

The following is advice on authorship produced by the Provost of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA.

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Guidance on Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications

1.0 General Principles

The public's trust in and benefit from academic research and scholarship relies upon all those involved in the scholarly endeavor adhering to the highest ethical standards, including standards related to publication and dissemination of findings and conclusions.

Accordingly, all scholarly or scientific publications involving faculty, staff, students and/or trainees arising from academic activities performed under the auspices of Yale University must include appropriate attribution of authorship and disclosure of relevant affiliations of those involved in the work, as described below.

These publications, which, for the purposes of this guidance, include articles, abstracts, manuscripts submitted for publication, presentations at professional meetings, and applications for funding, must appropriately acknowledge contributions of colleagues involved in the design, conduct or dissemination of the work by neither overly attributing contribution nor ignoring meaningful contributions.

Financial and other supporting relationships of those involved in the scholarly work must be transparent and disclosed in publications arising from the work.

2.0 Authorship Standards

Authorship of a scientific or scholarly paper should be limited to those individuals who have contributed in a meaningful and substantive way to its intellectual content. All authors are responsible for fairly evaluating their roles in the project as well as the roles of their co-authors to ensure that authorship is attributed according to these standards in all publications for which they will be listed as an author.

2.1 Requirement for Attribution of Authorship

Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for its content. All co-authors should have been directly involved in all three of the following:

- planning and contribution to some component (conception, design, conduct, analysis, or interpretation) of the work which led to the paper or interpreting at least a portion of the results;
- writing a draft of the article or revising it for intellectual content; and
- final approval of the version to be published. All authors should review and approve the manuscript before it is submitted for publication, at least as it pertains to their roles in the project.

Some diversity exists across academic disciplines regarding acceptable standards for substantive contributions that would lead to attribution of authorship. This guidance is intended to allow for such variation to disciplinary best practices while ensuring authorship is not inappropriately assigned.

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2.2 Lead Author

The first author is usually the person who has performed the central experiments of the project. Often, this individual is also the person who has prepared the first draft of the manuscript. The lead author is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all other authors meet the requirements for authorship as well as ensuring the integrity of the work itself. The lead author will usually serve as the corresponding author.

2.3 Co-Author(s)

Each co-author is responsible for considering his or her role in the project and whether that role merits attribution of authorship. Co-authors should review and approve the manuscript, at least as it pertains to their roles in the project.

2.4 External Collaborators, Including Sponsor or Industry Representatives

Individuals who meet the criteria for authorship should be included as authors irrespective of their institutional affiliations. In general, the use of “ghostwriters” is prohibited, i.e., individuals who have contributed significant portions of the text should be named as authors or acknowledged in the final publication. Industry representatives or others retained by industry who contribute to an article and meet the requirements for authorship or acknowledgement must be appropriately listed as contributors or authors on the article and their industry affiliation must be disclosed in the published article.

2.5 Acknowledgements

Individuals who do not meet the requirements for authorship but who have provided a valuable contribution to the work should be acknowledged for their contributing role as appropriate to the publication.

2.6 Courtesy or Gift Authorship

Individuals do not satisfy the criteria for authorship merely because they have made possible the conduct of the research and/or the preparation of the manuscript.

Under no circumstance should individuals be added as co-authors based on the individual's stature as an attempt to increase the likelihood of publication or credibility of the work. For example, heading a laboratory, research program, section, or department where the research takes place does not, by itself, warrant co-authorship of a scholarly paper.

Nor should “gift” co-authorship be conferred on those whose only contributions have been to provide, for example, routine technical services, to refer patients or participants for a study, to provide a valuable reagent, to assist with data collection and assembly, or to review a completed manuscript for suggestions. Although not qualifying as co-authors, individuals who assist the research effort may warrant appropriate acknowledgement in the completed paper.

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Senior faculty members should be named as co-authors on work independently generated by their junior colleagues only if they have made substantial intellectual contributions to the experimental design, interpretation of findings and manuscript preparation.

2.7 Authorship Disputes

Determinations of authorship roles are often complex, delicate and potentially controversial. To avoid confusion and conflict, discussion of attribution should be initiated early in the development of any collaborative publication. For disputes that cannot be resolved amicably, individuals may seek the guidance of the dean of their school or the cognizant deputy provost in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences.

2.8 Disclosure of Research Funding and Other Support

In all scientific and scholarly publications and all manuscripts submitted for publication, authors should acknowledge the sources of support for all activities leading to and facilitating preparation of the publication or manuscript, including, but not limited to:

- grant, contract, and gift support;
- salary support if other than institutional funds. Note that salary support that is provided to the University by an external entity does not constitute institutional funds by virtue of being distributed by the University; and
- technical or other support if substantive and meaningful to the completion of the project.

2.9 Disclosure of Financial Interests and External Activities

Authors should fully disclose related financial interests and outside activities in publications (including articles, abstracts, manuscripts submitted for publication), presentations at professional meetings, and applications for funding.

In addition, authors should comply with the disclosure requirements of the University's Committee on Conflict of Interest.