

JTSA Code of Best Practice

JTSA

The *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (JTSA) is an independent academic journal which is not directly associated with a particular academic society or a particular university. JTSA is Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) with a Board of Directors.

JTSA was initially based at the University of Cape Town and is currently based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. While independent of these institutions, JTSA has received the support of these institutions.

JTSA has been published continuously since December 1972 and so has celebrated 50 years of African contextual theological and religious academic work. Shaped specifically by the contextual realities of Southern Africa, JTSA has increasingly come to serve scholarship across the African continent, in the Third World, and beyond.

JTSA publishes three volumes a year. The final volume in each year contains a comprehensive index of authors, titles, and reviewers.

Scope and Focus

JTSA is committed to theological and religious scholarship which engages with African contextual realities. Contributions over the years have included scholarly engagement with race, class, politics, economics, gender, culture, HIV, masculinity, sexuality, disability, ecology, traditional religion, etc. JTSA's understanding of 'theology' and 'religion' is broad, encouraging scholarship that probes and pushes the boundaries of academic disciplines, including biblical studies, ethics, history of Christianity, ministerial and pastoral studies, systematic theology, religion studies, theology and development, gender and religion, etc.

Publishing Practice

JTSA is a small publishing project which retains an overt human dimension. Our publishing processes are not automated. The administrator and editors are an email away, offering direct and personal contact. JTSA is committed to mentoring emerging authors. JTSA publishes three volumes a year.

Peer Review

Each submission to JTSA is logged and sent to the editors for an initial assessment. The editors primary concern is that the submitted scholarship is conceptually clear, original in its contribution, contextually resonant, coherent in its argument, and appropriate to the JTSA style. Should the editors have concerns about the article it is returned to the author for revision. In some cases the article is rejected or the author is referred to another more appropriate journal. In such cases the author receives an explanation for the decision.

Articles which meet the editors' initial assessment are then allocated to blind peer review. In each case an article is sent to two peer reviewers. Considerable care is taken to identify reviewers who complement each other and who have the necessary expertise to review interdisciplinary research.

The two peer reviews are co-ordinated by one of the editors, who then compiles a co-ordinating report. The co-ordinating report is sent to the author. Once again, the emphasis in the peer review process is on working alongside authors to produce quality research. Peer

reviewers are asked to offer clear guidelines for any revisions they require. The editors err on the side of revision rather than rejection. However, should the editors, after a lengthy revision process, decide that the article should be rejected, then their decision is final.

Publishing Order and the 75% Rule

JTSA publishes articles in the time-frame order in which they are received, once they have proceeded through the peer review process. Occasionally JTSA will adjust the publishing order so that the 75% rule is not infringed, ensuring that no volume of JTSA has more than 25% of authors from a single institution.

Page Fees

JTSA is recognised as an accredited journal by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET). Within the DoHET system South African universities receive a research subsidy for South African university-based authors. JTSA only claims page fees from South African university-based authors whose institutions are part of this DoHET system.

Special Volumes

The usual practice of JTSA is to publish articles submitted by authors in its volumes. However, JTSA is willing to consider thematic volumes, though not more than one a year.

Access

JTSA retains a subscription system, offering a range of options for institutions and individuals, with preferential options for the African continent. Subscriptions enable JTSA to continue to run its not-for-profit academic publishing project.

Volume 157 (2017) introduced the first PDF option for subscribers. JTSA has a formal contract with the ATLA Database, whereby each article published by JTSA is available electronically. This contract permits JTSA to offer a PDF version of an entire volume, but not PDFs of individual articles. We ask that subscribers who choose the PDF option commit themselves to not reproducing it, except for their own use. By choosing this option you commit yourself to an ethical use of the PDF.

Editorial Board

JTSA considers each of its peer reviewers as a member of our Editorial Board. Peer reviewers are vital to academic publishing, and JTSA recognises the willingness of peer reviewers to share their time and expertise by acknowledging them as part of our Editorial Board. A list of the Editorial Board for each year is published in the final volume of each year.

Authorial Integrity

Authors are expected to be responsible to the critical discourses of their disciplines and ethically accountable to the communities among whom they have worked. A submission to JTSA confirms that the submission has not been previously published and that it is not under consideration by another journal. A submission to JTSA confirms that the work is original and that the author has acknowledged each and every source from which theory and content has been used.