Albanian Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery (AJTES)

# AJTES EDITORIAL WORKFLOW

**Submission → Peer review → Decision → Production → Publication**

*Editorial procedures follow the COPE Core Practices and the ICMJE Recommendations; see also the AJTES Peer Review Policy and Process.*

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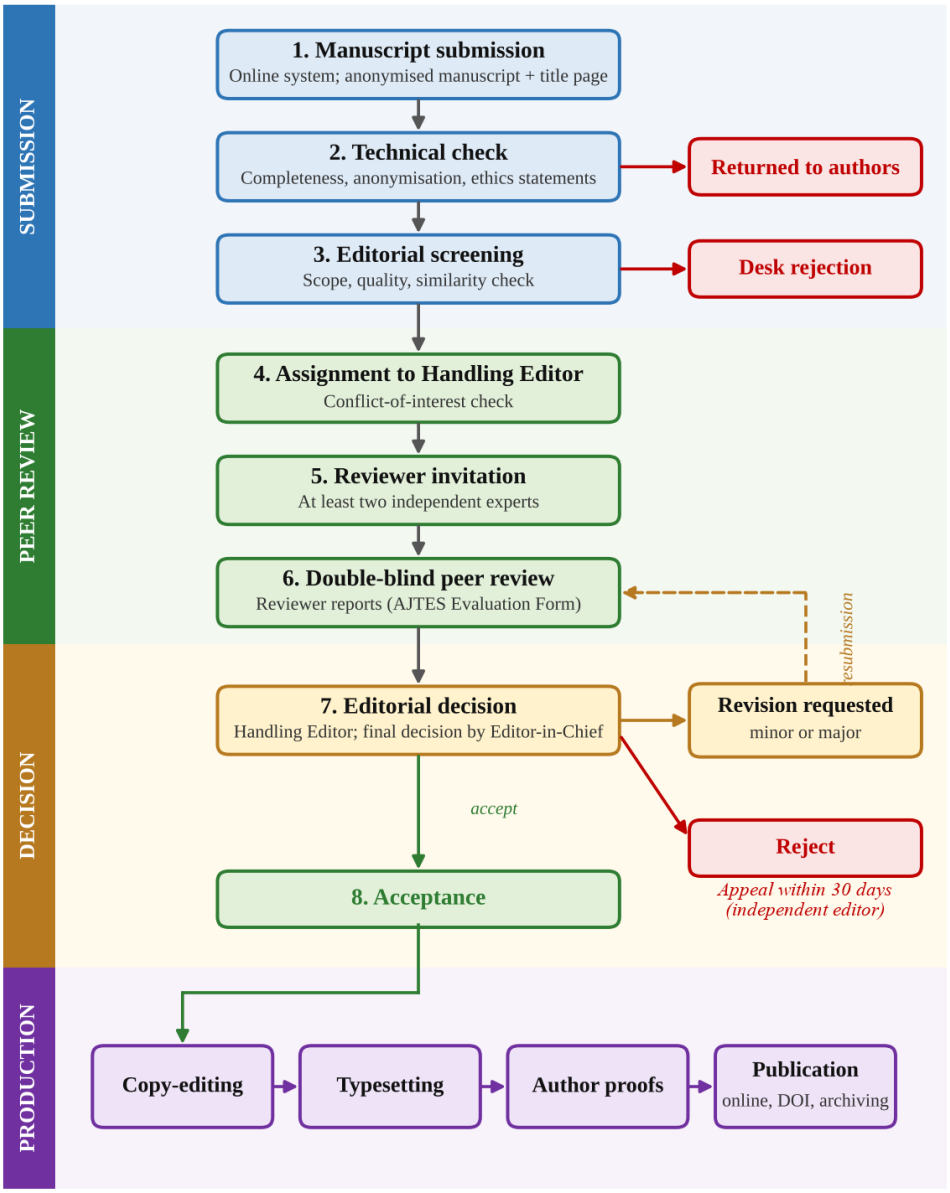


*Figure 1.* Editorial workflow of AJTES. Each step is identified by its number and label; colours indicate the phase only.

## Stages, Responsibilities and Target Times

| No. | Stage | Responsible | Key actions | Target time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Manuscript submission | Corresponding author | Submission through the online system: anonymised manuscript, separate title page, cover letter, AJTES Author Declaration Form, ICMJE Disclosure Forms of all authors, declarations (ethics, consent, funding, competing interests) and reporting-guideline checklist | — |
| 2 | Technical check | Editorial office | Verify completeness, anonymisation, ethics and consent statements, trial registration where applicable, authorship and reporting checklists; return incomplete files. | 3 working days |
| 3 | Editorial screening | Editor-in-Chief | Assess scope, methodological quality and ethical compliance. Check similarity with iThenticate (Crossref Similarity Check) and interpret reports in context; no automatic rejection on a similarity percentage. Desk-reject where warranted. | 14 days |
| 4 | Assignment to Handling Editor | Editor-in-Chief | Assign a subject-qualified Handling Editor with no relevant competing interest; document any recusal. | 3 working days |
| 5 | Reviewer invitation | Handling Editor | Invite at least two independent subject experts; document reviewer selection and disclosures of competing interests. | 7 days |
| 6 | Double-blind peer review | Reviewers | Conduct double-anonymised evaluation using the AJTES Reviewer Evaluation Form; protect confidentiality, including restrictions on AI tools. | 21 days |
| 7 | Editorial decision | Handling Editor; Editor-in-Chief | Consider reviewers' advice (not binding); decide accept, minor/major revision or reject. Final decision by Editor-in-Chief or independent delegated editor if conflicted. | 7 days |
| – | Revision | Authors | Submit tracked changes and a point-by-point response; re-review major revisions when needed. Minor/major revision targets: 30/60 calendar days. | 30 / 60 days |
| 8 | Acceptance | Editor-in-Chief | Issue formal acceptance after editorial checks of authorship, ethics, competing interests and the non-exclusive publishing licence (Author Declaration Form, Part E; CC BY 4.0). | — |
| 9 | Production | Production editor | Copy-edit, typeset, verify references, DOIs, article metadata, disclosures and licence information. | 14 days |
| 10 | Author proofs | Corresponding author | Review proofs for typographical, formatting and factual accuracy; substantive corrections require editorial approval and may require further assessment. | 3 working days |
| 11 | Publication | Editorial office | Publish the Version of Record with DOI and clear CC BY 4.0 licence; deposit metadata with relevant services where eligible and preserve content through appropriate archiving. | — |

**Additional Provisions**

- Editorial independence: manuscripts from the Editor-in-Chief, editors, staff or connected individuals are assigned to an independent editor. The conflicted editor is excluded from reviewer selection, access to confidential reports and the decision; the recusal is documented.
- Appeals and complaints: authors may appeal within 30 calendar days with a reasoned rebuttal. An independent editor reviews the appeal. Complaints involving the Editor-in-Chief are referred to an external adjudicator appointed by the Chair of the Editorial Board.
- Publication ethics: suspected plagiarism, redundant publication, fabrication, image manipulation or other misconduct is assessed fairly under relevant COPE guidance. Similarity scores alone do not establish misconduct.

- Post-publication: corrections, expressions of concern and retractions follow relevant COPE guidance and are linked to the original article with transparent metadata.

Confidentiality and AI: editors and reviewers must not submit confidential manuscript material to external generative-AI platforms. Any approved AI use requires appropriate safeguards, transparency and continued human accountability.

Review categories: Research Articles, Review Articles, Case Reports, Short Reports and Conference Papers undergo external peer review. Editorials, invited contributions, letters and consensus materials may follow a different documented process, disclosed when published.

Records and timelines: retain review reports, correspondence, decisions, conflicts and appeals under the journal retention policy and applicable law. Target times are service goals, not guarantees, and may vary with complexity and reviewer availability.

Editorial consistency: this workflow must be read with the AJTES Peer Review Policy and Process, Author Declaration Form and Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure Policy. Any exceptions are documented in the editorial system.