



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Policy on Authorship and Publication

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 2016

Introduction

Authorship is an explicit way of conveying responsibility and contributing credit for intellectual work. The process of ensuring responsible authorship should occur prior to writing of the paper. Potential authors must be familiar with institutional policy with respect to what constitutes authorship and who should be considered an author. Good communication clarifies roles, and minimizes potential authorship disputes. Although authorship practices differ from one discipline to another, and individual situations often require judgement, practices should adhere to this policy.

Individual researchers and scholars and federal and private sponsors increasingly are taking notice of and identifying deviations from acceptable practices in written works, including publications and grant applications. Both sponsors and whistleblowers are bringing these deviations, many constituting, plagiarism, fabrication and falsification to the attention of authors and organizations, thus increasing the importance of responsible authorship.

Policy

The scope of this policy covers authorship in conference proceedings, scientific journals, books, web-based publications, published scientific posters, abstracts, grant proposals, as well as other scholarly activities by University of South Alabama faculty, staff and trainees. In general, the University is obligated to ensure the outputs of its scholarly works are made as widely available as possible and to promote the principles of open access in making the outputs of publicly-funded research accessible through unrestricted online access.

Defining Authorship

An author is an individual who has made substantial intellectual contributions to a research work. An administrative relationship, acquisition of funds, collection of data, or supervision of a

research group does not constitute authorship. In NO instance should an individual be included as an “honorary” author. For attribution of authorship, a contributing individual must meet all of the following criteria:

- Contribute significantly to the conception, design, execution and/or analysis and interpretation of data
- Actively participate in drafting and/or revising the published piece of work for intellectual content
- Approve publication of the written work when named as an author.

Lead Author

The lead author is typically the person who performs the core experiments and prepares the first draft of the manuscript. Generally the lead author serves as the corresponding author. Specifically, the lead author is responsible for:

- Ensuring all authors meet the requirements for attribution of authorship
- Providing the draft of the manuscript to each author for review and consent for authorship. Additionally, journals may have specific requirements governing author review and consent.
- The integrity of the work as a whole and ensuring data is accurate and reasonably interpreted.
- Ensuring all authors have approved publication of the written work.

Co-Authors

Co-authors of a publication are responsible for reviewing and approving portions of the manuscript pertaining to their role(s) in the project. An individual retains the right to refuse co-authorship if he/she does not satisfy the criteria for authorship.

Order of Authorship

Several different ways of determining order of authorship exist across disciplines and research groups. Such examples of authorship policies include descending order of contribution, placing the person who took the lead in writing the manuscript or doing the research first, and the most senior contributor last, and alphabetical or random order. While the meaning of a particular order may be recognized in a given setting, order of authorship has no generally agreed upon meaning.

- The authors should decide on the order of authorship collectively.
- The senior author may wish to specify in their manuscript a description of the contributions of each author and how they assigned the order of authorship so that readers can correctly interpret an author’s role(s).

All authors should review and approve the manuscript before it is submitted for publication (at minimum, pertaining to their roles in the project).

Acknowledgements

Individuals who provided valuable contribution to the work but do not meet the requirements for authorship should be acknowledged for their contribution to the work.

- Related Support: For example sharing of reagents or reviewing a draft of a manuscript warrant acknowledgement but not authorship. This acknowledgement should include, as appropriate, the requirement to make research tools and data available to other investigators. *Reference:* (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/sharing.htm>).
- Research Funding and Other Support: Acknowledgements must disclose the source(s) of support for the work, to include grant/contract/gift support, salary support if other than institutional funds, and technical support if substantive to the completion of the project.
 - A source of funds should be acknowledged only if there was an actual contribution from a supporting organization.
 - Authors should be cognizant of making false statements in any publication either in the text or figures/charts that are included. If federal funds are involved this is a violation of the Federal False Statement/False Claims Act.
Reference: (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733).

Prior Review by Material Providers

Many material transfer agreements require paper or other public disclosures to be submitted to the provider for review prior to their publication or release. Such review serves to allow the provider the opportunity to identify appropriate patentable inventions and to ensure that the proposed publication does not contain provider's confidential information.

- Office of Commercialization & Industry Collaboration (“OCIC”): The lead author or faculty mentor has the responsibility of coordinating with OCIC to ensure compliance with any existing material transfer agreement directly related to the subject matter of the proposed publication.

Unacceptable Authorship

The following forms of authorship/writing do not meet satisfactory criteria for authorship and are in violation of this policy:

- Guest (honorary, prestige, or courtesy) authorship is in violation, e.g. inclusion based solely on prestige or affiliation of the individual. Serious consequences can arise when viewed as granting authorship out of respect or appreciation of an individual.
- Ghost authorship/writing, e.g. lending one's name as an author to works authored in whole by others such as industry representatives, is bad practice. Payment from commercial entity representatives to serve as an author to whom they did not substantially contribute undermines the integrity of the scientific process and is contrary to the values and principles of academia.
- Gift authorship, e.g. granting credit solely as an obligation or tribute to an individual who has not substantially contributed to the work.

NOTE: the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors has adopted a set of authorship principles that are viewed as the gold standard applicable for physicians and the scientific community. *Reference:* www.icmje.org

Financial Conflicts of Interest

Authors must disclose any financial arrangements and/or outside activities that may constitute a potential conflict of interest in manuscripts to journals, grant applications, and at professional meetings. Authors should comply with the [University's Conflict of Interest Policy](#) for disclosure requirements.

Authorship Disputes

To prevent conflict, discussion of authorship attribution should be introduced in the early development stages of any collaborative publication. If authorship disputes are unable to be resolved amicably, individuals may seek guidance from the division/department chair and/or Dean of their school, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, or Vice President for Research and Economic Development. Guidelines are available to assist with avoiding and resolving authorship disputes if authorship disputes are unable to be resolved amicably.

Publications

Accessibility of Publications

- **Public Access Requirements for Funding Agencies:** All NIH supported, peer-reviewed publications must comply with the NIH Public Access Policy. The manuscripts must be available to the public through accessing the NIH National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central immediately after the date of publication, or at a later time not to exceed 12 months from the date of publication. NIH-funded investigators are responsible for ensuring that evidence of compliance is included in all NIH applications, proposals, and reports. To ensure compliance, NIH Program Officials will check the citations in grant applications, proposals, or progress reports for PubMed Central Identifiers or appropriate alternatives. It is the author's responsibility to understand and adhere to the requirements of any agency funding the author's research. *Reference:* [NIH Public Access Policy](#)

- Registration of Clinical Trials: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and many others require that, to be considered for publication, any prospective, interventional clinical research study must have been appropriately recorded in an approved trial registry before enrollment of the first subject. The goal of this policy is to promote the public availability of a comprehensive database of clinical trials. Trial registration is the responsibility of the trial investigators or sponsors. Before commencement of a study, the authors should consider whether the journal(s) to which they wish to submit their study report have adopted this policy.

Reference: [Clinical Trials Registration](#)

Related Publication Practices

Good publication practices include the following:

- Include sufficient information in publications to allow others to replicate the results or validate the research.
- Redundant publication is unacceptable. This arises when multiple papers, without full cross reference, share equivalent hypotheses, discussion points, data and/or conclusions. At the time of manuscript submission, authors should disclose details of similar papers and/or abstracts. This also applies if the paper is written in a different language, as well as similar papers in press.

Responsible Party(ies):

Vice President For Research and Economic Development
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Next Review Date: August, 2019