Article Processing Charge (APC) Policy

1. Standard Fees

Science Letters operates under an Open Access model. To provide immediate, worldwide free access to published research, the journal charges a flat Article Processing Charge (APC) upon acceptance.
The APC is payable **only after** a manuscript has been formally accepted for publication by the editorial board:

- **International Submissions:** USD 160
- **Domestic Submissions (Within Pakistan):** PKR 40,000

Editorial decisions are based strictly on the manuscript's scientific merit, originality, relevance, and compliance with the journal's standards. Payment of the APC covers publication costs and does not influence or guarantee acceptance.

2. Frequency-Based Concessions (Multiple Papers)

To support prolific authors publishing multiple independent studies within a single calendar year, Science Letters offers a tiered APC structure. These concessions apply to subsequent papers accepted within the same calendar year under the same **corresponding author**:

Manuscript Sequence (Per Calendar Year)	International APC (USD)	Domestic APC (PKR)	Effective Discount
First Accepted Paper	USD 160	PKR 40,000	Baseline Rate
Second Accepted Paper	USD 80	PKR 20,000	50% Reduction
Third and Subsequent Papers	USD 40	PKR 10,000	75% Reduction

Note: Each manuscript must independently undergo the standard double-blind peer-review process. These concessions strictly exclude duplicate publications, redundant submissions, or micro-publishing (salami slicing).

3. Reviewer Recognition Program

Science Letters offers reciprocal APC credits to recognize the vital contribution of our peer reviewers. Qualifying review credits must be claimed by the **corresponding author** within **12 months** of completing the qualifying reviews.

- **Tier 1 (After 3 Satisfactory Reviews):** 50% APC concession (Payable: USD 80 / PKR 20,000)
- **Tier 2 (After 5 or More Satisfactory Reviews):** 75% APC concession (Payable: USD 40 / PKR 10,000)

Quality Standards: To qualify for credits, reviews must be substantive, constructive, scientifically rigorous, and submitted within the agreed deadline. Final eligibility of the review quality rests solely with the handling Editor.

4. Discretionary Student Hardship Concessions

Science Letters is committed to supporting early-career researchers facing verified financial constraints.

- **Application Process:** Student authors may submit a formal, written request for an APC concession at the time of manuscript submission, detailing their financial circumstances.
- **Evaluation:** The Editor-in-Chief retains sole discretionary authority to grant partial concessions or, in exceptional circumstances, full institutional waivers.
- **Firewall Policy:** Hardship requests are handled exclusively by the administrative office. Reviewers and handling editors have no visibility into an author's financial status or waiver applications, ensuring an unbiased peer-review process.

5. Institutional Waivers for Low- and Middle-Income Countries

To promote global equity in scientific publishing, Science Letters grants automatic **100% APC waivers** to corresponding authors whose primary institutional affiliation is located in a country classified by the World Bank as a Low-Income or Lower-Middle-Income Economy.

- **Country Eligibility:** Authors can verify their country's current classification status directly via the World Bank Country and Lending Groups data desk.
- **External Funding:** If the research is supported by a grant that explicitly earmarks funds for Open Access publication, the author is expected to utilize those funds, and the waiver may be rescinded.
- **Global Collaborations:** The inclusion of co-authors from high-income countries does not automatically disqualify an LMIC corresponding author, provided the primary research was conducted at the LMIC institution.

6. General Terms and Conditions

1. **Non-Cumulative Clause:** Unless explicitly authorized by the Editor-in-Chief, concessions, discounts, and waivers cannot be combined. Authors eligible for multiple programs will automatically receive the highest applicable discount.
2. **Data Integrity:** Authors must provide true and accurate institutional and professional information. The journal reserves the right to request official documentation (e.g., student enrollment verification, grant agreements) and may revoke publication or retract papers if fraudulent eligibility data is provided.
3. **Inclusivity Rule:** An author’s inability to pay the standard APC shall never be used as a ground for rejecting a scientifically sound manuscript.
4. **Policy Revisions:** Science Letters reserves the right to amend this fee structure and policy framework at any time. Any changes will be actively communicated via the journal's official web portal and will apply only to manuscripts submitted after the effective date of the revision.