EDITORIAL BOARD APPOINTMENT AGREEMENT

1. Parties and Appointment Details

This Editorial Board Appointment Agreement ("Agreement") is made between the Journal of Algebra Combinatorics Discrete Structures and Applications ("the Journal") and the individual identified below ("the Appointee").

Appointee's Full Name: _____
Academic Title: _____
Institution and Department: _____
Professional Email: _____
Appointee's ORCID iD: _____
Editorial Role: [Editor-in-Chief / Associate Editor / Section Editor / Managing Editor / Production Editor]
Assigned Subject Area: _____
Appointment Term Dates: From: ____-__-__ To: ____-__-__ (Fixed three-year term)
Appointing Authority: Editor-in-Chief (appointed by the EiC following evaluation by the Associate Editors and the EiC)

The Appointee accepts the appointment subject to the terms of this Agreement, the Journal's published editorial policies, and international publication ethics guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

2. Purpose and Nature of the Appointment

2.1. Defines the Appointee's professional responsibilities, expected contributions, ethical obligations, confidentiality requirements, conflict-of-interest duties, and terms of appointment.

2.2. Dedicated to maintaining the Journal's scholarly quality, editorial independence, rigorous peer-review standards, publication ethics, and sustainable scholarly development.

2.3. Honorary academic service: Unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing, this appointment is an honorary academic service and does not establish an employment relationship, legal representation authority, or salary entitlement.

3. Appointment Term and Renewal

3.1. The initial appointment is for a fixed term of three (3) years, commencing on the start date and concluding on the end date specified in Section 1.

3.2. Renewal is not automatic. Prior to term conclusion, the Journal evaluates the Appointee's contributions, editorial responsiveness, adherence to published editorial policies, and compliance with publication ethics requirements.

3.3. Successive Multi-Term Renewals: Renewal is not limited to a single term. Subject to the continuing disciplinary and editorial needs of the Journal and a positive active performance review of the Appointee, the appointment may be renewed for successive three-year terms (multiple consecutive terms) by mutual written agreement.

3.4. Expiry of the appointment does not affect surviving obligations, including confidentiality, data protection requirements, and research integrity duties.

4. Role and Scope of Responsibilities

The Appointee's specific responsibilities depend on the editorial role designated in Section 1:

4.1. Editor-in-Chief (EiC)

- Holds overall scholarly and ethical responsibility for editorial direction, journal policies, and final publication decisions.
- Initial OJS Intake & Editorial Screening: Under OJS workflow, the EiC initially receives submissions as Journal Editor and conducts formal Editorial Screening (assessing scope, methodological suitability, novelty, and plagiarism check as defined in the Peer Review Policy).
- Editorial Assignment: Assigns qualified submissions passing initial screening to the appropriate Section Editor according to subject expertise.
- Supervises the editorial board, oversees conflict-of-interest disclosures, appeals, and research integrity investigations.

4.2. Associate Editors

- Assist the Editor-in-Chief in editorial governance, strategic development, and editorial board member evaluations.
- Editorial Screening Delegation: When formally authorized by the Editor-in-Chief, the three Associate Editors conduct initial editorial screening.
- Independent Responsibility & Decision in CoI Cases: In cases where the Editor-in-Chief has a conflict of interest regarding a submission (or upon formal delegation), an authorized independent Associate Editor independently assumes editorial responsibility and renders the final editorial decision.
- Participate in editorial evaluations, complex case assessments, and research integrity reviews as delegated.

4.3. Section Editors

- Manage peer-review workflows for manuscripts assigned by the EiC following successful Editorial Screening.
- External Reviewer Mandate & Oversight: Select and invite qualified, independent expert reviewers external to the Editorial Board (obtaining at least two independent external reports prior to a regular final decision); ensure review requests are not transferred to colleagues without prior editorial permission and monitor reviewer performance.
- Recommendation Only: Editorial recommendations (Accept, Revisions, Reject) submitted via OJS are recommendations only, subject to the formal approval of the Editor-in-Chief (or authorized independent decision-making Associate Editor in CoI cases), and do not constitute a final decision on their own.
- Promptly report potential conflicts of interest, delays, or publication ethics concerns to the Editor-in-Chief.

4.4. Managing Editor

- Coordinates administrative and operational aspects of OJS workflow, author/reviewer communications, and production scheduling.
- Monitors turnaround timelines and maintains official records. Administrative coordination does not confer final scholarly decision authority.

4.5. Production Editor

- Post-Acceptance Oversight: Assumes operational responsibility for manuscripts following formal scholarly acceptance by the Editor-in-Chief.
- Copyediting Stage Management: Oversees the copyediting workflow in OJS; ensures grammatical accuracy, typographical precision, mathematical typesetting integrity (LaTeX notation, formulas, numbering), and compliance with the Journal's house style and author guidelines.
- Author Proofs & Typographical Queries: Coordinates proofreading with corresponding authors; addresses queries regarding metadata, references, Crossref DOIs, and ORCID iDs; ensures only authorized typographical corrections are applied without altering accepted scientific content.
- Galley Production & Pre-Publication QA: Oversees final publication galley production (PDF layout, volume/issue pagination, Crossmark metadata); conducts final pre-publication quality assurance prior to issue publication.

Administrative & Technical Scope: Production and copyediting coordination is operational; it does not confer authority to reverse, alter, or make substantive scholarly publication decisions.

5. Professional Conduct and Editorial Standards

The Appointee agrees to perform all editorial functions fairly, impartially, diligently, and in strict accordance with the Journal's published guidelines, the COPE Core Practices, the COPE Short Guide to Ethical Editing, and the COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers.

- Objective Assessment: Decisions to accept or reject a manuscript must be based strictly on its scholarly importance, originality, mathematical correctness, clarity, and relevance to the Journal's remit, without bias regarding author nationality, institution, gender, or personal beliefs.
- Anti-Coercive Citations: Zero tolerance for coercive citation. Never require authors to cite work by the Appointee or the Journal without clear, legitimate scholarly justification.
- No Exploitation of Confidential Data: Refrain from using unpublished manuscript content or confidential editorial data for personal, academic, or financial advantage.
- Prohibition of Undercover/Anonymous Board Reviews: In accordance with COPE guidelines and the Journal's external reviewer mandate, if an editor decides to personally evaluate an assigned manuscript, they must do so transparently on the editorial record and not under the guise of an anonymous additional referee. Editorial Board members shall under no circumstances submit review reports disguised as anonymous external reviewers.

6. Expected Contributions and Communication

6.1. Active Scholarly Contributions: The Appointee is expected to undertake substantive editorial assignments appropriate to their appointed tier and expertise, including:

- Expected Volume & Quality of Reviews/Decisions: Fulfil the expected annual number and quality of manuscript reviews, evaluations, and reasoned editorial recommendations/decisions (commensurate with submission flow and editorial tier) in a timely and thorough manner.
- Identifying and inviting qualified peer reviewers, and actively recruiting competent new reviewers to the Journal's reviewer database.
- Guest editing or advising on approved special issues, themed collections, or topical symposia.
- Contributing occasional scholarly commentaries, perspectives, or editorial articles in their specialized domain.
- Actively participating in editorial board meetings, consultations, and strategic journal development initiatives.

6.2. Timely Communication: Acknowledge editorial assignments within 5 working days and notify the EiC promptly in case of illness, leave, or sabbatical.

6.3. Unresponsiveness & Sanction: Repeated failure to respond to editorial communications, persistent inactivity, or unexcused delays may trigger a formal review and early termination of appointment under Section 11 (Clause 11.3).

7. Conflict-of-Interest (CoI) Disclosure

7.1. Mandatory Comprehensive Disclosure: The Appointee must disclose all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest prior to appointment and update disclosures throughout the term (see Appendix A). Disclosures must include:

- Institutional affiliations, academic employment, or commercial consultancy.
- Recent co-authorship or active research collaborations with authors within the preceding 3-5 years.
- Direct mentor-student, supervisory, or immediate personal/familial relationships.
- Financial, commercial, patent, or competing academic interests.
- Other professional commitments and roles with other scholarly journals, book series, and publishing scientific societies/associations (including membership on publication oversight committees).

7.2. Recusal & Mandatory OJS Audit Logging: An editor with a conflict of interest cannot participate in initial editorial screening, reviewer selection, evaluation of referee reports, editorial deliberations, recommendations, or final publication decisions regarding that submission. If an editor identifies a conflict after accepting an assignment, they must immediately report it and recuse themselves. All CoI disclosures, assignment acceptances, rejections, recusals, and reassignments are formally logged and audited in the Journal's editorial management system (OJS).

8. Multiple Editorial Appointments and Competing Commitments

8.1. Scope & Competing Content: Serving on multiple editorial boards of journals with similar aims and scope competing for the same content carries inherent risks of conflicts of interest or conflicts of roles, commitments, and loyalties.

8.2. Prohibition on Competing Decision Authority: An editor may not simultaneously hold final decision-making authority over editorial content, policy, or strategy at two or more journals that directly compete for the same submissions.

8.3. Prohibition on Competing Guest Editorships: An editor shall not accept a guest editor invitation from a competing journal for a scholarly initiative, thematic collection, or special issue that could legitimately be published in this Journal.

8.4. Prevention of Field Monopolization: An editor shall not assume decision-making authority that establishes them as the primary gatekeeper for manuscript acceptance in a specific subfield across multiple leading journals, thereby restricting the diversity of scientific perspectives.

8.5. Workload and Capacity Limits: If handling or reviewing manuscripts for multiple journals, the aggregate workload must not overburden the editor or compromise their capacity to provide thorough, timely, and diligent handling of assignments for this Journal.

8.6. Sanction: Irreconcilable, unmanaged conflicts of interest or loyalty arising from multiple editorial appointments shall preclude appointment or result in removal from the Board under Section 11 (Clause 11.3).

9. Handling Submissions Authored by Editorial Board Members

9.1. Equal Scholarly Standards: Editorial board members may submit original research to the Journal, which shall be subjected to the exact same rigorous peer-review standards applied to external authors.

9.2. Firewalled Handling, EiC Recusal Hierarchy & Transparency:

- Zero Dashboard Access: The author-editor shall have zero access to the submission tracking dashboard, reviewer identities, referee reports, or confidential editorial deliberations concerning their submission.
- EiC Submissions Hierarchy: If the author or conflicted party is the Editor-in-Chief, editorial responsibility and final decision-making authority shall be assumed entirely by an authorized independent Associate Editor with no conflict of interest.
- Associate Editors Conflicted: In the event that all three Associate Editors are conflicted, an independent Section Editor shall manage the peer review and another authorized independent editor shall render the final decision. The Editor-in-Chief shall not participate in, influence, or access the deliberations or final decision in any manner.
- Published Transparency Disclosure: In accordance with COPE guidelines, if a manuscript authored or co-authored by an Editorial Board member is accepted and published, the published article shall carry a transparent editorial note confirming that the peer-review and decision-making process was handled independently of the author-editor.

10. Confidentiality and Absolute Generative AI Restrictions

10.1. Strict Confidentiality: All submitted manuscripts, reviewer identities, referee reports, and editorial deliberations are strictly confidential and protected by applicable privacy standards.

10.2. Absolute Generative AI Restrictions (Zero-Tolerance Policy):

- Prohibition on Substantive AI Generation: Editors shall not use generative AI or AI-assisted technologies to create, draft, or formulate editorial decisions, recommendations, evaluations, or other substantive assessments regarding submitted manuscripts.
- Permissible Limited Use: Limited use of AI-assisted tools for routine copyediting (language polishing) or administrative assistance is permissible only where confidentiality is fully maintained, no unpublished manuscript content or confidential information is disclosed to an AI system, and the editor's independent scholarly judgment is not delegated.
- Absolute Upload Ban: This limited permission DOES NOT authorize uploading a submitted manuscript, any part of a manuscript, abstract, reviewer report, editorial correspondence, or other confidential editorial material to an external AI system.

11. Research Integrity, Independence, Resignation, and Termination

11.1. Editorial & Publisher Independence: Editorial assessments must remain completely free from commercial, financial, institutional, or political influence. The Publisher provides the necessary publishing infrastructure and operational support for the Journal but does not interfere with editorial decisions on individual manuscripts (in line with COPE Guidelines for Transparent Relationships Between Journals and Society Owners). Any editorial grievances or operational disagreements with the Publisher or Editor-in-Chief shall be resolved through transparent written consultation in accordance with COPE Core Practices.

11.2. Research Integrity, Misconduct, Complaints & Appeals (COPE Mandate): The Appointee plays an essential role in preserving the integrity of the scholarly record in strict adherence to COPE Core Practices, COPE Flowcharts, and COPE Retraction Guidelines:

- Duty to Pursue Misconduct: Editors must investigate and report suspected research or publication misconduct (including plagiarism, data fabrication, redundant publication, or authorship/guest-ghost authorship disputes), even in submissions that are rejected and not intended for publication.
- Handling Complaints & Author Appeals: All ethical complaints (including anonymous complaints) and formal author appeals against editorial decisions must be handled politely, fairly, objectively, and confidentially, providing the involved parties an opportunity to respond to factual evidence before a determination is reached.
- Corrections & Retractions: The Appointee shall support the prompt publication of corrections, clarifications, expressions of concern, or retractions whenever required to safeguard the academic record.

11.3. Early Termination Causes: The Journal may terminate the appointment before term expiry for serious cause, including:

- Material breach of confidentiality or data protection rules;
- Research misconduct or academic integrity violations;
- Persistent unresponsiveness, unexplained inactivity, or unexcused delays;
- Unresolved conflicts of interest or loyalty arising from multiple editorial appointments;
- Violation of the Journal's generative AI usage restrictions;
- Any action materially detrimental to the Journal's scholarly reputation or editorial integrity.

11.4. Resignation, Handover & Continuity of Decisions: The Appointee may resign with thirty (30) days advance written notice to facilitate an orderly handover and reassignment of pending manuscripts. During any editorial transition or handover, incoming editors (including an incoming Editor-in-Chief) shall not overturn a previous editor's formal manuscript acceptance decision unless serious ethical or scientific problems (such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or severe misconduct) are identified.

12. Acceptance and Signatures

By signing below, the parties confirm that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms, professional responsibilities, and ethical obligations set forth in this Agreement.

For the Journal (JACODESMATH):

Name: _____

Title: Editor-in-Chief

Date: _____

Signature: _____

The Appointee (Editorial Board Member):

Name: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX A: Editorial Conflict-of-Interest Declaration

The Appointee must complete this declaration prior to appointment and update it whenever material changes occur during the term of service. Completed forms are reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief and kept on official record.

1. Current Editorial Positions, Book Series & Society Roles (COPE Mandate)

List current appointments at other scholarly journals, book series editorships, or roles in publishing scientific societies/associations (including membership on publication oversight committees).

Response: _____

_____

2. Other Journal Affiliations, Decision Authority & Scopes

Identify journals with overlapping subject scopes or potential competition. Explicitly state whether you hold final manuscript decision-making authority or guest editor roles at those venues.

Response: _____

_____

3. Institutional and Collaborative Relationships

Disclose primary and secondary academic affiliations, consultancies, and close research collaborations within past 3-5 years.

Response: _____

_____

4. Financial and Commercial Interests

Disclose relevant research funding, corporate sponsorships, patents, or direct commercial interests.

Response: _____

_____

5. Personal, Academic, or Competing Prejudices

Disclose any circumstance that could reasonably affect or appear to compromise impartial scholarly judgment.

Response: _____

_____

6. Availability and Workload Capacity

Confirm capacity to fulfil editorial responsibilities and state any anticipated leaves or sabbaticals.

Response: _____

_____

Declaration Statement

I confirm that the information provided in this declaration is complete, truthful, and accurate. I agree to notify the Editor-in-Chief promptly if a relevant conflict of interest or material change in circumstances arises during my editorial tenure.

Appointee Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ORCID iD: _____ **Signature:** _____

Please return the signed agreement and declaration to the Editor-in-Chief (info@jacodesmath.com).

References: COPE Guidelines: Editorial Board Participation (DOI: 10.24318/F3lRGybw) & COPE Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors (DOI: 10.24318/cope.2019.1.8).