

Rutgers University School of Social Work

PhD Program: Guidelines for Student/Faculty Co-authorship on Scholarly Publications

Although many different traditions of joint authorship exist among different disciplines, Rutgers' School of Social Work provides a set of general principles that intend to serve as a guide for PhD students.

Scholarly publications are defined as manuscripts, abstracts, presentations, and grant applications. It is generally appropriate to address questions of authorship at the earliest practical stage of research projects. The major topics to address include the following— (1) who will be named as an author or acknowledged as a contributor if the study is submitted for publication, presentation, or grant funding; (2) what will be the order of authorship, and (3) what are the responsibilities and expectations for each contributor to the study.

It is also important to recognize that roles often change during the course of a project and it may not be possible to appropriately evaluate each author's relative contribution to the work until the final scholarly product is actually written or delivered. For this reason, it is important for all involved parties to re-discuss authorship whenever significant changes occur and make it clear to all participants from the start that final decisions about authorship can be extended until the time of submission.

Recommended Criteria for Authorship

- The person made a significant contribution to the conception and design of the project, or the analysis and interpretation of the data, or other substantial scholarly effort.
- The person participated in drafting, reviewing and/or revising the work; and approved the final version for publication.
- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take full responsibility for his or her contributions to the content.

Order of Authorship

- As a practical matter, with multi-authored scholarly products, it is usually important to designate or acknowledge one individual as the lead author, who takes responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole. This lead author often also serves as the corresponding author.
- The lead author has responsibility for 1) including as co-authors all those who meet the three criteria defined above; and 2) obtaining from all co-authors their agreement to be designated as such.
- The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. If a decision cannot be reached, the lead author should have final decision.
- When the student works on a faculty member's funded or original research project, the student must obtain a priori permission to develop an independent project. Similarly, a paper developed by the student in an independent study will usually justify status of principal author.
- When a student is designated as the first and corresponding author of a co-authored manuscript with a faculty member, it is recommended that they consult with the faculty member with regard to how to communicate with editors prior to submission as well as throughout the publication process.

Recommended Criteria for Acknowledgement

- Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of a research group does not justify authorship unless the individual also fulfills the above recommended criteria for authorship. Data collection alone is not sufficient to obtain authorship credit. This is also the case with data entry or copy-editing. Similarly, conducting data analyses designed and overseen by others does not merit authorship. There must be a substantive intellectual contribution to the writing, conceptualization, or analysis of a collaborative effort in order to receive credit for authorship.
- Anyone who does not meet the above authorship criteria but who has made other substantial contributions (such as technical help, writing assistance, etc.) should be acknowledged in the final product.
- A student hired to photocopy articles, interview respondents, edit a text, or conduct an electronic search is not performing an intellectual task that merits co-authorship. The student can expect to be included as a co-author if s/he is asked to perform an exhaustive summary/review of the literature that necessitates an intellectual effort.
- Minor contributions to the research or the writing for publication are appropriately acknowledged, such as in a footnote or in an introductory statement.

Revised May 1 2017

PhD Executive Committee