

## **Authorship Guidelines for Students Involved in Research/Scholarly Projects**

Many research and scholarly projects lend themselves to the creation of publications and abstracts. We encourage students to discuss the potential publication and expectations around authorship with their research supervisor during the project planning stage. Every discipline and scholarly community has their own guidelines regarding who is eligible to be an author and the author order. Your supervisor will have the most experience with their area of study, and they have the final say on authorship. The following are general guidelines.

### **Recommendations from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**

<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

The ICMJE is a working group of general medical journal editors who meet annually to work on the *Recommendations for the conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals*. Their website provides great resources in this area.

The ICMJE recommends that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement 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 are appropriately investigated and resolved.

### **CRedit – Contributor Roles Taxonomy**

CRedit has outlined 14 Contributor Roles which can clarify and describe each contributor's specific contribution to the scholarly output: <https://casrai.org/credit/>

CRedit has helped to reduce the potential for author disputes and supports adherence to authorship processes and policies. It may be beneficial to discuss CRedit's contributor roles with your supervisor and refer to them throughout the duration of your project.

### **Tips on how to have the authorship discussion**

Nature Journal published the following article which provides some hints on how to have the authorship discussion: [Dance A. Authorship: Who's on first?, \*Nature\* 2012; 489: 591-593](#)

When many scientists work together, determining authorship isn't always easy. Here are some tips for consideration:

- Make sure that you choose collaborators with whom you can work well.
- Discuss authorship early, and keep doing so often as a project evolves. Put it in writing.
- When there are disputes, first try to talk it out amicably and understand the other person's point of view. For example, try to work out how the idea first came about.

- If you approach your supervisor to discuss an authorship decision that you don't agree with, keep the tone inquisitive, not accusatory. Explain that you want to understand how authorship was decided.
- If a contributor's authorship is uncertain, it can help to consider what the paper would have looked like without their efforts, and whether someone else could have easily made the same contribution.
- Familiarize yourself with your institution's or journal's authorship guidelines, or those of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.
- Be prepared to compromise or share credit.

### **Who should be first author?**

Who should be first author is a common question. Points for students to keep in mind are:

- Creativity (such as in conceiving the research hypothesis) and novel intellectual contributions are the most important factors for determining who should be the first author.
- Doing a great deal of work (such as going through many, many charts) is a necessary contribution to a project. But doing a great deal of work in itself does not warrant first authorship.

In general, the expectation is that the first author will play a substantial role in preparing the manuscript for publication, often being responsible for drafting the article in its entirety.

For more information on writing, presenting and publishing your work, as well as information on how to pick a journal for publication, please refer to our website here: <https://www.med.ubc.ca/current-learners/research/present-publish/>

FLEX students with authorship questions can also refer to the FLEX Guidelines for Authorship hosted on Entrada.