



Departmental Authorship Code of Practice

Introduction

The code of practice outlined here has been drawn up to set out the Department's position on authorship of any research publications and other academic outputs (e.g. conference proceedings) that arise from departmental research projects involving departmental staff collaborating with colleagues both internally and externally. It also covers any research publications/academic outputs, including those with undergraduate and postgraduate students. The code of practice also sets out the processes for managing any authorship disputes that may arise.

All members of academic staff and students are advised to make themselves familiar with this document before starting any collaborative research projects and should reach agreement on the terms of this code of practice in advance and on specific points that it includes.

1. Publications arising from research project

- 1.1 The contribution of all authors to the research must be recognised.
- 1.2 All authors have equal right of access to the data and other materials obtained, this includes any data and materials generated by students in the course of supervised work resulting in publication(s).
- 1.3 An in-principle decision to publish any results arising directly as a result of research conducted should be mutually agreed by all parties before work begins. Should any delay occur as a result of a disagreement, the matter should be managed according to the guidance provided in Section 4.
- 1.4 In advance, and in principle, there should be mutual agreement between all parties as to the inclusion of any co-authors on the planned submission as well as the order of authorship in any subsequent manuscript. This agreement should allow for changes in authorship during the project (e.g. withdrawal of and/or new co-author[s]).
- 1.5 For publications arising from student led research projects, the supervisor has a duty to ensure that any data arising directly as a result of the work conducted by the student, and of sufficient quality to merit potential publication, is considered for publication without undue delay.
- 1.6 The use of a “pre-nuptial agreement” for collaborations is strongly suggested (see Section 3).

2. Authorship

- 2.1 There are no universally accepted standards for assigning authorship. However, the Department code of practice is based on the [University of Oxford guidance on authorship](#) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).
- 2.2 Generally, an author is considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. This includes anyone who:

- 2.2.1. made a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; and
 - 2.2.2. drafted or substantively reviewed or revised the publication; and
 - 2.2.3. approved the final version of the publication; and
 - 2.2.4. agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work could be appropriately investigated and resolved.
- 2.3. Contributors who do not meet all four of the criteria for authorship listed in *section 2.2* should not be listed as authors, but they may be acknowledged. (Permission for acknowledgement must be obtained). Examples of activities that alone (without other contributions) do not qualify a contributor for authorship are acquisition of funding (other than the Principal Investigator); general supervision of a research group or general administrative support; and writing assistance, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading.

3. Authorship agreement

- 3.1 The above places most of the responsibility for decisions about authorship on the researchers who conducted the research reported in the publication. These decisions are best made early in each project, making modifications as appropriate as the work progresses, to avoid misunderstanding and later disputes. If agreement cannot be reached about who qualifies for authorship, they should refer to procedures set out in this document under Section 4 “Authorship disputes”.
- 3.2 Where the work has more than one author the researchers should:
- 3.2.1 agree the contribution each will make to reporting the work and review this commitment regularly as the work progresses. This agreement should be formally recorded e.g. through a written correspondence between authors (e.g. email, minutes from relevant meetings)
 - 3.2.2 appoint a lead or executive author for communication on the work
 - 3.2.3 report the work fairly according to each author’s contribution, and not omit, underplay, or overplay a contributor’s input
 - 3.2.4 comply with the definition of author and co-author given by the publication (e.g. the journal) or by international organisations (e.g. the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors)
 - 3.2.5 provide a formal offer of authorship (which should be accepted or declined in writing and a record kept by both student and supervisor) to those meeting the agreed definitions

4. Authorship dispute resolution

- 4.1 In cases of authorship disputes related to composition and/or order of authors in which only Departmental staff authors are part of the dispute, the project lead is required to refer the dispute for the attention of the Chair of the Departmental Research Committee via email to researchcommittee@phc.ox.ac.uk, with the heading “AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE”.
- 4.2 In cases of authorship disputes in which *graduate students* and Departmental authors are part of the dispute, the project lead is required to refer the dispute for the attention of the Director of Graduate Students (DGS) via email dgs@phc.ox.ac.uk with the heading “AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE – GRADUATE”.
- 4.3 In cases of authorship disputes in which *undergraduate students* and Departmental authors are part of the dispute, the project lead is required to refer the dispute for the attention of the head of primary care undergraduate teaching (UGT), via email to headofPCUGTeaching@phc.ox.ac.uk with the heading

“AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE - UNDERGRADUATE”.

- 4.4 The Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT (as relevant) will encourage both parties to engage in direct dialogue to resolve matters informally. All these processes should be handled as expeditiously as possible.
- 4.5 Direct dialogue involves the parties to the dispute discussing their perspectives and working to reach an agreeable resolution, preferably no later than two weeks after the dispute has been logged with the Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT. Once logged, the Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT will ensure anonymity of all disputing parties is maintained when reporting back to the relevant committee group.
- 4.6 The Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT will seek written confirmation from both parties that an agreement has been reached and that the dispute has been resolved. The Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT will log the case, and highlight its resolution at the next available Departmental Research Committee meeting, and report back to the Head of Department.
- 4.7 Should the dispute not be resolved within two weeks of being logged with the Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT, the Head of Department will propose a panel of three scientists with sufficient scientific expertise in the relevant research area and no conflict of interest with any of the disputants. One of these panellists will be chosen on the basis that they have no direct connection in relation to employment with the host department, but are a member of the University of Oxford Medical Science division and have sufficient standing and scientific expertise in the area of research. A lead panellist will be selected to facilitate the Confidential Panel review process.
- 4.8 The Head of Department will make the final determination on panel composition.

5 Confidential Panel review of authorship disputes

- 5.1 The Panel decision is limited in scope to composition and order of authors. No other matters will be considered by the Panel.
- 5.2 The Panel will meet with each disputant separately and, at the discretion of the panel, will interview other parties relevant to resolving the authorship dispute.
- 5.3 Disputants will submit the manuscript and may provide other relevant materials regarding the authorship dispute to the panelists in advance of the presentation stage. Panelists will review the materials at their discretion.
- 5.4 Following deliberations, the Panel will take a vote to reach a final decision and prepare a written Report detailing the decision and rationale. If the vote is not unanimous, the report will reflect both sides, but the majority vote will be decisive.
- 5.5 The Panel will inform the Head of Department and Research Committee chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT, as relevant, of its decision and provide the written Report. The Head of Department will provide the disputants with the final Report.
- 5.6 The Research Committee Chair, the DGS or the head of primary care UGT, as relevant, will highlight resolution of the case (maintain confidentiality) at the next monthly Departmental Research Committee meeting as well as all other authors on the paper regarding the binding decision and rationale.
- 5.7 The parties involved will be expected to agree to accept and abide by the decision of the panel.

5.8 No appeals will be considered.

6 Confidentiality

All members of the Department, including committee members, or external to it, who have been made aware of the dispute, will agree not to disclose the details of the dispute, deliberations of the panel, or how any of the panellists voted on the matter to any other party. Failure to maintain confidentiality will constitute a significant breach and will be referred directly to the Head of Department for appropriate management.

Last reviewed: November 2023

Next review due by: November 2026