Normas éticas da American Mathematical Society

Ethical Guidelines Drafted by the
American Mathematical Society Council[1]

The Council of the AMS is seeking comments on a set of ethical guidelines drafted by the ad hoc Committee on Professional Responsibility. The proposed guidelines and some introductory material are presented here.

The Council of the American Mathematical Society, in response to several cases in the mathematical community alleging serious breaches of professional ethics and perceiving the need of a national professional society for a code of ethics, resolved in March 1992 to establish a Committee (later called the ad hoc Advisory Committee on Professional Responsibility) to make recommendations concerning the role of the Society. The committee consisted of Murray Gerstenhaber; Frank Gilfeather; Linda Keen, chair; and Elliott Lieb. After reviewing the statements on ethics published by other societies, one recommendation of this committee was that the Society should promulgate a set of ethical guidelines, a preliminary draft of which was submitted by the Committee to the Council in January 1995 and which is printed here by vote of the Council in order to solicit comments.

Ethical Guidelines

To assist in its chartered goal, "... the furtherance of the interests of mathematical scholarship and research...", and to help in the preservation of that atmosphere of mutual trust and ethical behavior required for science to prosper, the American Mathematical Society, through its Council, sets forth the following, guidelines. While the Society speaks only for itself, these guidelines reflect its expectations of behavior both for its members and for all members of the wider mathematical community, including institutions engaged in the education or employment of mathematicians or in the publication of mathematics. The guidelines are not a complete expression of the principles that underlie them but will, it is expected, be modified and amplified by events and experience.

The American Mathematical Society, through its Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), accepts the responsibility of providing an avenue of redress for individual members injured in their capacity as mathematicians by violations of its

ethical principles.

I. Mathematical Research and Its Presentation

The public reputation for honesty and integrity of the mathematical community and of the Society is its collective treasure, and its publication record is its legacy.

The correct attribution of mathematical results is essential, both as it encourages creativity by benefiting the creator whose career may depend on the recognition of the work and as it informs the community of when, where, and sometimes how original ideas have entered into the chain of mathematical thought. To that end mathematicians have certain responsibilities which include the following: To be knowledgeable; to be aware of related work; to be certain of the originality of their own work; to give proper credit even to unpublished sources because the knowledge that something is true or false is valuable, however it is obtained; to use no language that suppresses or improperly detracts from the work of others; and to correct in a timely way or withdraw work that is erroneous or previously published. On appropriate occasion it may be desirable to offer or accept joint authorship when independent researchers find that they have produced identical results. However, the authors listed for a paper must all have made a significant contribution to its content, and all who have made such a contribution must be offered the opportunity to be listed as an author. A claim of independence may not be based on ignorance of well-disseminated results and it must be convincing. A mathematician may not claim a result in advance of its achievement, for that injures the community by restraining those working toward the same goal. Publication of results that are announced must not be unreasonably delayed.

Because the free exchange of ideas necessary to promote research is possible only when every individual's contribution is properly recognized, the Society will not knowingly publish anything that violates this principle, and it will seek to expose violations anywhere in the mathematical community.

II. Social Responsibility of Mathematicians

The Society promotes mathematical research together with its unrestricted dissemination, and to that end encourages all and will strive to afford equal opportunity to all to engage in this endeavor. Mathematical ability must be respected wherever it is found, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religious or political belief.

The growing importance of mathematics in society at large and of public funding of mathematics may increasingly place members of the mathematical community in conflicts of interests. Even the appearance of bias in reviewing refereeing, or in

funding decisions must be scrupulously avoided, particularly where decisions may affect one's own research, that of close colleagues, or of one's students; in extreme cases one must withdraw.

Any relevant relationship between a person asked for a report and someone named in it, whether or not it involves funding, should be explicitly revealed.

A reference or referee's report fully and accurately reflecting the writer's views is often given only on the understanding that it be confidential or that the name of the writer by withheld from certain interested parties; therefore, a request for a reference or report must be assumed, unless there is a statement to the contrary, to carry an implicit promise of confidentiality or anonymity which must be carefully kept unless negated by law. The writer of the reply must respond fairly, withhold no essential information of which the writer is aware, and keep confidential any privileged information, personal or mathematical, which the writer receives. When information received with the request substantially affects the writer's own work, the report must reveal that fact. If the requesting individual, institution, agency, or company becomes aware that confidentiality or anonymity cannot be maintained, that must immediately be communicated and, if known in advance, must be stated in the original request.

Where choices must be made and conflicts are unavoidable, as with editors or those who decide on appointments or promotions, it is essential to keep careful records which, even if held confidential at the time, would, when opened, demonstrate that the process was indeed fair.

Freedom to publish must sometimes yield to security concerns, but mathematicians should resist excessive secrecy demands, whether by government or private institutions.

In those instances where mathematics impacts on the "real world" it is the duty of mathematicians to disclose to their employers and to the public, if necessary, the implications of their work, particularly when the impact may be on the public health, safety, or general welfare. This includes disclosing knowledge of false or overblown claims.

It is the duty of individual mathematicians to reveal unethical professional acts or practices of which they may have knowledge. When this may bring retaliation, the Society is obligated to help protect the "whistleblower", particularly when the complaint has been made to the Society.

III. Education and Granting of Degrees

Holding a Ph. D. degree is virtually indispensable to an academic career in mathematics and is becoming increasingly important as a certificate of competence

in the wider job market. An institution granting a degree in mathematics is certifying that competence and must take full responsibility for it by insuring the high level and originality of the thesis work and sufficient knowledge by the recipient of important branches of mathematics outside the scope of the thesis. A thesis must adhere to the same rules as a publication and should be publishable in a recognized journal. When, despite diligent search by the candidate and without the candidate's knowledge or fault, the work is found to have been anticipated in the literature, the degree should be granted. But when there is evidence of plagiarism, it must be carefully investigated, even if it comes to light after granting the degree, and if proven, the degree should be revoked.

IV. Publications

The Society will not publish, print, promote, or aid in the publishing, printing, or promoting of any research journal where there is some criterion for acceptance of a paper other than its content. It will promote the quick refereeing and timely publication of articles accepted to its journals.

Editors are responsible for the timely refereeing of articles, and must judge articles by the state of knowledge at the time of submission.

If the contents of a paper become known in advance of publication solely as a result of its submission to or handling by a journal, and if a second paper based on knowledge of the privileged information is received anywhere by an editor aware of the facts, then unless the first author agrees the editor must refuse or delay publication of the second paper until after publication of the first.

At the time a manuscript is submitted editors should notify authors whenever a large backlog of accepted papers may produce inordinate delay in publication; notice of these backlogs should also be published openly. A journal may not delay publication of a paper for reasons of an editor's self-interest or of any interest other than the author's. Editors must be given and accept full scientific responsibility for their journals; when a demand is made by an outside agency for prior review or censorship of so-called "sensitive" articles, that demand must be resisted, and, in any event, knowledge of the demand must be made public.

All mathematical publishers, particularly those who draw without charge on the resources of the mathematical community through the use of unpaid editors and referees, must recognize that they have made a compact with the community: to disseminate information, and that compact must be weighed in their business decisions.

Both editors and referees must respect the confidentiality of materials submitted to them unless these have previously been made public and above all may not

appropriate to themselves ideas in work submitted to them or do anything that would impair the rights of authors to the fruits of their labors. Editors must preserve the anonymity of referees unless there is a credible allegation of misuse.

These are ethical obligations of all persons or organizations controlling mathematical publications, whatever their designation.

Notas

[1]Publicado originalmente com um pedido de comentários em *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, *41*(4), 288-289, 1994.