

Author Instructions of *Soft Science*

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1. Submission Overview

Before you decide to publish with us, please read the following items carefully and make sure that you are well aware of **Editorial Policies** and the following requirements.

1.1 Topic Suitability

The topic of the manuscript must fit the scope of the journal. Please refer to **Aims and Scope** for more information.

1.2 Open Access and Copyright

The journal adopts **Gold Open Access** publishing model and distributes content under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License**. Copyright is retained by authors. Please make sure that you are well aware of these policies.

1.3 Publication Fees

Soft Science is an open access journal. When a paper is accepted for publication, authors are required to pay Article Processing Charges (APCs) to cover its editorial and production costs. The APC for each submission is \$1500. There are no additional charges based on color, length, figures, or other elements. For more details, please refer to [OAE Publication Fees](#).

1.4 Language Editing

All submissions are required to be presented clearly and cohesively in good English. Authors whose first language is not English are advised to have their manuscripts checked or edited by a native English speaker before submission to ensure the high quality of expression. A well-organized manuscript in good English would make the peer review even the whole editorial handling more smoothly and efficiently.

If needed, authors are recommended to consider the language editing services provided by OAE to ensure that the manuscript is written in correct scientific English before submission. An extra charge is required to enjoy this service.

Please visit https://www.oaepublish.com/index/author_services or contact English-Editing@oaepublish.com for more details.

1.5 Work Funded by the National Institutes of Health

If an accepted manuscript was funded by National Institutes of Health (NIH), the author may inform Editors of the NIH funding number. The Editors are able to deposit the paper to the **NIH Manuscript Submission System** on behalf of the author.

2. Submission Preparation

2.1 Cover Letter

A cover letter is required to be submitted accompanying each manuscript. It should be concise and explain why the study is significant, why it fits the scope of the journal, and why it would be attractive to readers, *etc.*

Here is a guideline of a cover letter for authors' consideration:

In the first paragraph: include the title and type (e.g., Research Article, Review Article, *etc.*) of the manuscript, a brief on the background of the study, the question the author sought out to answer and why;

In the second paragraph: concisely explain what was done, the main findings and why they are significant;

In the third paragraph: indicate why the manuscript fits the Aims and Scope of the journal, and why it would be attractive to readers;

In the fourth paragraph: confirm that the manuscript has not been published elsewhere and not under consideration of any other journal. All authors have approved the manuscript and agreed on its submission to the journal. Journal's specific requirements have been met if any.

If the manuscript is contributed to a special issue, please also mention it in the cover letter.

If the manuscript was presented partly or entirely in a conference, the author should clearly state the background information of the event, including the conference name, time and place in the cover letter.

2.2 Types of Manuscripts

The journal publishes Research Article, Review Article, Communication, Perspective, Commentary, Research Highlight, News, Editorial *etc.* For more details about paper type, please refer to the following table.

Manuscript Type	Definition	Word Limit	Abstract	Keywords	Main Text Structure
Research Article	A Research Article is a seminal and insightful research study and showcases that often involves modern techniques or methodologies. Authors should justify that their work are of novel findings. Research Articles will be subject to rigorous peer review by experts on the	8000 max	The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions. No more than 250 words.	3-6 keywords.	The main content should include four sections: Introduction, Experimental, Results and discussion, and Conclusions.



	subject matter.				
Mini Review / Review Article	A review article should provide readers with an in-depth understanding of a field by summarizing existing literature, and highlight key gaps and challenges to address future research. Review submissions will be subject to rigorous peer review by experts on the subject matter.	5000~8000 / 8000~20000	Unstructured abstract. No more than 250 words.	3-6 keywords.	The main text may consist of several sections with unfixed section titles. We suggest that the author include an "Introduction" section at the beginning, several sections with unfixed titles in the middle part, and a "Conclusion and outlook" section in the end.
Communication	A Communication is for the urgent publication of a research which is of outstanding significance and interest to experts in the field and also to general readership. Communication submissions will be subject to rigorous peer review by experts on the subject matter.	4000 max	Unstructured abstract. No more than 150 words	3-6 keywords	The Communication is a one body text with maximum 4 items (figures and tables).



Perspective	A Perspective provides personal points of view on the state-of-the-art of a specific area of knowledge and its future prospects. Perspective submissions will be subject to rigorous peer review by experts on the subject matter.	1800 max	Unstructured abstract. No more than 150 words.	3-6 keywords.	1~2 figures/tables, ~15 references
Commentary	A Commentary is to provide comments on a newly published article or an alternative viewpoint on a certain topic.	2500 max	Unstructured abstract. No more than 150 words.	3-6 keywords.	/
Research Highlight	A Research Highlight article highlights work recently published in the journal or in a recent issue of another journal. Research Highlight submissions are typically not subject to peer review at the discretion of the editorial team.	1200 max	Unstructured abstract. No more than 150 words.	3-6 keywords.	/



News	A News comments on an important event in the related field in the world. News submissions are typically not subject to peer review at the discretion of the editorial team.	1500 max	None required.	None required.	/
Editorial	An Editorial can be a comment about an important event in the world related or not to soft science or a particular discovery in soft science, needing a particular attention of soft science community. Editorials are typically not subject to peer review at the discretion of the editorial team.	1000 max	None required.	None required.	/

2.3 Manuscript Structure

2.3.1 Front Matter

2.3.1.1 Title

The title of the manuscript should be concise, specific and relevant, with no more than 16 words if possible. When gene or protein names are included, the abbreviated name rather than full name should be used.

2.3.1.2 Authors and Affiliations

Authors' full names should be listed. The initials of middle names can be provided. Institutional addresses and email addresses for all authors should be listed. At least one author should be designated as corresponding author. In addition, corresponding authors are suggested to provide their **Open Researcher and Contributor ID** upon submission. Please note that any change to authorship is not allowed after manuscript acceptance.

2.3.1.3 Abstract

The abstract should be a single paragraph with word limitation and specific structure requirements (for more details please refer to Types of Manuscripts). It usually describes the main objective(s) of the study, explains how the study was done, including any model organisms used, without methodological detail, and summarizes the most important results and their significance. The abstract must be an objective representation of the study: it is not allowed to contain results which are not presented and substantiated in the manuscript, or exaggerate the main conclusions. Citations should not be included in the abstract.

2.3.1.4 Graphical Abstract

The graphical abstract is essential as this can catch first view of your publication by readers. We recommend you to submit an eye-catching figure. It should summarize the content of the article in a concise graphical form. It is recommended to use it because this can make online articles get more attention. The graphic abstract should be submitted as a separate document in the online submission system. Please provide an image with a minimum of 730 × 1,228 pixels (h × w) or proportionally more. The image should be readable at a size of 7 × 12 cm using a regular screen resolution of 96 dpi. Preferred file types: TIFF, PSD, AI, JPG, JPEG, EPS, PNG, ZIP and PDF files.

2.3.1.5 Keywords

Three to six keywords should be provided, which are specific to the article, yet reasonably common within the subject discipline.

2.3.2 Main Text

Manuscripts of different types are structured with different sections of content. Please refer to Types of Manuscripts to make sure which sections should be included in the manuscripts.

2.3.2.1 Introduction

The introduction should contain background that puts the manuscript into context, allow readers to understand why the study is important, include a brief review of key literature, and conclude with a brief statement of the overall aim of the work and a comment about whether that aim was achieved. Relevant controversies or disagreements in the field should be introduced as well.

2.3.2.2 Experimental

Experimental should contain sufficient details to allow others to fully replicate the study. New methods and protocols should be described in detail while well-established methods can be briefly described or appropriately cited. Experimental participants selected, the drugs

and chemicals used, the statistical methods taken, and the computer software used should be identified precisely. Statistical terms, abbreviations, and all symbols used should be defined clearly. Protocol documents for clinical trials, observational studies, and other non-laboratory investigations may be uploaded as supplementary materials.

2.3.2.3 Results and Discussion

This section should contain the findings of the study and discuss the implications of the findings in context of existing research and highlight limitations of the study. Future research directions may also be mentioned. Results of statistical analysis should also be included either as text or as tables or figures if appropriate. Authors should emphasize and summarize only the most important observations. Data on all primary and secondary outcomes identified in the section Methods should also be provided. Extra or supplementary materials and technical details can be placed in supplementary documents.

2.3.2.4 Conclusions

It should state clearly the main conclusions and include the explanation of their relevance or importance to the field.

2.3.3 Back Matter

2.3.3.1 Acknowledgments

Anyone who contributed towards the article but does not meet **the criteria** for authorship, including those who provided professional writing services or materials, should be acknowledged. Authors should obtain permission to acknowledge from all those mentioned in the Acknowledgments section. This section is not added if the author does not have anyone to acknowledge.

2.3.3.2 Authors' Contributions

Each author is expected to have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data, or the creation of new software used in the work, or have drafted the work or substantively revised it.

Please use Surname and Initial of Forename to refer to an author's contribution. For example: made substantial contributions to conception and design of the study and performed data analysis and interpretation: Salas H, Castaneda WV; performed data acquisition, as well as provided administrative, technical, and material support: Castillo N, Young V.

If an article is single-authored, please include "The author contributed solely to the article." in this section.

2.3.3.3 Availability of Data and Materials

In order to maintain the integrity, transparency and reproducibility of research records, authors should include this section in their manuscripts, detailing where the data supporting their findings can be found. Data can be deposited into data repositories or published as supplementary information in the journal. Authors who cannot share their data should state

that the data will not be shared and explain it. If a manuscript does not involve such issue, please state "Not applicable." in this section.

2.3.3.4 Financial Support and Sponsorship

All sources of funding for the study reported should be declared. The role of the funding body in the experiment design, collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and writing of the manuscript should be declared. Any relevant grant numbers and the link of funder's website should be provided if any. If the study is not involved with this issue, state "None." in this section.

2.3.3.5 Conflicts of Interest

Authors must declare any potential conflicts of interest that may be perceived as inappropriately influencing the representation or interpretation of reported research results. If there are no conflicts of interest, please state "All authors declared that there are no conflicts of interest." in this section. Some authors may be bound by confidentiality agreements. In such cases, in place of itemized disclosures, we will require authors to state "All authors declare that they are bound by confidentiality agreements that prevent them from disclosing their conflicts of interest in this work." If authors are unsure whether conflicts of interest exist, please refer to the "Conflicts of Interest" of *Soft Science* **Editorial Policies** for a full explanation.

2.3.3.6 Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

Research involving human subjects, human material or human data must be performed in accordance with the **Declaration of Helsinki** and approved by an appropriate ethics committee. An informed consent to participate in the study should also be obtained from participants, or their parents or legal guardians for children under 16. A statement detailing the name of the ethics committee (including the reference number where appropriate) and the informed consent obtained must appear in the manuscripts reporting such research.

Studies involving animals and cell lines must include a statement on ethical approval. More information is available at **Editorial Policies**.

If the manuscript does not involve such issue, please state "Not applicable." in this section.

2.3.3.7 Consent for Publication

Manuscripts containing individual details, images or videos, must obtain consent for publication from that person, or in the case of children, their parents or legal guardians. If the person has died, consent for publication must be obtained from the next of kin of the participant. Manuscripts must include a statement that a written informed consent for publication was obtained. Authors do not have to submit such content accompanying the manuscript. However, these documents must be available if requested. If the manuscript does not involve this issue, state "Not applicable." in this section.

2.3.3.8 Copyright

Authors retain copyright of their works through a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License** that clearly states how readers can copy, distribute, and use their attributed research, free of charge. A declaration "© The Author(s) 2024." will be added to each article. Authors are required to sign License to Publish before formal publication.

2.3.3.9 References

References should be numbered in order of appearance at the end of manuscripts. In the text, reference numbers should be placed in square brackets and the corresponding references are cited thereafter. If the number of authors less than or equal to six, we require to list all authors' names. If the number of authors is more than six, only the first three authors' names are required to be listed in the references, other authors' names should be omitted and replaced with "et al.". Abbreviations of the journals should be provided on the basis of **Index Medicus**. Information from manuscripts accepted but not published should be cited in the text as "Unpublished material" with written permission from the source.

References should be described as follows, depending on the types of works:

Types	Examples
Journal articles by individual authors	Weaver, D. L.; Ashikaga, T.; Krag, D. N. Effect of occult metastases on survival in node-negative breast cancer. <i>N. Engl. J. Med.</i> 2011 , <i>364</i> , 412-421. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1008108
Organization as author	Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group. Hypertension, insulin, and proinsulin in participants with impaired glucose tolerance. <i>Hypertension</i> 2002 , <i>40</i> , 679-686. DOI: 10.1161/01.HYP.0000035706.28494.09
Both personal authors and organization as author	Vallancien, G.; Emberton, M.; Harving, N.; van Moorselaar, R. J.; Alf-One Study Group. Sexual dysfunction in 1,274 European men suffering from lower urinary tract symptoms. <i>J. Urol.</i> 2003 , <i>169</i> , 2257-2261. DOI: 10.1097/01.ju.0000067940.76090.73
Journal articles not in English	Zhang X.; Xiong H.; Ji T. Y.; Zhang Y. H.; Wang Y. Case report of anti-N-methyl-D-aspartate receptor encephalitis in child. <i>J. Appl. Clin. Pediatr.</i> 2012 , <i>27</i> , 1903-1907. (in Chinese)

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- Journal articles ahead of print** Odibo, A. O. Falling stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates in twin gestation: not a reason for complacency. *BJOG*. **2018**, Epub ahead of print [DOI: 10.1111/1471-0528.15541]
-
- ebook** Hammond, C. *The Basics of Crystallography and Diffraction*, 4th ed.; Oxford University Press, 2015. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198738671.001.0001
-
- Book in print** Frankel, F. *Picturing Science and Engineering*; MIT Press, 2018.
-
- ebook chapter** Hammond, C. Crystal Symmetry. In *The Basics of Crystallography and Diffraction*, 4th ed.; International Union of Crystallography Texts on Crystallography, Vol. 21; Oxford University Press, 2015; pp 99–134. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198738671.003.0004
-
- ebook with editors** *Mom the Chemistry Professor: Personal Accounts and Advice from Chemistry Professors Who Are Mothers*, 2nd ed.; Woznack, K., Charlebois, A., Cole, R. S., Marzabadi, C. H., Webster, G., Eds.; Springer, 2018. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-78972-9
-
- ebook series** Gaede, H. C. Professional Development for REU Students. In *Best Practices for Chemistry REU Programs*; Griep, M. A, Watkins, L., Eds.; ACS Symposium Series, Vol. 1295; American Chemical Society, 2018; pp 33–44. DOI: 10.1021/bk-2018-1295.ch003
-
- Thesis or dissertation** Cable, M. L. Life in Extreme Environments: Lanthanide-Based Detection of Bacterial Spores and Other Sensor Design Pursuits. Ph.D. Dissertation, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, 2010.
<http://resolver.caltech.edu/CaltechTHESIS:05102010-145436548>
(accessed 2019-09-10).
-
- Thesis or dissertation in print** Enander, R. T. Lead particulate and methylene chloride risks in automotive refinishing. Ph.D. Thesis, Tufts University, Medford, MA, 2001.

Website World Health Organization Home Page. <https://www.who.int/> (accessed 2019-02-21).

Newspaper Beauge, J. School district sued over burns girl suffered during chemistry class demonstration. *PennLive (Harrisburg, PA)*, November 17, 2018, updated November 17, 2018. https://www.pennlive.com/news/2018/11/school_district_sued_over_burn.html (accessed 2019-02-22).

Conference abstract Okita, J.; Iwamoto, T.; Kira, M. Novel synthetic route for hydrosilyllithiums. In Book of Abstracts, 2000 *International Chemical Congress of Pacific Basin Societies (PACIFICHEM 2000)*, Honolulu, HI; Paper INOR 216.

Conference proceedings Nilsson, A.; Petersson, F.; Persson, H. W.; Jönsson, H.; Laurell, T. Manipulation of suspended particles in a laminar flow. In *Micro Total Analysis Systems 2002, Proceedings of the μ TAS 2002 Symposium*, Nara, Japan, November 3–7, 2002; Baba, Y., Shoji, S., van den Berg, A., Eds.; Kluwer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 2002; Vol. 2, pp 751–753. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-010-0504-3_50

Database *SpectraBase*. Bio-Rad Laboratories. <https://spectrabase.com/> (accessed 2020-01-05).

Patent Stern, M. K.; Cheng, B. K. M. Process for preparing N-(p-nitroaryl)amides via reaction of nitrobenzene with nitriles. US 5380946, 1995.

Preprint Yamamoto T. S.; Inui R.; Tada Y.; Yokoyama S. Prospects of detection of subsolar mass primordial black hole and white dwarf binary mergers. *arXiv* **2004**, arXiv:2401.00044. Available online: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2401.00044> (accessed 29 December 2023).

2.3.3.10 Supplementary Materials

Additional data and information can be uploaded as Supplementary Materials to accompany the manuscripts. The supplementary materials will also be available to the referees as part of the peer-review process. Any file format is acceptable, such as data sheet (word, excel, csv, cdx, fasta, pdf or zip files), presentation (powerpoint, pdf or zip files), image (cdx, eps, jpeg, pdf, png or tiff), table (word, excel, csv or pdf), audio (mp3, wav or wma) or video (avi, divx, flv, mov, mp4, mpeg, mpg or wmv). All information should be clearly presented.

Supplementary materials should be cited in the main text in numeric order (e.g., Supplementary Figure 1, Supplementary Figure 2, Supplementary Table 1, Supplementary Table 2, *etc.*). The style of supplementary figures or tables complies with the same requirements on figures or tables in main text. Videos and audios should be prepared in English, and limited to a size of 500 MB.

2.4 Manuscript Format

2.4.1 File Format

Manuscript files can be in DOC and DOCX formats and should not be locked or protected.

2.4.2 Length

The word limit is specified in the item "Types of Manuscripts". There are no restrictions on number of figures or number of supporting documents. Authors are encouraged to present and discuss their findings concisely.

2.4.3 Language

Manuscripts must be written in English.

2.4.4 Multimedia Files

The journal supports manuscripts with multimedia files. The requirements are listed as follows:

- Video or audio files are only acceptable in English. The presentation and introduction should be easy to understand. The frames should be clear, and the speech speed should be moderate.
- A brief overview of the video or audio files should be given in the manuscript text.
- The video or audio files should be limited to a size of up to 500 MB.
- Please use professional software to produce high-quality video files, to facilitate acceptance and publication along with the submitted article. Upload the videos in mp4, wmv, or rm format (preferably mp4) and audio files in mp3 or wav format.

2.4.5 Figures

- Figures should be cited in numeric order (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2) and placed after the paragraph where it is first cited;
- Figures can be submitted in format of TIFF, PSD, AI, EPS or JPEG, with resolution of 300-600 dpi;
- Figure caption is placed under the Figure;
- Diagrams with describing words (including, flow chart, coordinate diagram, bar chart, line chart, and scatter diagram, etc.) should be editable in word, excel or powerpoint format. Non-English information should be avoided;



- Labels, numbers, letters, arrows, and symbols in figure should be clear, of uniform size, and contrast with the background;
- Symbols, arrows, numbers, or letters used to identify parts of the illustrations must be identified and explained in the legend;
- Internal scale (magnification) should be explained and the staining method in photomicrographs should be identified;
- All non-standard abbreviations should be explained in the legend;
- Permission for use of copyrighted materials from other sources, including re-published, adapted, modified, or partial figures and images from the internet, must be obtained. It is authors' responsibility to acquire the licenses, to follow any citation instruction requested by third-party rights holders, and cover any supplementary charges.

2.4.6 Tables

- Tables should be cited in numeric order and placed after the paragraph where it is first cited;
- The table caption should be placed above the table and labeled sequentially (e.g., Table 1, Table 2);
- Tables should be provided in editable form like DOC or DOCX format (picture is not allowed);
- Abbreviations and symbols used in table should be explained in footnote;
- Explanatory matter should also be placed in footnotes;
- Permission for use of copyrighted materials from other sources, including re-published, adapted, modified, or partial tables from the internet, must be obtained. It is authors' responsibility to acquire the licenses, to follow any citation instruction requested by third-party rights holders, and cover any supplementary charges.

2.4.7 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be defined upon first appearance in the abstract, main text, and in figure or table captions and used consistently thereafter. Non-standard abbreviations are not allowed unless they appear at least three times in the text. Commonly-used abbreviations, such as DNA, RNA, ATP, *etc.*, can be used directly without definition. Abbreviations in titles and keywords should be avoided, except for the ones which are widely used.

2.4.8 Italics

General italic words like *vs.*, *et al.*, *etc.*, *in vivo*, *in vitro*; *t* test, *F* test, *U* test; related coefficient as *r*, sample number as *n*, and probability as *P*; names of genes; names of bacteria and biology species in Latin.

2.4.9 Units

SI Units should be used. Imperial, US customary and other units should be converted to SI units whenever possible. There is a space between the number and the unit (i.e., 23 mL). Hour, minute, second should be written as h, min, s.

2.4.10 Numbers

Numbers appearing at the beginning of sentences should be expressed in English. When there are two or more numbers in a paragraph, they should be expressed as Arabic numerals; when there is only one number in a paragraph, number < 10 should be expressed in English and number > 10 should be expressed as Arabic numerals. 12345678 should be written as 12,345,678.

2.4.11 Equations

Equations should be editable and not appear in a picture format. Authors are advised to use either the Microsoft Equation Editor or the MathType for display and inline equations.

2.5 Submission Link

Submit an article via <https://oaemesas.com/login?JournalId=ss>

3. Research and Publication Ethics

3.1 Research Involving Human Subjects

All studies involving human subjects must be in accordance with the **Helsinki Declaration** and seek approval to conduct the study from an independent local, regional, or national review body (e.g., ethics committee, institutional review board, *etc.*). Such approval, including the names of the ethics committee, institutional review board, *etc.*, must be listed in a declaration statement of Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate in the manuscript. If the study is judged exempt from ethics approval, related information (e.g., name of the ethics committee granting the exemption and the reason for the exemption) must be listed. Further documentation on ethics should also be prepared, as Editors may request more detailed information. Manuscripts with suspected ethical problems will be investigated according to **COPE Guidelines**.

3.1.1 Consent to Participate

For all studies involving human subjects, informed consent to participate in the studies must be obtained from participants, or their parents or legal guardians for children under 16. Statements regarding consent to participate should be included in a declaration statement of Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate in the manuscript. If informed consent is not required, the name of the ethics committee granting the exemption and the reason for the

exemption must be listed. If any ethical violation is found at any stage of publication, the issue will be investigated seriously based on **COPE Guidelines**.

3.1.2 Consent for Publication

All articles published by OAE are freely available on the Internet. All manuscripts that include individual participants' data in any form (i.e., details, images, videos, *etc.*) will not be published without Consent for Publication obtained from that person(s), or for children, their parents or legal guardians. If the person has died, Consent for Publication must be obtained from the next of kin. Authors must add a declaration statement of Consent for Publication in the manuscript, specifying written informed consent for publication has been obtained.

3.1.3. Trial Registration

Soft Science requires all authors to register all relevant clinical trials that are reported in manuscripts submitted. *Soft Science* follows the World Health Organization (WHO)'s definition of clinical trials: "A clinical trial is any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more health-related interventions to evaluate the effects on health outcomes. Interventions include but are not restricted to drugs, cells and other biological products, surgical procedures, radiologic procedures, devices, behavioural treatments, process-of-care changes, preventive care, *etc.*"

In line with ICMJE recommendation, *Soft Science* requires the registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrollment. *Soft Science* accepts publicly accessible registration in any registry that is a primary register of the WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP) or in ClinicalTrials.gov. The trial registration number should be listed at the end of the Abstract.

Secondary data analyses of primary (parent) clinical trials should not be registered as a new clinical trial, but rather reference the trial registration number of the primary trial.

Editors should consider carefully whether studies failed to register or had an incomplete trial registration. Because of the importance of prospective trial registration, if there is an exception to this policy, trials must be registered and the authors should indicate in the publication when registration was completed and why it was delayed. Editors should publish a statement indicating why an exception was allowed. Please note such exceptions should be rare, and authors failing to prospectively register a trial risk its inadmissibility to *Soft Science*.

Authors who are not sure whether they need trial registration may refer to ICMJE FAQs for further information.

3.2. Research Involving Animals

Experimental research on animals should be approved by appropriate ethics committees and must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines. *Soft Science* encourages authors to comply with the AALAS Guidelines, the ARRIVE Guidelines, and the ICLAS Guidelines and obtain prior approval from relevant ethics committee. Manuscripts must

include a declaration statement of Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate indicating that the study has been approved by relevant ethical committee and the whole research process complies with ethical guidelines. If a study has been granted an exemption from requiring ethics approval, the name of the ethics committee that granted the exemption and the reasons for the exemption should be detailed. Editors will take account of animal welfare issues and reserve the right to reject a manuscript, especially if the research involves protocols that are inconsistent with commonly accepted norms of animal research.

3.3 Publication Ethics Statement

Soft Science fully adheres to the **Code of Conduct** and the **Best Practice Guidelines** of Committee on Publication Ethics (**COPE**).

The Editors of this journal enforce a rigorous peer-review process together with strict ethical policies and standards to guarantee to add high-quality scientific works to the field of scholarly publication. Unfortunately, cases of plagiarism, data falsification, image manipulation, inappropriate authorship credit, and the like, do arise. The Editors of *Soft Science* take such publishing ethics issues very seriously and are trained to proceed in such cases with zero tolerance policy.

Authors wishing to publish their papers in *Soft Science* must abide to the following:

- The author(s) must disclose any possibility of a conflict of interest in the paper prior to submission.
- The authors should declare that there is no academic misconduct in their manuscript in the cover letter.
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9.1 Initial check

9.1.1 Initial manuscript check

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