

Good Practice in Research Authorship

Version – v2– August 2026

Procedure Author –Chair of Faculty of CBSS Academic Integrity and Ethics Committee

Procedure Owner – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

Parent Policy Statement – Research and Innovation Policy Statement

Public Access or Staff Only Access – Public

Version – v2– August 2026

Changes and Reason for Changes – amended to align with revised structure/titles.



Introduction

As part of the University's commitment to delivering on the ambitions of [Strategy 2030](#), we recognise that responsible and inclusive research authorship is fundamental to achieving our goals of creating and applying new knowledge, maximising student and staff success, and growing our global impact. Co-authorship is not only a marker of academic achievement but also a reflection of our institutional values of integrity, respect, inclusivity, and accountability. These guidelines are designed to promote fairness, transparency, and accountability in the co-authoring process, ensuring that all contributors are appropriately recognised and that research outputs reflect the highest standards of integrity, as outlined in the [UWS Code of Research Practice & Research Ethics](#).

UKRIO Good Practice in research: Authorship (2017):

Correct authorship of research publications matters because authorship confers credit, carries responsibility, and readers should know who has done the research. Denying authorship to somebody who deserves it denies recognition and academic credit since publications are used to assess academic productivity. Including an undeserving author is unfair since this person gets credit for workⁱ

Problems related to co-authorship and non-author contributions can arise when contributors have differing expectations about who should and should not be included as co-authors or acknowledged in other ways. These challenges often stem from variations in disciplinary conventions, differing interpretations of academic seniority, and changes in team roles over timeⁱⁱ. The University recognises that addressing these issues requires a commitment to integrity through transparent decision-making, respect for the contributions of all team members, inclusivity in recognising diverse roles, and accountability in ensuring fair and ethical authorship practices.

This guidance document is not intended to exist in isolation but to form part of a wider programme of activities undertaken by research teams to ensure good practice in research output co-authorship, including specific training where appropriate.

Aim

The aim of this guide is to help research teams foster a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture related to co-authorship. This guide also seeks to assist research teams in mitigating difficulties related to the attribution of co-authorship and non-author contributions, by providing researchers with recommended steps for the planning of co-authorship.

Acknowledgment

This guide was developed using the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Caucus (EDICa) co-authoring guidelines; the UKRIO Good practice in research: Authorship guidance, the COPE discussion document on co-authoring; and the British Sociological Association Authorship Guidelines, the Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT), and Taylor & Francis' Defining authorship in your research paper: Co-authors, corresponding authors, and affiliations. These resources are referenced at the end of this document.

Recommended Steps for Planning Co-Authorship

Before initiating a research project, research leaders, working collaboratively with the research team, should consider the following recommendations:

1. Clarify Roles and Contributions

Review the categories of authorship and non-authorship contributions and agree on the role(s) each team member will undertake (see Appendices 1–3).

2. Recognise and Support Contributions

Proactively ensure that all team members' contributions are acknowledged and valued. Provide mentorship and support, particularly to postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and early career researchers (ECRs).

3. Apply Equity and Inclusion Principles

Consider and apply the [UWS Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Code](#) when determining authorship and non-authorship roles.

4. Address Power Dynamics

Identify and mitigate potential power imbalances within the team to foster an open, inclusive, and supportive research culture.

5. Agree on Authorship Order and Corresponding Author

Negotiate and confirm the order of co-authorship and designate the corresponding author (see Appendix 4).

6. Ensure Accountability and Approval

All co-authors should approve the final version of any output prior to submission and be prepared to defend its content (although not necessarily all the technical details).

7. Establish a Dispute Resolution Process

Develop and agree on a process for resolving disputes related to authorship or non-authorship contributions (see Appendix 5).

Note: Authorship and acknowledgement criteria should be revisited and renegotiated as needed throughout the lifecycle of the research project.

Anonymous authorship and researchers at risk

Where there is a credible risk of serious harm due to the attribution of co-authorship or a non-author contribution, research leaders and teams should look to safeguard the wellbeing of team members, providing appropriate mitigations to minimise risk. Where appropriate, research

teams should seek the advice of relevant publishers or funders to discuss the implications of anonymous authorship. Anonymous authorship should be seen as an exceptional circumstance.ⁱⁱⁱ

Co-Authorship involving external partners

Where research involves external organisations, such as commercial companies or other HEIs, formal co-authorship agreements may be required. Establishing formal co-authorship agreements from the outset of a project can safeguard intellectual property rights, data ownership, rights to publish, and requirements to review publications. Establishing formal co-authorship agreements should also be considered where research projects involve international collaboration, as conventions and expectations related to co-authorship may vary between institutions and regions.^{iv}

Appendix 1: Core Framework for Attributing Co-Authorship

Contributors who have made a substantive intellectual contribution to an output should be credited as authors. Authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors. Authors will be responsible and publicly accountable for the associated output. A substantive intellectual contribution can be defined as:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception, award proposal or design of a project on which a work is based;
2. The acquisition, data cleaning and analysis, of data;
3. The research design, methods and methodological contribution,
4. The writing or rewriting of paper or output, or one of its segments, this may include earlier reports and white papers on which the paper is based;
5. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content, recognising the considerable time and intellectual effort that revising an output, for example during peer review or revise and resubmit requirements of journals, can take;
6. Final approval of the version to be published.^v

Clearly defining co-authorship roles facilitates transparency and accessibility for funders, publishers and readers. Researchers can make several contributions to a research output and therefore can be assigned to more than one role.^{vi}

Expanded definitions of contributor roles can be found in the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT): [CRediT Taxonomy Terms and Definitions list](#)^{vii}

Appendix 2: Core Framework for Acknowledging Non-Authorship Contributions

‘Contributorship’ acknowledges people involved in the research project who don’t meet the co-authorship criteria. Clearly defining criteria for non-author contributor roles facilitates transparency and accessibility for funders, publishers and readers. Non-authorship contributions can be defined as:

1. Acquisition of funding
2. General supervision
3. General administrative support
4. Writing assistance
5. Technical editing
6. Technical support
7. Language editing
8. Proof reading
9. Research participants

Prior to the publication of an output, co-authors should invite potential non-author contributors to view the final version of the output and confirm their willingness to be acknowledged. Written consent is required for non-author contribution acknowledgements, and individuals who do not provide consent should not be acknowledged.

Appendix 3: Order of Co-Authorship

The ordering of authorship is bound to the context of the research project. Ordering should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Different ways of ordering exist across different disciplines. Co-author ordering should be negotiated from the outset of the research project, and renegotiated if necessary. Ordering should be agreed jointly by the research team and communicated to all members. Research teams should seek external guidance from publishers and or funders where necessary.

Co-authors should negotiate and agree the person who will fulfil the role of corresponding author. The corresponding author will be responsible for communication between the research team and the publisher or funder, as well as ensuring that co-authorship and non-author contributions are correctly attributed.

Appendix 4: Suggested Procedure for Addressing Disputes Related to Co-Authorship and Non-Author Contributions

To help prevent and manage potential conflicts, it is recommended that research teams agree on a dispute resolution process at the beginning of the project. This process should cover both co-authorship and the acknowledgement of non-author contributions, as well as issues related to author ordering.

Recommended Steps in the Event of a Dispute

If a disagreement arises, the following staged approach is suggested:

1. Stage 1 (Informal) – Internal Resolution

Team members should first attempt to resolve the issue informally within the research group. Open, respectful dialogue and reference to any pre-agreed authorship or contribution criteria are encouraged.

2. Stage 2 (Informal) – Institutional Mediation

If internal efforts are unsuccessful, the matter may be referred to the relevant Faculty Academic Integrity & Ethics Committee or escalated to the University Academic Integrity & Ethics Committee for informal mediation or arbitration.

3. Stage 3 (Formal) – External Mediation

If institutional mediation does not lead to a resolution, researchers may consider seeking assistance from a recognised external body with expertise in research ethics or publication practices.^{viii}

Disputes Arising After Publication

In cases where authorship disputes emerge after publication, it is advisable for the complainant to contact the publisher directly, following the publisher's established dispute resolution procedures.

ⁱ UKRIO Good Practice in Research: Authorship. Available: [Case study 1](#)

ⁱⁱ Derived from British Sociological Association Authorship Guidelines: [Authorship Guidelines](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Derived from Taylor & Francis. Defining authorship in your research paper: Co-authors, corresponding authors, and affiliations. [Defining authorship in your research paper - Author Services](#)

^{iv} Derived from UKRIO Good Practice in Research: Authorship. Available: [Case study 1](#)

^v Derived from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Caucus (EDICa) co-authoring guidelines: Principles for co-authoring research outputs

^{vi} How to implement CRediT: [How to implement CRediT – CRediT](#)

^{vii} CRediT role descriptors, available: [CRediT role descriptors – CRediT](#)

^{viii} Derived from the UKRIO Authorship in research publications webinar, 19th March 2025.