PUBLISHER POLICY

Thematic Collections and Special Issues Policy

Focused scholarly collections with independent editorial oversight

VERSION	1.2
LAST UPDATED	23 September 2026
PERMANENT WEB VERSION	https://eldranacademic.com/policies/thematic-collections/

1. Purpose and scope

This policy applies to thematic article collections, special issues, guest-edited issues, conference-linked collections and similar grouped content published within an Eldran journal. It applies whether the collection is proposed by an external scholar, editorial board member, institution, conference organiser, partner or the journal itself.

Collection articles remain articles of the parent journal. They are not exempt from the journal's Author Guidelines, Peer Review Policy, Research Integrity Policy, Open Access and Licensing Policy, APC & Waiver Policy, conflicts rules or corrections procedures.

2. Principles

- Scope first: a collection must fit the journal and have a coherent scholarly rationale.
- No fast-track acceptance: participation in a collection does not guarantee review, acceptance or expedited publication.
- Same peer review standard: collection articles receive the same level of independent assessment as comparable regular articles.
- Independent decisions: guest editors cannot decide on their own papers or papers where they have a conflict.
- Oversight: the Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Office retain authority over scope, conflicts, review quality, integrity and publication.
- Transparency: collection leadership, scope, deadlines, fees and any sponsorship are disclosed.
- Quality before volume: collection targets never override peer review or editorial standards.

3. What is an Eldran Thematic Collection?

A Thematic Collection is a set of independently assessed articles organised around a focused research question, method, technology, policy problem, interdisciplinary theme or emerging area. Articles may be invited, openly submitted, or both.

Articles may be published continuously as soon as they are accepted and later displayed together on a collection landing page. Publication does not need to wait for every planned article to be complete.

4. Types of collections

- Open Thematic Collection: a public call for papers open to all eligible authors.

- Invited Collection: submissions are primarily solicited from identified experts, while editorial standards remain unchanged.
- Conference-linked Collection: eligible full manuscripts arise from a conference or workshop but must undergo the journal's normal review and originality requirements.
- Cross-journal Collection: a coordinated theme may accept manuscripts into more than one Eldran journal, with each manuscript reviewed and published by the journal to which it belongs.
- Rapid-response Collection: a time-sensitive theme may use a focused call and prioritised workflow, but may not reduce review or integrity safeguards.

5. Proposal requirements

A proposal should normally include:

- proposed title and concise rationale;
- fit with the journal's aims and scope;
- specific themes, questions or subtopics to be covered;
- why a collection is preferable to ordinary ungrouped submissions;
- names, affiliations, ORCID identifiers where available, expertise and publication records of proposed Guest Editors;
- known conflicts, collaborations or institutional relationships among the proposed editorial team;
- anticipated article types and approximate number of submissions;
- proposed opening and closing dates;
- planned contributor outreach and whether invitations will be used;
- any conference, funder, society, commercial, institutional or other sponsorship relationship;
- any proposed financial support for APCs, awards, promotion or editorial work.

6. Approval and due diligence

A collection is not opened merely because a topic is popular or because a proposer expects a high number of submissions. The journal and Editorial Office should assess the proposal's scholarly rationale, scope, editorial capacity, conflict profile, integrity risk and fit with the journal's publication plan.

Guest Editor identities and credentials should be independently verified using institutional profiles, ORCID records, publication history or other reliable sources. Unverifiable identities, implausible publication records, mass-solicitation proposals, unclear affiliations or unusual submission promises should be investigated before approval.

7. Guest Editor eligibility

A Guest Editor should have demonstrable expertise in the collection topic and sufficient experience to make responsible scholarly judgments. Appropriate qualifications vary by field. A doctorate or equivalent advanced qualification is normally expected for research-led collections, but established professional, technical or policy expertise may be accepted where appropriate to the journal.

The proposed team should collectively provide adequate subject and methodological coverage. Prior reviewing or editorial experience is strongly preferred. A Guest Editor must have a verifiable professional affiliation or scholarly identity and agree to Eldran's editorial, confidentiality, conflict and integrity requirements.

8. Guest Editor responsibilities

- help define and maintain the approved scope;
- suggest or invite contributors without guaranteeing acceptance;
- conduct initial scholarly assessments where assigned;
- identify suitably independent reviewers and disclose conflicts;
- evaluate review reports on their reasoning rather than treating them as votes;
- communicate professionally with authors and the Editorial Office;
- escalate suspected misconduct, manipulation or conflicts immediately;
- avoid coercive citation and self-promotional editorial practices;
- meet reasonable deadlines and maintain confidential records;
- cooperate with audits, reassignment or additional review requested by the Editor-in-Chief or publisher.

9. Editor-in-Chief and publisher oversight

The Editor-in-Chief retains ultimate journal-level responsibility for the integrity of collection content and may approve, reject, amend, pause or close a collection. The Editor-in-Chief may reassign any manuscript, require extra reviewers, replace a Guest Editor, audit reviewer selections or review reports, and intervene when policy compliance is uncertain.

The Editorial Office may perform identity verification, conflict checks, reviewer-quality checks, integrity screening and workflow audits. Publisher intervention should protect policy, research integrity and due process without directing scholarly outcomes for commercial reasons.

10. Calls for papers and invitations

A public call should clearly state the collection title, parent journal, scope, eligible article types, submission route, Guest Editors, opening/closing dates, peer review model, open-access licence, APC information and links to relevant policies.

Invitations must not imply that a manuscript has been pre-approved. Recommended language should make clear that all submissions are subject to editorial assessment and peer review under the journal's normal standards.

Mass unsolicited emails, misleading urgency, unverified claims of indexing, fabricated metrics, guaranteed acceptance language and deceptive use of institutional names are prohibited.

11. Submissions and author eligibility

Any eligible researcher may submit to an open collection if the manuscript fits the scope. Invited authors receive no preferential review. Authors may also choose to submit relevant work as a regular journal article where the submission system permits.

A manuscript that does not fit the collection but fits the parent journal may, with the author's agreement, be considered outside the collection. Transfer does not imply acceptance.

12. Peer review requirements

Collection manuscripts follow the journal's normal double-anonymous peer review model and article-type requirements. Full-length externally reviewed scholarly articles ordinarily require at least two independent reviewers before acceptance.

Guest Editors may identify reviewers but must not create reviewer panels dominated by close collaborators, one institution, one research group or a recurring closed network. Reviewer identity and expertise should be verified independently.

The journal may add an independent handling editor or reviewer where the topic is sensitive, the Guest Editor has a conflict, reviewer reports are weak or unusually rapid, or patterns suggest compromised review.

13. Conflicts of interest and endogeny

Collection leadership often draws on a concentrated research community, so conflicts require active management. Guest Editors must disclose personal, professional, supervisory, financial, institutional and collaborative relationships that could reasonably affect judgment.

Articles authored by Guest Editors and their close colleagues should form only a small minority of the collection. The Editorial Office may impose a numerical cap or require wider contributor outreach where a collection is becoming overly concentrated within one editorial network, institution or research group.

14. Guest Editor and close-colleague submissions

Independent handling required A Guest Editor must have no access to reviewer selection, confidential reviews or the decision on a manuscript that they authored or for which they have a material conflict. Such manuscripts must be assigned to an independent editor selected by the journal or Editor-in-Chief.

The same principle applies to manuscripts from a Guest Editor's current supervisees, close collaborators, immediate institutional team or others where impartiality could reasonably be questioned.

15. Research integrity and review manipulation

Guest-edited collections can present elevated risks of coordinated submission, paper-mill activity, fabricated reviewer identities, reciprocal reviewing, citation cartels and other forms of process manipulation. Eldran therefore applies enhanced scrutiny where patterns warrant it.

- suspicious clusters of authors, reviewers, email domains or institutions;
- unusually rapid reviews with little substantive analysis;
- repeated use of the same reviewer network across manuscripts;
- reviewer identities that cannot be independently verified;
- similar wording across supposedly independent reviews;
- unusual citation requests concentrated on the collection editors, journal or a closed group;
- shared data, images, templates or textual patterns suggestive of coordinated fabrication.

Where credible concerns arise, Eldran may pause individual manuscripts or the entire collection while investigating. A collection may be closed and affected articles or manuscripts reassessed if the review process is compromised.

16. APCs, waivers and financial independence

Collection articles are subject to the same published APC and waiver framework as comparable articles in the parent journal unless an alternative funding arrangement is disclosed publicly.

Guest Editors must not promise fee waivers unless authorised, collect APCs personally, receive commissions based on accepted article counts, or use financial incentives to influence scholarly decisions. Any honorarium or support for Guest Editors must be independent of the number of accepted manuscripts.

17. Collection timelines and publication model

Each collection should have an opening date and a planned closing date. Dates may be extended when there is a genuine scholarly or operational reason, but extensions should not be used simply to accumulate volume.

Accepted articles may be published continuously rather than held until the collection closes. Closing a collection stops normal new submissions to the collection but does not prevent completion of manuscripts already under review.

18. Article ownership, licences and indexing

Collection articles remain part of the parent journal and use the same copyright, open-access licence, DOI practice, metadata standards, corrections policy and repository permissions as other articles in that journal.

A collection does not create a separate journal, impact factor, CiteScore or indexing status. Promotional material must not imply that collection participation confers an indexing or metric benefit that has not been independently established.

19. Promotion and claims

Promotion should focus on the scholarly theme, confirmed Guest Editors, submission information and published content. Images must be original, commissioned, generated for Eldran or appropriately licensed.

Testimonials, citation claims, readership claims, download counts and other metrics may be used only when genuine and accurately described. Names, photographs and institutional affiliations of Guest Editors or contributors require appropriate authority or consent.

20. Closing, suspending or cancelling a collection

Eldran may suspend or cancel a collection for insufficient editorial capacity, unresolved conflicts, weak scope, low-quality solicitation, research-integrity concerns, compromised peer review, Guest Editor non-performance, legal risk or other reasons that threaten publication standards.

If a collection is closed early, manuscripts already submitted should be handled fairly. Depending on the circumstances, they may continue under an independent editor, be transferred to the journal's regular workflow with author agreement, or receive an editorial decision based on the record.

21. Post-publication responsibilities

Published collection articles remain subject to ordinary post-publication review, corrections, expressions of concern and retractions. A problem in one article does not automatically invalidate the entire collection, but evidence of systematic manipulation may justify a broader audit.

22. Records and audit

The Editorial Office should retain the approved proposal, Guest Editor declarations, reviewer records, conflicts, decisions and relevant correspondence. Collections may be audited during or after publication for reviewer quality, turnaround patterns, editor-authored content, conflict concentration and integrity indicators.

23. External guidance

These resources guide Eldran's collection procedures. Their inclusion does not state that Eldran is a member, indexed publication, certified publisher or approved participant in the organisations or services named.

- COPE: Best practices for guest edited collections: https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/article-collections-best-practice.pdf
- COPE DOI for the guest-edited collections discussion document: https://doi.org/10.24318/7cKLAia0
- Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing: https://doaj.org/apply/transparency/
- Committee on Publication Ethics: https://publicationethics.org/

- COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers: https://members.publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-v2_0.pdf
- ORCID: https://orcid.org/
- Crossref: https://www.crossref.org/
- Crossref DOI resolver: https://doi.org/

24. Related policies

These pages provide the related publisher-level requirements and should be read together with this document where their subject matter applies.

- Peer Review Policy: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/peer-review/
- How We Publish and Editorial Independence: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/how-we-publish/
- Open Access and Licensing Policy: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/open-access/
- Research Integrity: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/research-integrity/
- APCs and Waivers: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/apcs-and-waivers/
- Complaints and Appeals: https://eldranacademic.com/policies/complaints-and-appeals/

Appendix A. Collection proposal checklist

Item	Required information
Collection title	Clear, specific and not misleading.
Scholarly rationale	Explains why the topic warrants a focused collection.
Journal fit	Shows alignment with the parent journal aims and scope.
Guest Editors	Names, affiliations, ORCID/profile links and expertise provided.
Conflict review	Collaborations, institutional concentration and financial interests disclosed.
Article types	Eligible manuscript categories defined.
Contributor plan	Open call, invitations or mixed approach explained.
Timeline	Opening date, submission deadline and expected closing date proposed.
Peer review capacity	Sufficient independent reviewer pool is reasonably available.
APC communication	Fees and waiver arrangements are accurate and transparent.
Sponsorship	Any institutional, conference, society, funder or commercial support disclosed.
Integrity risks	Known risks and mitigation steps identified.
Promotion	Planned outreach avoids misleading metrics or guaranteed-acceptance language.
Oversight	Editor-in-Chief or independent senior editor responsible for escalation is identified.

Appendix B. Guest Editor declaration

Before appointment, each Guest Editor should confirm the following in writing:

- I have disclosed relationships and interests that could affect my editorial judgment.
- I will not promise acceptance, expedited acceptance, indexing, citations or other outcomes to potential authors.

- I will apply the parent journal's peer review, ethics, confidentiality and research-integrity policies.
- I will not handle my own manuscript or a manuscript where I have a material conflict.
- I will not request unnecessary citations to my work, the collection, the journal or colleagues.
- I will protect manuscript and reviewer confidentiality.
- I will not upload confidential manuscripts or reviews to unapproved public AI systems.
- I will cooperate with independent oversight, audits, reviewer replacement and integrity investigations.
- I understand that the Editor-in-Chief and Eldran Academic Press may reassign manuscripts, replace editors, suspend the collection or close it if publication standards are at risk.

CONTACT

Eldran Academic Press - editorial@eldranacademic.com - https://eldranacademic.com