of published works? Do you adhere to bibliographic standards adopted for citations and bibliographic references to other texts, research data, methods and computer software?

More information: 'What Is a Reporting Guideline?' EQUATOR Network. Accessed 12 July 2023.

<https://www.equator-network.org/about-us/what-is-a-reporting-guideline/>.



Do your institutional Research Integrity plans include journal publishing? Are there adequately trained research ethics committees who could provide support to journal editors and the publisher?



Do you provide publicly available clear and detailed author guidelines?



Do you have clear policies on authorship and contributorship, which also address chatbots and other writing assistance tools?

More information: Zielinski, C., M. Winker, R. Aggarwal, L. Ferris, M. Heinemann, J. F. Jr. Lapeña, S. Pai, E. Ing, and L. Citrome. 2023. 'Chatbots, ChatGPT, and Scholarly Manuscripts: WAME Recommendations on ChatGPT and Chatbots in Relation to Scholarly Publications'. WAME. 20 January 2023. <https://wame.org/page3.php?id=106>.



Do you apply the CRediT taxonomy? Do you display the full names and affiliations of each author/contributor? Do you have complete and unambiguous author information supported by the author's persistent identifiers (ORCID)?

How to: 'Implementing CRediT'. 2020. *CRediT* (blog). 14 April 2020. <https://credit.niso.org/implementing-credit/>.



Do you have defined criteria for acceptance of manuscripts, preprints and other contributions?



Do you allow the deposit of the "Version of Record" or the "Publisher Version" in repositories?

Hint: This information is usually mentioned in the self-archiving policy. Open Access journals should allow this.



Do you have an archival, digital preservation policy and do you implement it? Is the published content deposited in a digital preservation service (e.g. LOCKSS, CLOCKSS, Portico)?

More information: 'E-Journals - Digital Preservation Handbook'. n.d. Digital Preservation Coalition. Accessed 11 July 2023.
<https://www.dpconline.org/handbook/content-specific-preservation/e-journals>.



Do you regularly review and update your policies and guidelines?



Do you have a mechanism for regular and objective evaluation of editor performance by the publisher based on predetermined and agreed-upon measures of success?



Do you clearly define reviewer roles and responsibilities? Do you provide a review framework to reviewers and do you publish it on the journal website with the process outline and evaluation criteria?



Do you have a mechanism of preventing manuscripts from being reviewed by a closed circle of people who are well acquainted with each other or work in the same institution?



Do you practise one of the forms of anonymised peer review or open peer review (including the potential disclosure of the identity of reviewers, publicly available reviews, and the ability for a broader community to participate in the review process) by at least two reviewers? Do you publish review reports? Do you have any other form of evaluation of submissions by more than one person, and is this transparently specified on your website?

More information: Ross-Hellauer, Tony. 2017. 'What Is Open Peer Review? A Systematic Review'. F1000Research.

<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.11369.2>.



Do you have a workflow for reviewers' recognition and awards? Do you publish the names of reviewers annually and/or do you have a publicly available list of reviewers (updated at least once a year)? Do you work with services for crediting reviewers (such as [Reviewer Credits](#))?



Do you display dates of submission and acceptance on published articles? Do you publish at least basic statistics annually on the journal/platform website, covering in particular the number of submissions, the number of reviews requested, the number of reviews received, the approval rate, and the average time between submission and publication?



Does the editorial team maintain the registry of submitted papers, the archive of author statements, reviewer guidelines, list of reviewers and the registry of peer-review reports?



Do you have a policy in place to address complaints and appeals for rejected or withdrawn manuscripts?



Do you provide training for editors and reviewers and do you make training materials available?



Are authors, reviewers and editorial staff required to provide transparent declarations of conflict of interests, including the financial conflicts of interest (e.g. the Conflict of Interest statement in the manuscript in the case of authors)?

More information: Conflicts of Interest / Competing Interests'. n.d. COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics. Accessed 11 July 2023.
<https://publicationethics.org/competinginterests>.



Do authors disclose all sources of funding (i.e., in the Funding acknowledgements/statements)?



Does the publisher have mechanisms for correcting, revising or retracting articles after publication? Do editors maintain the integrity of the literature by publishing errata or corrections identifying anything of significance, retractions, expressions of concern and new versions of the publication as quickly as possible? Does the publisher have mechanisms for correcting, revising or retracting articles after publication?

More information: 'Post-Publication Discussions and Corrections'. n.d. COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics. Accessed 11 July 2023.
<https://publicationethics.org/postpublication>.



Do you allow debate post publication either on the journal site, through letters to the editor, or on an external moderated site, such as PubPeer?

How to: 'Handling of Post-Publication Critiques'. n.d. COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics. Accessed 12 July 2023.
<https://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts/handling-post-publication-critiques>.

Open science practices



Do you use CC-BY as the preferred open licence for journal articles, and other types of CC licences for book publications? Do you display licensing information?

How to: 'Displaying Licensing Information - OA Journals Toolkit'. 2023.
<https://www.oajournals-toolkit.org/policies/displaying-licensing-information>.



Do you have a data availability policy? Do you provide clear data sharing guidelines? Do you require authors to provide a data availability statement? Do you encourage authors to make data related to their submissions available in a repository already at the time of submission?

How to: 'Open Data, Software and Code Guidelines'. Open Research Europe. Accessed 13 July 2023.
<https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/for-authors/data-guidelines>.



Do you encourage authors to share their manuscripts as preprints by depositing them and making them immediately available in open repositories, including preprint repositories, at all stages of the publication process? Do you encourage authors to share the details of their research in a public registry before conducting the study (as a preregistration report)?

More information: 'Preprint Resource Center'. n.d. ASAPbio (blog). Accessed 13 July 2023. <https://asapbio.org/preprint-info>.
'Preregistration'. Center for Open Science. Accessed 13 July 2023.
<https://www.cos.io/initiatives/prereg>.



Do you accept manuscripts presenting and discussing negative scientific results (and those that do not meet the expected results)?

More information: 'Non-Reporting of Negative Findings'. 2021. The Embassy of Good Science. 27 March 2021.

<https://embassy.science/wiki/Theme:24e87492-7020-4fc0-ab37-dd88bcf9f637>.



Do you publish/make available the research protocols and methods? Making associated research protocols and methods available is a good open science practice that allows others to replicate and build on work published.

More information: 'Protocols'. n.d. *PLoS* (blog). Accessed 13 July 2023.

<https://plos.org/protocols/>.

'Open Methods'. n.d. *PLoS* (blog). Accessed 13 July 2023.

<https://plos.org/open-science/open-methods/>.



Do you encourage sharing of research software, e.g. through a source code repository?

More information: 'Open Code'. n.d. *PLoS* (blog). Accessed 13 July 2023.

<https://plos.org/open-science/open-code/>.



Are your bibliographic references openly available, structured, separable, freely accessible and reusable? Are you aligned with the Initiative for Open Citations (I4OC) and the Initiative for Open Abstracts (I4OA)?

Hint: 'Open Code'. n.d. *PLoS* (blog). Accessed 13 July 2023.

<https://plos.org/open-science/open-code/>.



Do you adhere to the TOP Guidelines of Promotion of Transparency and Openness? If you do, to which standard/s: Citation standards, Data transparency, Analytic methods (code) transparency, Research materials transparency, Design and analysis transparency, Study preregistration, Analysis plan pre-registration, and Replication? And to which level of increasing stringency - Disclosure, Requirement, or Verification?

More information: 'TOP Guidelines'. 2015. Center for Open Science. 2015.
<https://www.cos.io/initiatives/top-guidelines>.



Do you participate in or support research assessment reform?

More information: Notable initiatives: Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)(<https://sfedora.org/>) and Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA)(<https://coara.eu/>).

Technical service efficiency



Does the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing support online publishing workflows?

Hint: Using journal management software packages such as Open Journal Systems and Janeway makes it easier for publishers to implement this recommendation because these features are supported by the software.



Is the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing based on open-source software?

More information: A number of open-source journal management software solutions are available, such as: Open Journal Systems (<https://pkp.sfu.ca/software/ojs/>), Janeway (<https://janeway.systems/>), Lodel (<https://lodel.hypotheses.org/>), Kotahi (<https://kotahi.community/>).



Is the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing interoperable (using widely adopted metadata standards and protocols for harvesting (e.g. OAI-PMH); supporting HTML meta tags and massive metadata export for published outputs (as CSV files, ONIX XML feeds or in any other established format), providing MARC records to libraries, if relevant)? Is it regularly updated to conform to the current interoperability standards and open science principles? Do you make specific efforts to enhance your visibility in general and scholarly search engines (e.g. through HTML meta tags, XML sitemaps)?

Hint: Using journal management software packages such as Open Journal Systems and Janeway makes it easier for publishers to implement this recommendation because these features are supported by the software.



Is content migration enabled on the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing?

Hint: It should be possible to copy the entire content and migrate it to a different hosting site without additional costs and data loss. If the content is hosted by an external service provider, they should provide instructions, mechanisms and assistance to make content migration possible.



Is the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing supplied with basic functionalities (searching, browsing, navigation, formatted citations in multiple citation formats [styles], etc.) and a user friendly interface, in line with the needs of researchers, as the main audience? Is the user interface adjusted to low bandwidths?

Hint: Using journal management software packages such as Open Journal Systems and Janeway makes it easier for publishers to implement this recommendation because these features are supported by the software.



Are text and data mining (automatic downloading, extraction and indexing of the full texts and the associated metadata) supported on the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing and is this clearly stated in the relevant policy?



Are technical support and maintenance, protection from viruses and malware, backing up, etc. ensured for the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing? Is the published content regularly backed up?



Do you provide training on using the publishing platform to relevant stakeholders?



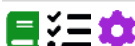
Does each journal/book and article/chapter have a unique landing page (URL) and relevant persistent identifier (ISSN, ISBN, DOI) and are persistent identifiers clearly indicated?



Is publishing and archiving in at least one digital file format suitable for long term preservation (e.g. PDF/A, XML JATS, etc.)?



Is a table of contents or a structure that allows direct access to articles/chapters provided?



Are the landing pages of the published items supplied with all relevant metadata (title, full names and institutional affiliations – including country/region – of all contributing authors, abstracts and keywords, funding information), provided in the original language and English / second language, and in human and machine readable formats?



Is the full-text content provided in multiple file formats (PDF, HTML, XML, ePub, etc.) tagged in the XML JATS format?

More information: 'Introduction to JATS (Journal Article Tag Suite)'. n.d. XML.Com. Accessed 11 July 2023.
<https://www.xml.com/articles/2018/10/12/introduction-jats/>.



Do you provide a bibliographic letterhead in the full text of each article, on the title page, including the name of the journal/book, ISSN, eISSN (or ISBN) volume and issue, period covered by the issue indicating months and years?



Are persistent identifiers for authors and contributors (ORCID), organisations (ROR), etc. clearly indicated?



Do you use CRediT tags to indicate contributions of the authors and is this information machine-readable (coded in JATS xml v1.2.)?

How to: 'CRediT Taxonomy'. 2022. JATS4R. 9 May 2022.
<https://jats4r.org/credit-taxonomy/>.

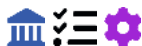


Do you provide complete and reliable machine-readable information on funding (including as a minimum the name of the funder and the grant number/identifier)?

How to: Hendricks, Ginny. 2022. 'Funding Data Overview'. Website. Crossref. 2022.
<https://www.crossref.org/documentation/funder-registry/funding-data-overview/>.



Is the licence information available both on the landing page of the published output and in the full text of the article?



Do you regularly deposit complete metadata about publications in a registration agency (e.g. CrossRef)?



Do you have quality assurance mechanisms to ensure a high quality of figures and tables (high resolution, annotations, clarity)?



Are the links to data, code, and other research outputs that underlie the publication and are available in external repositories, provided?

How to: Rosa-Clark. 2016. 'Linking Publications to Data and Software'. Website. Crossref. 2016.
<https://www.crossref.org/blog/linking-publications-to-data-and-software/>.

Visibility, indexing, communication, marketing and impact



Do you have workflows to submit your publications for indexing in abstracting and indexing databases, citation indexes, discovery services and aggregator databases? Do you have a workflow to keep the information about inclusion in indexes and registries on your website(s) up-to-date?



Do you share your developments, policy changes, updates, new features and functionality through newsletters, blogs, social media, direct emails, mailing lists, content alerts, notifications, RSS/Atom feed or other mechanism?



Have you implemented impact statements and/or simple-language abstracts alongside published content that can be understood by a general audience and allow authors to emphasise the intention and importance of their work?



Do you have social media or social networking profiles that are active and regularly updated?



Do you actively work with the media on the popularisation of science (preparing press releases and information for journalists)?



Do you have an operational plan for marketing and dissemination?



Do you encourage authors to share content via academic sharing services ([ScholarlyCommons](#), [HumanitiesCommons](#), etc.)?



Do you inform libraries about new publications?



Do you actively work to support authors in promoting published content (e.g. by inviting post-publication reviews articles, inviting and moderating post-publication online comments, organising events like book promotions, sending out copies, writing press releases, working with the media)?



Are metric indicators supported on the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing and do you publicly display them in a responsible way?
Metric indicators include the following :

- submission, acceptance, publication dates
- article-level usage metrics, such as visits, views, downloads
- publication-level usage metrics, such as visits, views, downloads
- article-level impact metrics, such as citation counts
- publication-level impact metrics
- altmetrics indicators
- widget showing the geographical spread of visitors.



Do you provide clear information about the analytics software used to generate usage metrics and methods used to collect them?

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): accessibility, gender equity, multilingualism



Do you have a clear insight into the composition of the community of authors, reviewers, editors and readers (according to their institutional affiliation, nationality and disciplinary orientation)? Do you strive for greater diversity?



Do you have gender policies regarding the composition of editorial staff and boards and policies that strive for gender balance among peer reviewers?



Do you promote systematic reporting of sex and gender in research in line with the SAGER guidelines (e.g. provide instructions for authors that require or encourage disaggregation of data by sex or gender when feasible, as well as guidelines requiring reviewers to assess manuscripts for inclusion of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis)?



Do you have a defined policy for maintaining Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across all activities and is it publicly available?



Do you collect data/statistics to monitor the success and failure of the EDI policy?



Do you take action as a result of these statistics, in terms of acknowledging progress or missteps and creating and implementing a plan to recover from missteps?



Do you provide information/contact person(s) if a reader/user likes to communicate e.g. accessibility problems?



Do you have a policy on the use of multiple languages (including the use of English) in the published content and in the user interface?



Does the EDI policy cover the accessibility of the website for the visually impaired? Is the publishing infrastructure you are using/providing aligned with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? Are the full-text formats aligned with these Guidelines?

More information: Initiative (WAI), W3C Web Accessibility. n.d. 'W3C Accessibility Standards Overview'. Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). Accessed 11 July 2023. <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/>.



Does the EDI policy cover decision-making on content?



Does the EDI policy promote diversity in open science practices?



Does the EDI policy refer explicitly to gender equity?

More information on the best practice in EDI can be found in the SAGER Guidelines: Heidari, S., Babor, T.F., De Castro, P. et al. Sex and Gender Equity in Research: rationale for the SAGER guidelines and recommended use. *Res Integr Peer Rev* 1, 2 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-016-0007-6>, and the [Sex and Gender Equity in Research \(SAGER\) Guidelines Checklist](#).

See also:

'2.7 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scholarly Publishing'. n.d. Council of Science Editors.

<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/2-7-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-scholarly-publishing>.

'DEI Scholarly Resources'. n.d. Council of Science Editors. Accessed 11 July 2023.

<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/dei-scholarly-resources>.

'Diversity and Inclusivity'. 2021. Committee on Publication Ethics.

<https://doi.org/10.24318/RLqSoVsZ>.

'Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit for Journal Editors'. 2021. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/wst4q>.
