

Guidelines Regarding Attribution of Authorship

Procedural Authority: General Faculties Council

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The Purpose of these Guidelines

The criteria used for defining “authorship” can vary significantly among disciplines at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE); therefore, a single set of policies on authorship that will apply to all academic disciplines is neither possible nor desirable.

The narrowest definition of authorship comes from Canadian copyright law and applies to collaborations in literary and artistic works in some of the humanities. For example, Canada’s *Copyright Act* states that a joint author or co-author is someone who has collaborated on a work in which the contributions of the various authors are not distinct from one another. In this model, only contributors to the form or expression of the work qualify; those supplying ideas normally do not qualify as an “author.” In some academic disciplines, however, the above definition is too narrow and excludes key collaborators in a project.

The following guidelines are intended to provide direction and engender discussion of authorship guidelines at the departmental level. Therefore, it is important that each department develop its own guidelines concerning authorship in order to provide assistance to graduate students, faculty and academic staff, adjunct and sessional instructors, and other collaborators in research.

Contributors to original ideas: If each person’s contribution is distinct (e.g. contributors of entries to an encyclopedia), the work is a “collective work” and each author has copyright in his or her individual contribution. However, in the physical and life sciences, and increasingly in the social sciences and humanities, collaboration and teamwork are commonplace, and a student’s research may be guided by a team or committee. Contributors to the original ideas in a project are typically given the right of joint authorship of publications that report on the results of the research.

Authorship should be reserved to those who have made significant contributions to the research: The publication of the results of graduate program research, thesis work, research project, or clinical study is very important for both the author of the research results as well as CUE where the research work was undertaken. Therefore, authorship must be reserved for only those individuals who have made significant intellectual contributions to the research.

Manuscripts derived from graduate program research, thesis work, graduate student research projects, and clinical studies: In the case where there are two or more authors contributing to a manuscript derived from graduate program research, thesis work, a graduate student research project, or a graduate student clinical study, the student would normally be listed as the first or senior author. A graduate student who is involved in research that is not related to his or her own research, thesis work, research project, or clinical study should be included as one of the authors on manuscript if his or her

contribution meet the “authorship criteria” listed below. It is best practice for all parties involved in the research to determine in advance (in writing) authorship considerations.

Authorship criteria: Many Canadian universities and journals now accept and implement the following authorship criteria which were developed by Ed Huth (*Ann. Int. Med.*, 104:269-74, 1986):

1. All authors should have made a substantial contribution to the conception, design, analysis, or interpretation of data;
2. All authors should have had a hand in writing and revising the manuscript for important intellectual content; and
3. All authors should have approved the final draft and be able to answer critical comments on the published manuscript.

Using the above criteria, those who have made other contributions to the research (such as data collection without providing any interpretation, or conducting laboratory work without providing any interpretation) are not listed as authors, but they are credited in the acknowledgments of the research.

On the other hand, there are some universities and journals that have adopted the following authorship criteria for manuscripts:

Authorship should be recognized only where the individuals have participated in a significant way in at least two (2) of the following aspects of the research and manuscript preparation:

1. Conception of the idea and design of research or scholarly inquiry;
2. Actual collection of data collection, experiment work, or hands-on laboratory work;
3. Analysis and interpretation of data, and/or actual writing of the manuscript.

Whichever authorship criteria is adopted by the department, it is important that: i) the department always apply the authorship criteria consistently; and 2) all members of the department, including faculty, students, academic staff, adjunct professors and sessional instructors, as well as other collaborators in research, are aware of the authorship criteria that will apply to their research and manuscripts.

Order of authorship: The process for determining the order of authors on a manuscript will vary among academic disciplines. In some disciplines, the senior or primary author is listed first on the manuscript, while the other authors are listed thereafter in descending order of importance. In other disciplines, on the other hand, the order of the authors, after the senior or primary author is listed, is determined by:

- a. the author who made the next most important contribution (e.g. the student’s supervisor) in which case he or she is listed last;
- b. alphabetical order; or
- c. a coin toss.

In some disciplines, it is expected that the roles of each of the authors in conducting the research and preparing the manuscript is detailed in a footnote of the manuscript.

Time limits to publish: A student and supervisor will often agree to work collaboratively on a research project with the goal of publishing the same. For these collaborative projects, it is important that the

department impose a standard time limit (e.g. 1 year) after the student completes the graduate program research, thesis work, graduate student research project, graduate student clinical study or convocation for the student to complete the manuscript and submit it for publication – unless the student and supervisor have agreed, in writing, to another arrangement. If the student does not meet this department deadline, and there appears no likelihood of the student bringing the manuscript to publication, then the supervisor involved in this collaboration shall be permitted to complete the manuscript and submit it for publication with the student listed as one of the authors.

Institutional Affiliation: The institutional affiliation of the author and which is listed in the manuscript is typically the place: a) where the author was employed; b) where the student carried out the research; or c) which provided most of the financial support for the research. Please note, however, that CUE reserves the right to withhold the use of its name as an affiliation on a manuscript when CUE believes that the manuscript: a) is not of an acceptable standard; b) will harm the reputation of CUE; or c) will expose CUE to unacceptable liability or litigation.

Addresses: Often a manuscript will have a footnote that lists the addresses of the authors. In this case, the current address of the author should be listed if it is different from the place where the research was undertaken. For example, if a CUE MA student publishes paper that is based on her undergraduate research at the University of Lethbridge, then the student’s address byline listed at the top of the manuscript should carry the University of Lethbridge address, but the footnote to the author’s name should state the following: “current address: Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Concordia University of Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta.”

Ethical Considerations and Conflicts of Interest: The publication of research always involves ethical considerations, some of which are listed in other sections of CUE’s policies on Academic Integrity and Ethics. When submitting a manuscript for publication, all authors of the manuscript must disclose any real or apparent conflicts of interest to the publisher (e.g. receiving financial support from a clinic for preparing a work outlining the outstanding benefits of the clinicians who work at the clinic).