

Authorship

Effective: June 18, 2018

Contact: [Vice President for Research](#)

Introduction

A key expectation of faculty, staff, and students in a research university is the generation of knowledge, and dissemination of knowledge, as evidenced by publications and other scholarly products and creative work including generation of intellectual property, regardless of the medium or format. Recognizing that authorship issues can often be complicated, and conventions can vary between disciplines, Iowa State University encourages its faculty, staff and students to proactively discuss authorship in their creative pursuits to identify and navigate potential conflicts that may impede wide and open dissemination.

Applicability

This policy applies to all individuals at Iowa State University engaged in the publication of research, defined broadly as all forms of scholarly investigation or creative work, regardless of funding source.

Colleges and departments are encouraged to develop additional "best practices" guidelines regarding authorship for their faculty, staff, and students that address discipline-specific issues.

The term "publication" as used in this policy is meant generically, representing as inclusively as possible any manner of report, paper, manuscript, article, book, chapter, treatise, exhibit or creation, or other publishable product whether printed or digital in format.

Policy Statement

Purpose and Expectations

Authorship assignments must honestly reflect actual contributions as a function of the ethical conduct of scholarship. Authors of scholarly products must adhere to the highest ethical standards of scientific integrity and accountability—an expectation from both society at large and granting agencies.

Authorship explicitly assigns both credit and responsibility for intellectual and creative works and has tangible implications for faculty, staff, and student participants on project teams. Faculty have the responsibility to safeguard the rights of staff and students at all levels to publish.

Adherence to this policy is specifically intended to eliminate authorship assignment rooted in power inequities (i.e. prejudiced by academic position, rank or other hierarchical considerations), inappropriate practices, and perceptions of conflict of interest in the presentation of scholarly findings.

Participants are expected to engage early in the idea generation, collaboration and publication development process in open and clear communication about the assignment of authorship roles with their potential publishing colleagues and especially keeping in mind that depending on the nature, complexity and longevity of the project, changes in authorship (additions, deletions and order) may become necessary. Written agreements specifying the details of authorship and contributions may be warranted in many cases but are recommended in all cases. [See Resources below for *Tips for Determining Authorship Credit*, *American Psychological Association*]

Attribution of Authorship

Authorship is limited to those who meet both of the following criteria and expectations; all those who meet these standards should be included as an author:

- Significant intellectual contribution to a project through conception and design, or data acquisition and analysis, or interpretation; and
- Ability to identify their own contribution, and ideally the contributions of each participating author, and defend the major aspects of the project presented in the publication, although not necessarily all the technical details, and accept responsibility for its integrity and credibility.

In addition, it is expected that each author has been given the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the manuscript (or substantive revision of its scholarly content) and approves the final version of the manuscript to be published.

Provision of logistical, financial, or administrative support alone does not constitute a valid basis for authorship. Recognition of these types of contribution is appropriate for an acknowledgements section of a publication.

Most journals have established criteria regarding authorship, acknowledgement, and conflicts of interest, but not regarding authorship order (note that some disciplines/journals practice authorship in alphabetical order). Potential authors must review and conform to journal specific policies and requirements prior to submission.

Violations

The following are examples of acts that may violate this policy:

- **Intentional exclusion of a person as author** who meets the criteria defined above in the Attribution of Authorship section.
- **Acceptance or ascription of an honorary authorship.** Honorary (guest, courtesy, or prestige) authorship is granting authorship out of appreciation or respect for an individual, or in the belief that the expert standing of the honored person will increase the likelihood of publication, credibility, or status of the work even in the absence of significant intellectual contribution.
- **Acceptance or ascription of a gift authorship.** Gift authorship is credit, offered from a sense of obligation, tribute, or dependence, within the context of an anticipated benefit, to an individual who has not appropriately contributed to the work.
- **Acceptance or ascription of a ghost authorship.** Ghost authorship is the failure to identify as an author someone who has made substantial contributions to the research or writing of a manuscript thus meriting authorship or allowing significant editorial control of a publication by an unnamed party, which may constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest that should be disclosed.

Dispute resolution and disciplinary action

A person who believes their authorship rights have been intentionally violated or who wishes to report other improper authorship practices must first attempt pursuing informal/collegial resolution of the issue within the research group, through discussions with a senior colleague/mentor external to the research group, through facilitated discussion with a disinterested party such as the institution's Ombuds officer and/or through departmental or collegiate channels (supervisor, chair, dean or equivalent within their units).

Authorship disputes that do not involve plagiarism as defined in the Research Misconduct Policy are not a matter of research misconduct. If an authorship dispute involves plagiarism it should be brought to the attention of the Research Integrity Officer in accordance with the Research Misconduct Policy for assessment.

Resources

Links

- [Authorship: Applications & Guidance from the Office of the Vice President for Research](#)
- [Non-Retaliation against Persons Reporting Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Research Integrity Officer \(RIO\)](#)
- [Vice President for Research Office](#)
- [U.S. Office of Research Integrity \(ORI\)](#)
- [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#)
- [Tips for Determining Authorship Credit, American Psychological Association](#)
- [Authorship Practices to Avoid Conflicts \(HHS Office of Research Integrity\) \[PDF\]](#)