C|O|P|E

Member Research

2019

2019 MEMBER RESEARCH

COPE's purpose is to improve publication of research through sharing and discussing best practice with our community of editors, publishers and those involved in publication ethics. We are committed to supporting members with practical guidance and bring together all involved in publication ethics in current debates to give members a global understanding of emerging issues.

Our **strategic plan for 2020-2023** has been developed using the member research conducted in 2019, **COPE** research undertaken among arts, humanities, and social sciences disciplines (656 responses) and, more widely, emerging trends in publication ethics through an environmental scan. An independent market research consultancy, **Maverick Publishing Specialists,** conducted the online research sent to all members and some non-members. The survey was sent to approximately 12,000 **COPE** members, as well as non-members and 299 responses were received (2.5% response rate). The 2015 **COPE** research among members, sent to just over 10,000 members with a 7% response rate, brings some context to the 2019 results, where relevant.

In this report we summarise particular issues from the 2019 research, bringing in reference to the arts, humanities, and social sciences research. We have used the feedback from our members to help develop our **2020-2023 strategic plan.**
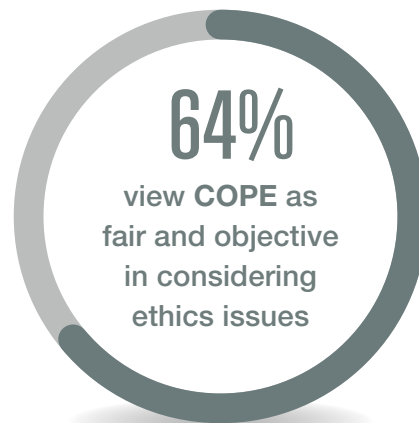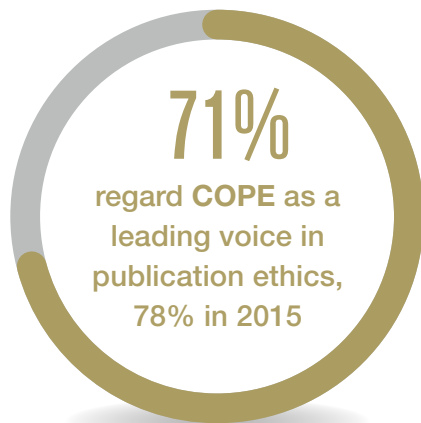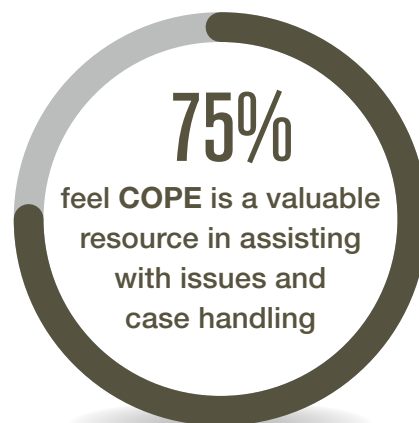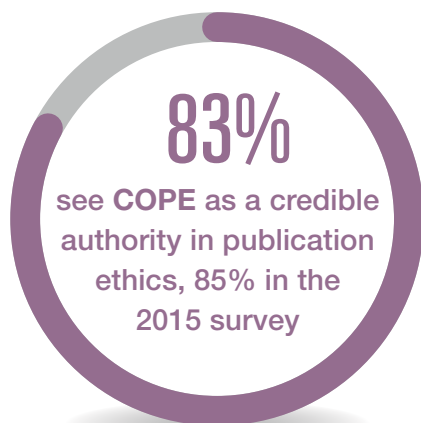
We have listened to our members and the wider community to develop our plans for 2020-2023. We intend to bring more resources and increase engagement and awareness of COPE across all disciplines and geographical areas, while continuing to listen to the community in the discussion of emerging issues. Consistent with your input and feedback, we are also moving forward with expanding membership to include universities.

Deborah Poff
Chair

C O P E

Overall performance

COPE is viewed positively by the majority of those who responded to the survey.

83%
see **COPE** as a credible authority in publication ethics, 85% in the 2015 survey

75%
feel **COPE** is a valuable resource in assisting with issues and case handling

71%
regard **COPE** as a leading voice in publication ethics, 78% in 2015

64%
view **COPE** as fair and objective in considering ethics issues

COPE is perceived to be slightly less effective in being a leading voice in publication ethics and can be slow to take a leadership position in certain areas.

"Although the resources are excellent, as new issues emerge, COPE is not as quick to lead the conversation."
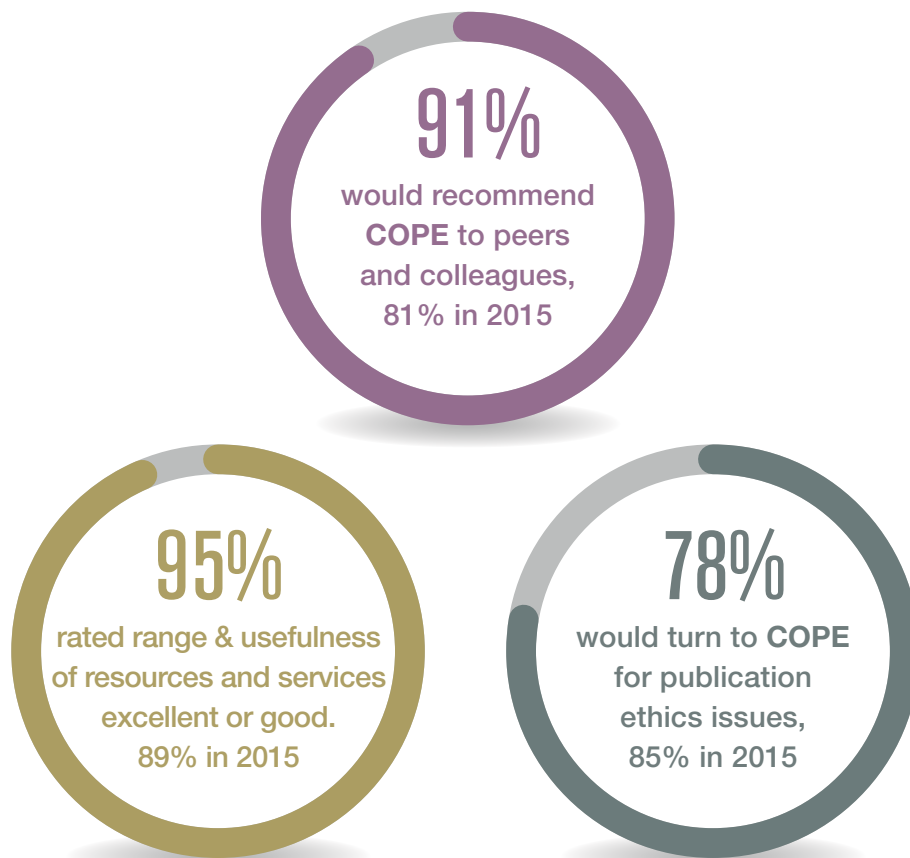
WORKING TOWARDS...

• We are working on our processes and procedures to allow **COPE** to respond more quickly to external drivers.

• We will annually report back to our members on emerging trends in publication ethics.

Use of COPE

COPE is highly recommended by respondents, and is used in conjunction with in-house expertise when dealing with particular issues.

91%
would recommend **COPE** to peers and colleagues, 81% in 2015

95%
rated range & usefulness of resources and services excellent or good. 89% in 2015

78%
would turn to **COPE** for publication ethics issues, 85% in 2015

"I use COPE resources at least once a month. I can almost always find what I'm looking for. COPE seems to look broadly at the landscape of publication ethics so they are on top of things."

WORKING TOWARDS...

• We will extend the range of our resources to meet the needs of all members, irrespective of discipline, and develop new resources.

C|O|P|E

Trends in publication ethics

Publication ethics issues are increasingly important to the majority of the respondents:

96%

feel publication ethics is an increasingly important subject, 87% in 2015

89%

feel that ethics issues are becoming increasingly complex, 87% in 2015

88%

feel research ethics is an increasingly important subject in their field, 82% in 2015

Issues of importance in publication ethics today (multiple choice):

49%

lack of education in publication ethics among authors/reviewers

45%

lack of training and education in research ethics among authors/reviewers

42%

assessing contribution and co-authorship claims (or just generally authorship issues)
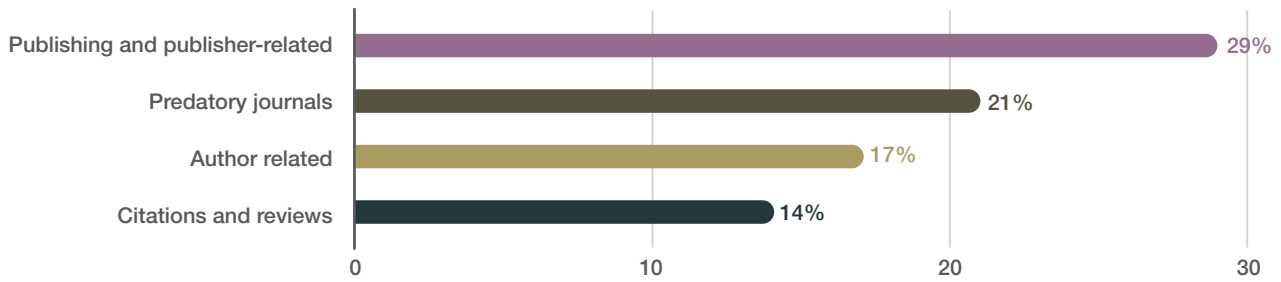
38%

increase in plagiarism

35%

lack of peer reviewers

The five issues with most widespread importance in publication ethics are similar to those reported in 2015.
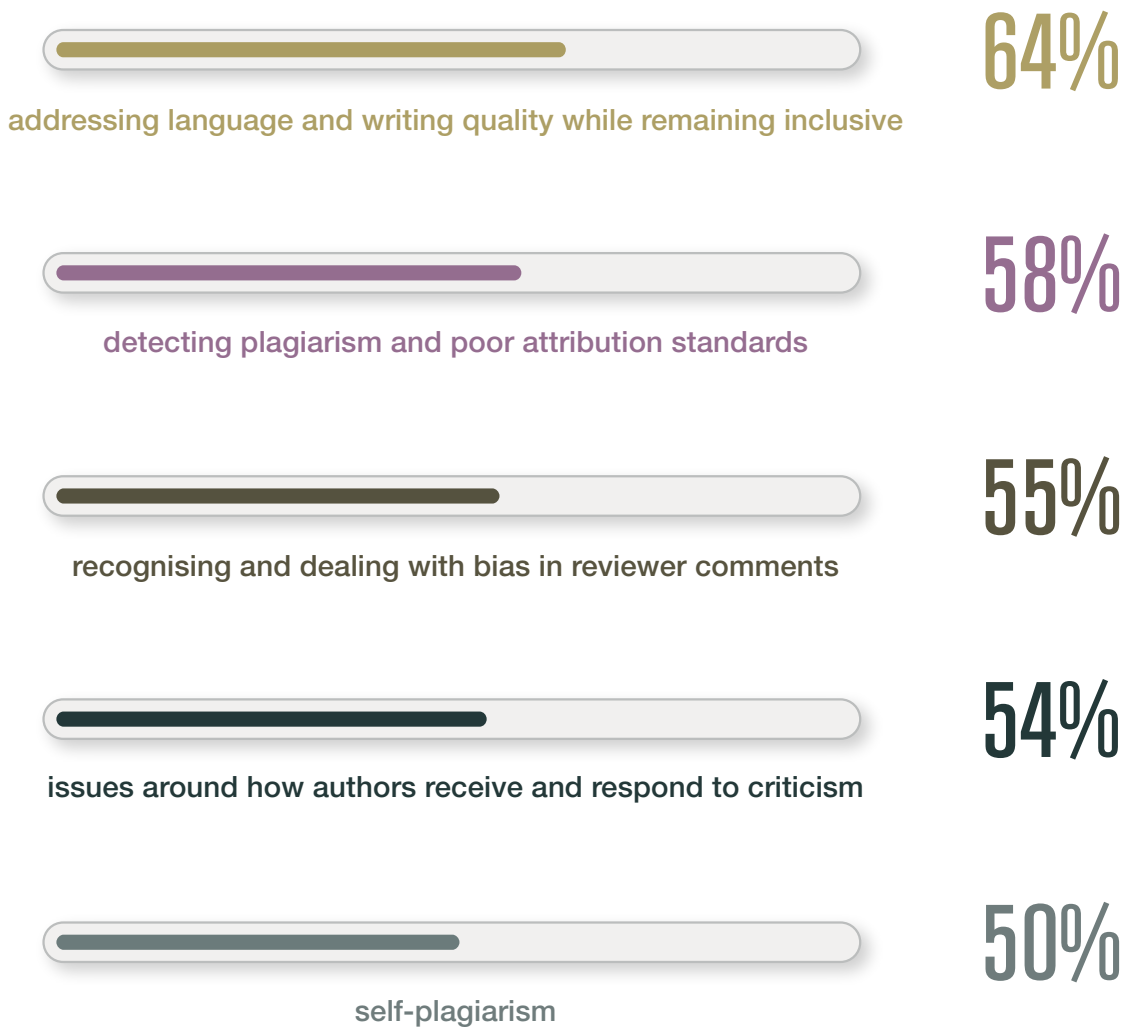
COPE

Trends in publication ethics

What other issues are important in publication ethics? (free text):

Publishing and publisher-related — **29%**
Predatory journals — **21%**
Author related — **17%**
Citations and reviews — **14%**

0   10   20   30

'Plagiarism detection software is widely misused and misunderstood by journal editors'

'Balancing increasing pressure to cut staff support/costs while also seeing increasing pressure to deal with complex ethics cases quickly and fairly.'

'Increasing pressure on authors to publish'

73 responses to this question on a wide variety of topics reflects the increasing complexity of the issues.

Trends in publication ethics

COPE research among arts, humanities and social sciences editors in 2019 showed the top 5 publishing ethics challenges faced by today's journal editors to be:

64% addressing language and writing quality while remaining inclusive

58% detecting plagiarism and poor attribution standards

55% recognising and dealing with bias in reviewer comments

54% issues around how authors receive and respond to criticism

50% self-plagiarism

Trends in publication ethics

Important emerging concerns and issues (multiple choice)**:**

77%
growth in
predatory journals

53%
alternate or redundant
routes of publication
(eg, preprints)

38%
use of altmetrics and other
forms of assessment

36%
data sharing

34%
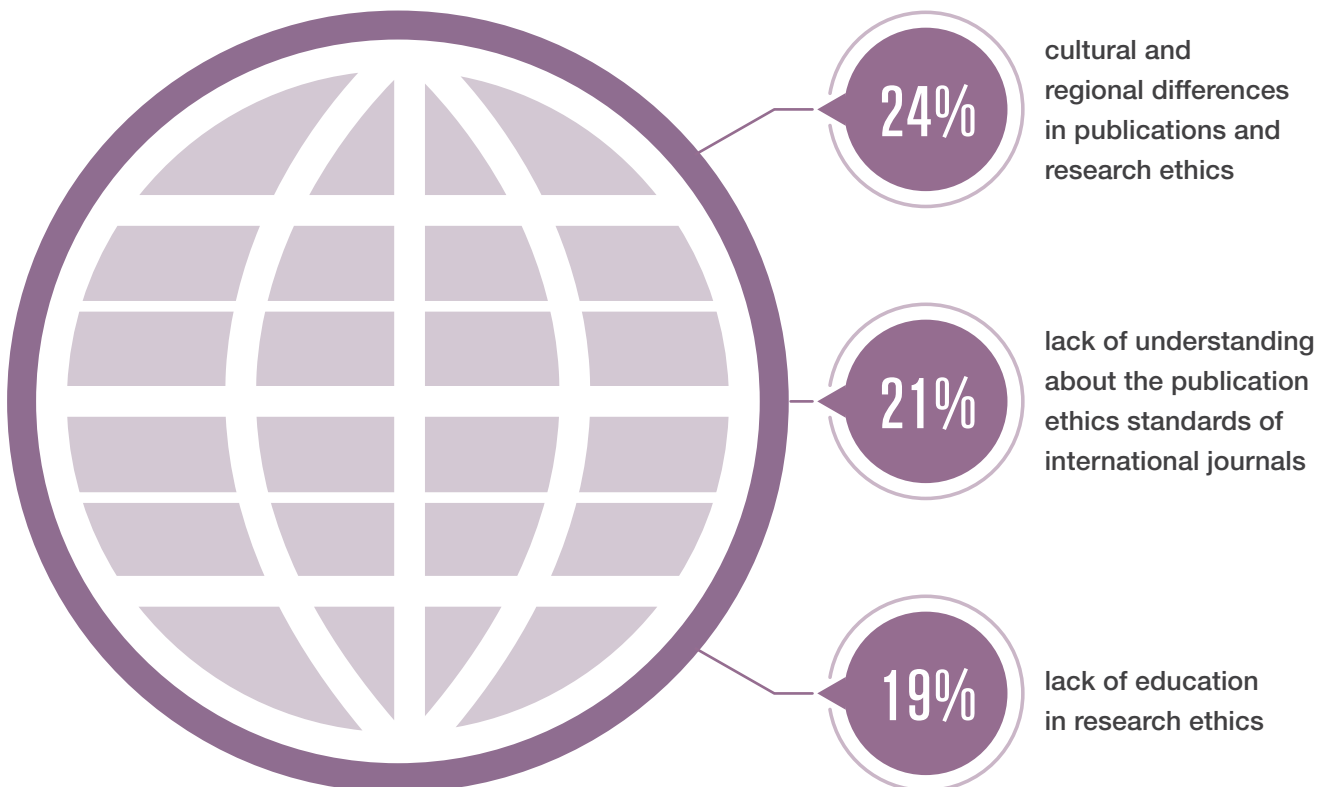social collaborative
networks and other forms
of sharing content

31%
PlanS

WORKING TOWARDS...

- We will increase and extend awareness of **COPE** across disciplines, sectors and geographical areas.
- We will work on increasing the range of guidance across disciplines, sectors and geographical areas.
- We will be more responsive to publication ethics issues as they arise.

Global ethical issues

The single most challenging global issue in publication ethics (multiple choice):

24% cultural and regional differences in publications and research ethics

21% lack of understanding about the publication ethics standards of international journals

19% lack of education in research ethics

As research productivity increases internationally, the cultural differences gain even more importance.

"There is still a significant difference in the level of understanding and application of research and publication ethics between regions and countries."

WORKING TOWARDS...

• We are working on producing resources that will support and advise journal editors and publishers, and increase representation on COPE Council, from all regions with specific focus on China, South Asia and South America.

Educational resources

How important do respondents think it is for **COPE** to provide education about publication ethics via the following initiatives?

63%
educating reviewers and authors

62%
working with universities and faculty to include ethics in their curricula

60%
providing educational resources for students and researchers

59%
working with publishers and journals to include ethical issues in author guidelines

Which **ONE** of the following do respondents think would be the most effective format for providing education?

29.7%
19.6%
18.6%
14.2%
7.8%
6.4%
3.7%
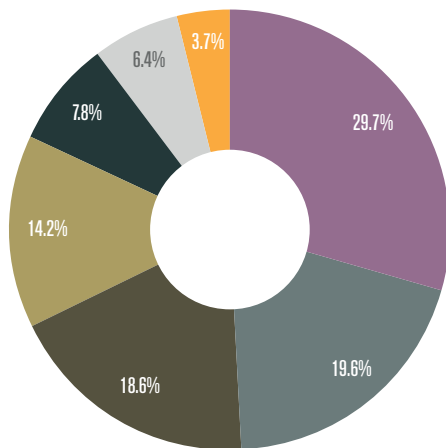
KEY

- Online eLearning courses
- Providing resources for students in universities
- Symposia or workshops (in person)
- Webinars
- Printed resources
- Online discussion forums
- Podcasts

Base = 296

*"**COPE** has been my "go to" place to discuss and learn about publication ethics. Nothing else in my graduate training or professional work prepared me for the challenges I have met as editor in chief."*

C O P E

Educational resources

How important is **COPE's** role in collaborating with universities and institutions on publication ethics issues? 87% responded to this positively.
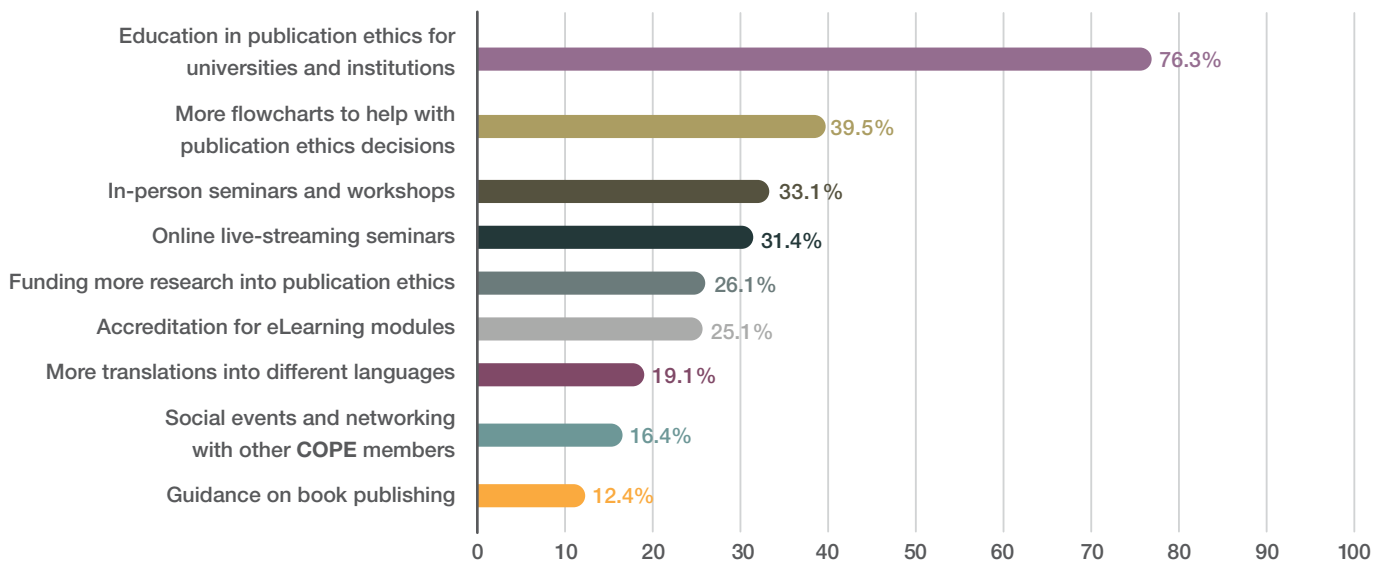

3%

10%

87%

KEY
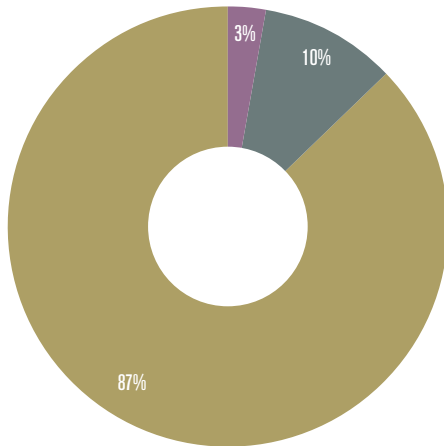
- Number of Promoters
- Number of Detractors
- Number of Neutrals

Base = 294

Which services would respondents like **COPE** to provide in future?

(multiple choice, up to 3 options)

Education in publication ethics for universities and institutions	76.3%
More flowcharts to help with publication ethics decisions	39.5%
In-person seminars and workshops	33.1%
Online live-streaming seminars	31.4%
Funding more research into publication ethics	26.1%
Accreditation for eLearning modules	25.1%
More translations into different languages	19.1%
Social events and networking with other **COPE** members	16.4%
Guidance on book publishing	12.4%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
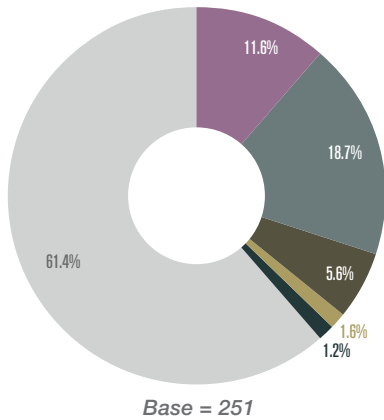
Base = 299

WORKING TOWARDS...

- We will develop educational resources that are used by universities.
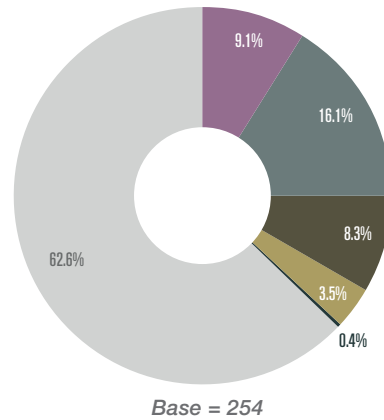- We will extend our range of resources to meet the needs of all members.

Overall satisfaction measures – COPE Services

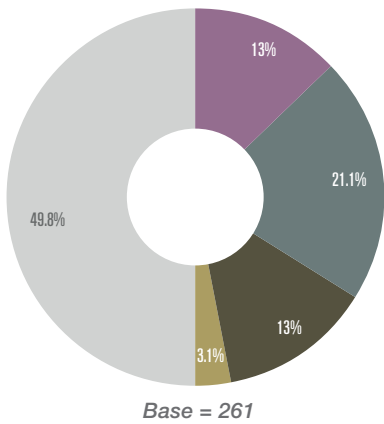How respondents rate their experience of the following:
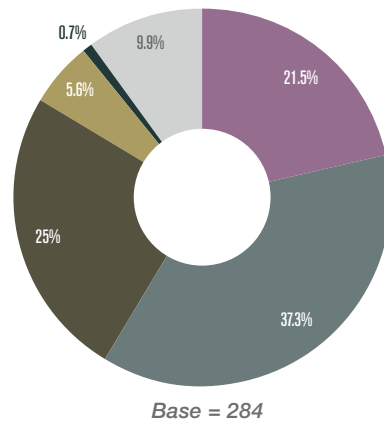
Attended a Seminar or Workshop

11.6%
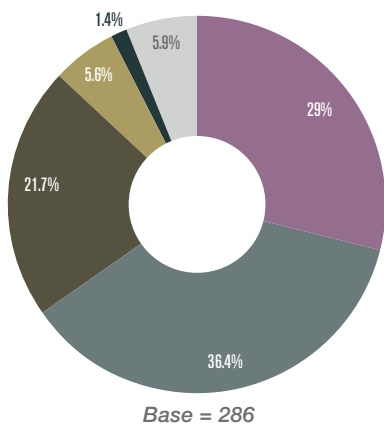18.7%
5.6%
1.6%
1.2%
61.4%

Base = 251

eLearning

9.1%
16.1%
8.3%
3.5%
0.4%
62.6%

Base = 254

Forum (to discuss cases)

13%
21.1%
13%
3.1%
49.8%

Base = 261

Newsletter

0.7%
9.9%
21.5%
5.6%
25%
37.3%

Base = 284

Website

1.4%
5.9%
29%
5.6%
21.7%
36.4%

Base = 286

KEY

- ● Excellent
- ● Very Good
- ● Good
- ● Fair
- ● Poor
- ● Not Applicable
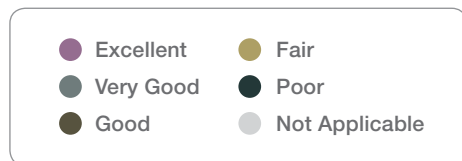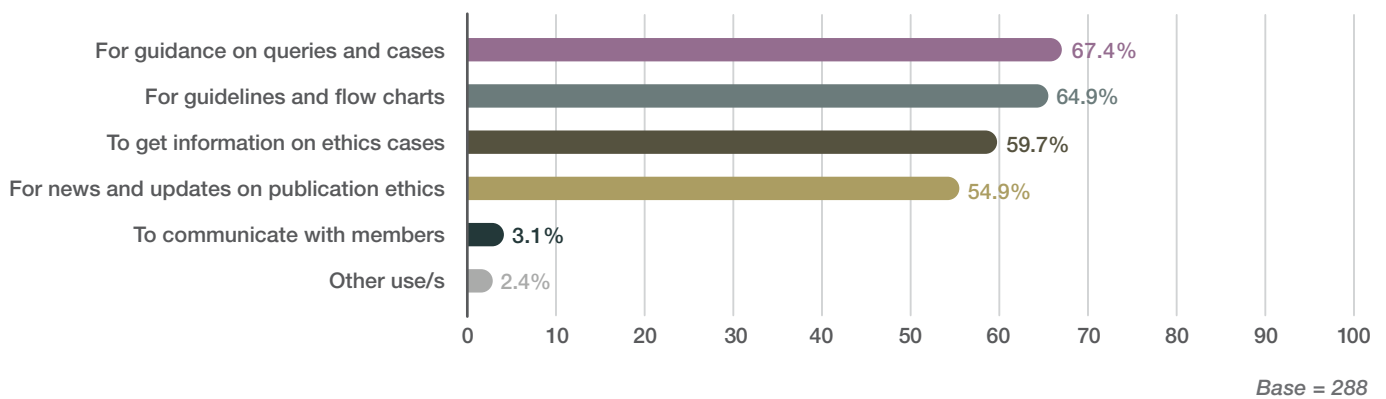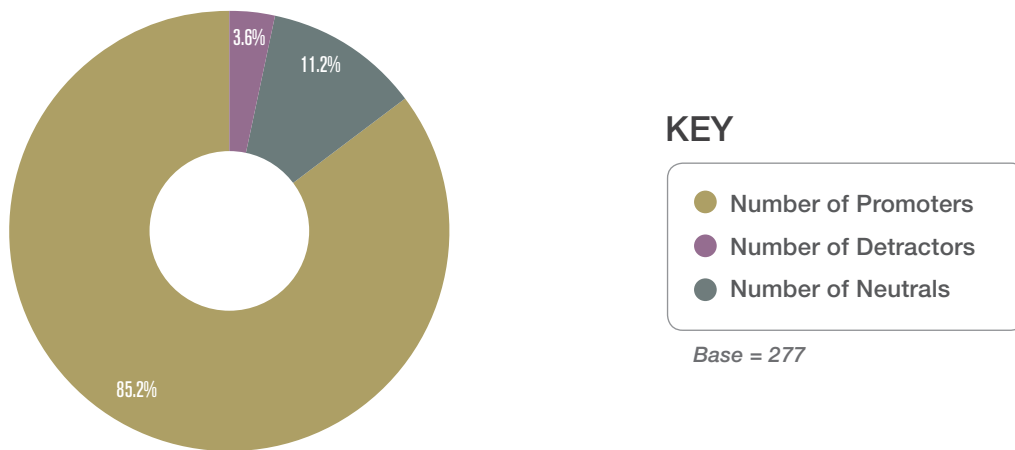
Total Base = 1336

COPE website and newsletter

Following our 2015 research we undertook a website project to understand the needs and improve usability of the **COPE** website. In this survey 29% of respondents consider the website excellent, compared to 15% in 2015.

How do respondents use the **COPE** website?

For guidance on queries and cases	67.4%
For guidelines and flow charts	64.9%
To get information on ethics cases	59.7%
For news and updates on publication ethics	54.9%
To communicate with members	3.1%
Other use/s	2.4%

Base = 288

How useful do respondents find the **COPE** website?

85.2%
3.6%
11.2%

KEY

- Number of Promoters
- Number of Detractors
- Number of Neutrals

Base = 277

"I think there is still a lot of room for improvement for the searchability and findability of the information on the website."

WORKING TOWARDS...

- We have an ongoing programme of website development to continually improve usability and findability of resources.

COPE website and newsletter

Our 2015 research highlighted the need to increase relevance to under-represented groups and improve navigation. Digest was redesigned with better signposting and a focus on issues that matter most to our readers. 22% say the newsletter is excellent, compared to 16% in 2015.

Do respondents read the **COPE** Digest newsletter, if so, why?

88%
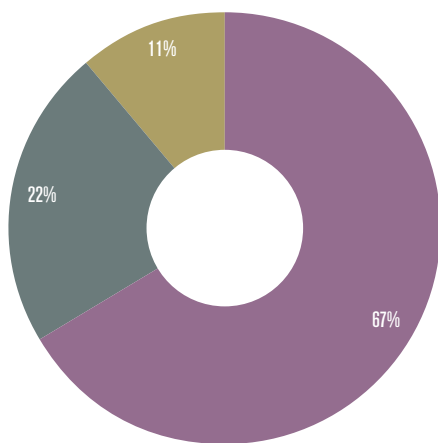read the newsletter

69%
read it to keep up to date on publication ethics

61%
read it to learn about ethics cases

44%
read it to learn about **COPE** activities

How often would respondents like to receive **COPE** Digest?

11%

22%

67%

KEY

- Monthly
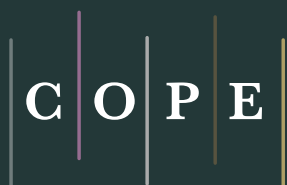- Continuous online updating
- Weekly

Base = 258

WORKING TOWARDS...

- We continue to send out the **COPE** Digest newsletter monthly and highlight continuous online updating on social media and the website.

COPE strategic plan 2020-2023

https://publicationethics.org/
strategicplan2020-2023

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publicationethics.org

https://publicationethics.org/contact-us

PROMOTING INTEGRITY IN SCHOLARLY
RESEARCH AND ITS PUBLICATION