

Case Western Reserve University
Guidelines on Authorship of Research and Scholarly Publications

Approved by Faculty Senate, April 25, 2005. Pending Board of Trustees approval.

Contributing to knowledge is a core activity of faculty, staff and students in a research university. Contributions to knowledge are evaluated by the publications produced, regardless of the medium or format. Recognizing that authorship can sometimes be a complex process, CWRU offers these guidelines for helping faculty, staff and students navigate authorship issues. For the purposes of these guidelines, publications include any and all articles, abstracts, and/or manuscripts based on original work (research and scholarship) conducted at CWRU. These guidelines describe what is expected of faculty, staff and students in authorship matters and are intended to encourage open communication about authorship issues.

Purpose of the Guidelines

1. Granting agency and public concerns are requiring explicit standards of accountability for all authors of research and scholarly publications.
2. In multiple investigator research and scholarly projects, standards are needed so that contributors can anticipate and understand their rights and responsibilities related to authorship or acknowledgment. However, in very large, multidisciplinary, or multi-institutional projects, following these precise guidelines may not be feasible; nevertheless, scholars are expected to adhere to the spirit of the guidelines.
3. Not all contributors in any research or scholarship endeavor have the same role, power or seniority in relationships; it is necessary to clarify the roles of all those involved and to understand each person's rights and obligations in authorship. The potential scholarly contributions of all collaborators, including students, need to be considered in the decisions of authorship.

Responsibilities and Criteria for Authorship

1. Authorship is attributed to persons responsible for the intellectual content of the publication. Only those who have contributed substantially to the conception, execution, or interpretation of the work such that they are willing and able to take public responsibility for the publication should be included as authors. Honorary authorship, that is, listing someone as a coauthor in the absence of substantial intellectual contribution, is discouraged.
2. All authors must have contributed to developing the manuscript and have read and understood the entire contents of the publication.
3. All authors must be sufficiently familiar with the conduct and at least the general interpretation of the research to accept responsibility for its integrity and credibility.
4. It is the responsibility of the author corresponding with the journal or conference, or his/her proxy, to ensure that authorship decisions conform to CWRU guidelines and ensure that all authors approve the final submission before publication.
5. All investigators accepting authorship should also accept the responsibility of avoiding unnecessary duplicate journal publication of similar material. Previous publication should be cited in any repeated use of data or theory, and a new publication should meet the criterion of making a new intellectual contribution to the field.

6. In the absence of meeting the above criteria, limited contributions such as provision of standard materials (for example, plasmids, cell lines, tissue, antibodies), performance of incidental assays or measurements, use of facilities, routine patient care, critical review of the manuscript, providing access to subjects or providing an environment and/or financial support for the research, collecting or analyzing data in a routine format, chairing or advising a dissertation or thesis committee, having an administrative relationship to the research, or contributing to the general intellectual development of one or more authors are insufficient to justify authorship unless the above criteria have also been met, but may be recognized by acknowledgment.

For large group projects, it is important at the outset that all members of the research team understand and agree to principles of authorship. It is also important that procedures for resolving more detailed concerns, such as the timing of presentations or publications, order of authorship, and privilege of presenting results at meetings, be discussed to the extent feasible at the beginning and throughout the work as needed.

7. If disputes or questions concerning authorship have not been successfully resolved among members of a collaboration, these disputes or concerns should be brought, by the individual having a concern, for assistance in resolution to the following administrative officials, in this order: a) the department chair, division head, or similar first line of academic management, b) the Dean, and c) the Provost. However, if these matters involve allegations or evidence of scholarly misconduct or threats of retribution, they must immediately be brought to the attention of the appropriate university official, as per Chapter 3, Part 2, II, Policy for responding to allegations of scientific misconduct, in the Faculty Handbook. Journals, societies, and conferences may have different authorship policies that are more stringent or more lenient than these guidelines. In such cases, the guidelines expressed in the present document are to be considered as the minimum standards to which all CWRU faculty, staff and students should adhere.