



International Mathematical Union

September 15, 2025
IMU AO Circular Letter 12/2025

To: The Adhering Organizations of the International Mathematical Union (IMU)

From: Christoph Sorger, IMU Secretary General

Joint Recommendations and a Report of the IMU and the ICIAM on Fraudulent Publishing

Dear colleagues

Fraudulent publishing and citation cartels have emerged as a significant concern within our community. Notably, in November 2023, Clarivate, the parent company of Web of Science, announced that it excluded the entire mathematical discipline from the most recent edition of its list of highly cited authors. The rationale provided for this exclusion was as follows (see Clarivate's blog entry by David A. Pendlebury, November 15, 2023, [Highly Cited Researchers 2023: The evolution of our evaluation and selection policy to support a robust scholarly landscape](#)):

“(Mathematics) is a highly fractionated research domain, with few individuals working on a number of specialty topics. The average rate of publication and citation in Mathematics is relatively low, so small increases in publication and citation tend to distort the representation and analysis of the overall field. Because of this, the field of Mathematics is more vulnerable to strategies to optimize status and rewards through publication and citation manipulation.”

Since then, the International Mathematical Union (IMU) and the International Council of Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) have established a working group to delve deeper into the study of fraudulent publishing and citation cartels. This working group, comprising Ilka Agricola, Lynn Heller, Wil Schilders, Moritz Schubotz, Peter Taylor, and Luis Vega, has recently authored a report on the subject and has formulated precise recommendations for policymakers and institutions, outlining strategies to foster ethical scientific practices while simultaneously detecting and addressing fraudulent conduct.

For individuals, the recommendations provide a set of possible actions to safeguard research communities from being corrupted by fraud and pure business interests.

These recommendations were formulated by the authors in close collaboration with the IMU Committee on Publishing (chaired by Ilka Agricola) and were endorsed by the Executive Committee of the IMU and the Board of the ICIAM in May/June 2025.

Please find the recommendations and report below:

- [2025-IMU-ICIAM-Recommendations-on-Fraudulent-Publishing](#)
- [2025-IMU-ICIAM-Report-on-Fraudulent-Publishing](#)

The report will appear in the [October issue of the *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*](#).

Regards

Christoph Sorger

Secretary General of the International Mathematical Union