# Authorship Policy (MPF1181)

## OBJECTIVE

## The objective of this policy is to prescribe the standards of responsible, honest, fair and accurate acknowledgement of authorship contribution required by the University of Melbourne and to facilitate compliance with [*The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018)(2018) (‘the Code’), the supporting ‘Guides’, including the *Authorship Guide* (2019) and the University’s Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy ([MPF1318](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1318)).

## SCOPE

Excluding patents, this policy applies to the dissemination of all University of Melbourne research, referred to throughout the policy as University ‘research outputs’. This policy also applies to the attribution of authorship in materials developed in the course of research such as research proposals, grant applications, reports for funding agencies and tenders.

## AUTHORITY

This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 (Vic](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/university-melbourne-act-2009/007)) and the [Vice-Chancellor Regulation](https://about.unimelb.edu.au/strategy/governance/regulatory-framework/legislative-framework) and is to be read in conjunction with the Code and with any other policies specifically referred to herein.

## POLICY

* 1. The University is committed to ensuring the community can trust the integrity of the University’s research by promoting and fostering a culture of best research practice, in which its researchers accurately acknowledge all those who have contributed to the research. The University requires that its researchers will adhere to:
     1. the Principles and Responsibilities of responsible authorship practices as described in the Code; and
     2. the Procedural Principles described in Section 5 of this policy.
  2. In accordance with the Code, researchers must appropriately recognise, value and respect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and afford appropriate acknowledgement and consideration of authorship within the planning and dissemination of research.

### PROCEDURAL PRINCIPLES

* 1. Authorship recognises a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output. In determining this policy, the University considers that authorship:
     + 1. must be an accurate reflection of contribution to research and its output;
       2. must be assigned fairly and consistently as aligned with established disciplinary practices;
       3. must be agreed to by all contributors and communicated clearly and transparently between them; and
       4. should be approached with generosity whilst remaining true to the policy requirements.

### Authorship criteria

* 1. Researchers qualify as authors if they have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output. While noting that some journals, disciplines and institutions may require a higher threshold, the University requires, unless there are exceptional circumstances, authorship contributions to meet at least two or more of the following:
     1. conception and design of the research described in the research output;
     2. acquisition and/or processing of research data where it has required significant intellectual judgement or input;
     3. substantial contribution of knowledge which influences the research and its output, including Indigenous knowledge;
     4. analysis or interpretation of research data; and
     5. drafting significant parts of the research output or redrafting the research output so as to critically change or substantively advance the interpretation.
  2. Failure to attribute authorship honestly, transparently, accurately and fairly constitutes a breach of the Code and this policy.
  3. Authorship must not be attributed when a researcher has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output. Authorship should not be attributed solely on the basis of the provision of:
     1. funding, data, materials, infrastructure or access to equipment;
     2. routine technical support; or
     3. technical advice or technical assistance;

In addition, authorship should not be attributed solely on the basis of a paid or voluntary contribution, or the position or status of an individual (gift or guest authorship).

* 1. Contributions to research and its output that do not meet the authorship criteria described in 5.2 must be appropriately recognised by acknowledgement in the research output in a manner appropriate for the type of contribution and research output.
  2. Authors must:
     1. agree to be listed as an author;
     2. agree on authorship in writing prior to submission for publication and/or dissemination of the research output; and
     3. agree to be accountable for the research output. Authors are directly responsible for the integrity and accuracy of their contribution, and also should take reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of all other co-authors.

**Researcher responsibilities**

* 1. All authors have a responsibility to ensure that all contributors to the research and its output, including students, Graduate Researchers and Research Assistants, are properly recognised through authorship or acknowledgement, including appropriate recording of preferred name and affiliation.
  2. All researchers should discuss authorship between potential co-authors and contributors at an early stage of planning a research publication, as well as throughout the research, to reflect any changes in circumstances and/or contributions to the research.
  3. The intention of authorship discussions is to reach an Authorship Agreement. Discussions should include all potential co-authors, and cover basic and discipline-specific aspects of authorship, such as:
     1. the expectations of individuals and the collaboration;
     2. the expected outcomes from the research;
     3. the probable research outputs that will be generated;
     4. the roles and interests of researchers who will contribute to the work;
     5. who will be an author (inclusive of authorship order and consideration of co-authorship);
     6. who will receive acknowledgement; and
     7. who will be the Coordinating Author.
  4. In addition to fulfilling the criteria for authorship, the Coordinating Author’s role is normally to have overseen the research and to attest to the integrity and accuracy of the research as a whole. They are also responsible for communication between the authors and the publishers and managing communication between the co-authors.
  5. Researchers should keep a record of all authorship discussions on the understanding that changes in authorship over the course of research are likely, and Authorship Agreements should be reviewed to reflect these changes. These records should be made available to all researchers involved in the research.
  6. Final Authorship must be agreed to by all authors prior to dissemination of the research output, via the finalised Authorship Agreement.
  7. The Authorship Agreement must include:

1. author’s preferred name and title;
2. author’s affiliation(s);
3. a description of all individual’s contributions made to the research and its output;
4. justification of decisions regarding authorship inclusion and authorship exclusion, inclusive of where an author has been included due to exceptional circumstances, where applicable;
5. the agreed authorship order, where applicable; and
6. identification of the Coordinating Author.
   1. A person who qualifies as an author must not be included or excluded without their written agreement and a record of this agreement must be kept.
   2. The Coordinating Author must distribute and maintain records of the Authorship Agreement for at least five years and in accordance with the Research Data Management Policy (MPF1242) and the Records Management Policy (MPF1106). Where the Coordinating Author is not a University of Melbourne researcher, authors are encouraged to keep their own records.
   3. Researchers should obtain permission from named contributors before acknowledging them in research outputs, and acknowledge in an agreed manner.
   4. Where researchers are unsure about authorship conventions, they should seek advice from a Research Integrity Advisor.
   5. Failure to reach agreement for authorship constitutes a dispute. Where a dispute arises between authors it is to be resolved in accordance with this policy.

### Management of authorship disputes

* 1. Parties in dispute are to attempt to resolve the matter through direct dialogue, with records of the discussion maintained and outcomes communicated to all involved.
  2. Where this is unsuccessful, authorship disputes should be referred to the Dean or Delegate for facilitation. If there is a Conflict of Interest that cannot be appropriately managed, the dispute should be referred to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) for facilitation.
  3. Where required, the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity can support the local level facilitation in the first instance.
  4. Records of agreement (ie. Authorship Agreement) reached after resolution by direct dialogue or facilitation shall be maintained by the parties to the dispute and the facilitator where applicable.
  5. Where resolution of the dispute is not reached, the output cannot be published.
  6. Where in the opinion of the appointed facilitator or disputing parties, the dispute might represent a potential breach of the Code, as per the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy (MPF1318) the dispute must be referred to the Office for Research Ethics and Integrity.
  7. The Office of Research Ethics and Integrity will consider and handle the dispute as a potential breach of the Code, as per the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy (MPF1318).
  8. Where the dispute pertains to authorship of a research output post publication, the matter must be referred to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, as a potential breach of the Code, as per the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy (MPF1318).
  9. Legal representation for any party to an authorship dispute is not ordinarily permitted.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

* [Template Authorship Record Form](https://gateway.research.unimelb.edu.au/resources/ethics-and-integrity/research-integrity/research-integrity-in-practice/authorship-and-publication-practices)
* Authorship Dispute Resolution Procedure Flowchart

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Role/Decision/Action*** | ***Responsibility*** | ***Conditions and limitations*** |
| Are directly responsible for the integrity and accuracy of their contribution, and should take reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of all other co-authors. Should maintain records relating to their direct contributions to research and its output, and authorship discussions and decisions. | Authors |  |
| Oversees the research and can attest to the integrity and accuracy of the research as a whole. Further, responsible for communication between the publishers, managing communication between the co-authors and distributing and maintaining records of the Authorship Agreement. | Coordinating Author |  |
| Facilitates dispute resolution where attempt to reach resolution amongst researchers is unsuccessful. Must maintain records of dispute facilitation and decisions of resolution. Where a potential breach of the Code is identified, refers dispute to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity. | Dean or Delegate | Will recuse themselves and delegate responsibility in cases where there could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest in their involvement. |
| Receives concerns regarding potential breaches of the Code. Oversees the University’s processes for responding to potential breaches of the Code | Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity | Will recuse themselves and delegate responsibility in cases where there could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest in their involvement. |
| Can provide initial support to facilitators for dispute resolution where required, and provides support in the handling of concerns relating to potential breaches of the Code. | Office of Research Ethics and Integrity |  |
| Advise on responsible research practices, inclusive of discipline specific authorship and citation practices. Can provide advice on raising a concern relating to a potential breach of the Code to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity. | Research Integrity Advisors | Appointment by nomination from an Associate Dean of Research or equivalent. Will delegate responsibility in cases where there could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest in their involvement. |

## DEFINITIONS

## Acknowledgement means the practice of formally acknowledging all contributors to research and its output. This may include contributions made by researchers, technical support, funding bodies, research infrastructure facilities and organisations.

## Author means an individual or writing group that has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and is willing to be responsible for that contribution, and who has agreed to be listed as an author as described in this Policy at clauses 5.2-5.7.

## Authorship Agreement means a record of contributions to research and its output, inclusive of the agreed to authorship inclusions and exclusions. An Authorship Agreement should identify the Coordinating Author. The record of Authorship Agreement must be written, however it may be informal (e.g. email, letters, etc. that outline the discussions and decisions being made).

## Authorship inclusion is offered to those who have made a significant scholarly contribution to a research and its output and meet the requirements for authorship as described within this policy.

## Authorship exclusion occurs when a contributor does not meet the requirements for authorship as described within this policy or declines authorship.

## Breach of the Code means a failure to meet the obligations and requirements of the Code.

## Conflict of Interest means where a researcher may be unduly influenced by other, competing interests. This could be a financial or non-financial interest and may be a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest.

**Contribution of knowledge means** circumstances where a body of knowledge is contributed to research and its output in which that knowledge significantly influences the research and/or its output, for example Indigenous knowledge obtained through unpublished manuscripts, or audio, or video recordings. Such contributions should be considered for acknowledgement and/or authorship, where appropriate.

**Coordinating Author** means an individual, as agreed to by all co-authors, who is ultimately responsible for the publication and dissemination of a research output. The Coordinating Author may also be referred to via varying terminology dependent on the discipline, for example: senior author, lead author, primary author, corresponding author, responsible author, etc.

## Contributor means all those, including researchers and others, who have made a contribution to research and/or its output, whether qualifying for authorship or not.

## Exceptional circumstances means a circumstance that is out of the ordinary, special or uncommon. An exceptional circumstance cannot be one that is regularly or normally encountered. To avoid doubt, ordinary disciplinary practice is not, of itself, an exceptional circumstance. Such circumstances must be justifiable, recorded in the authorship agreement, and agreed to by all authors.

**Facilitation** means the process through which an appointed facilitator aids disputing parties towards an agreed resolution and Authorship Agreement.

**Gift authorship** occurs where an individual is included as an author, who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution, but inclusion is based on the position or profession of that individual, such as their role as the author’s supervisor or head of department. This is not an acceptable practice and is inconsistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code and this Policy.

**Guest authorship** occurs where an individual is included as an author, who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution, but inclusion would elevate the esteem of the research. This is not an acceptable practice and is inconsistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code and this Policy.

**Graduate Researcher** means a person admitted to a Research Degree as defined in the Courses, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy (MPF1327) or whose research under consideration was undertaken while admitted to a Research Degree.

**Non-traditional research output** means research outputs that do not take the form of published books, book chapters, journal articles, conference publications or traditional forms of outputs. Examples include: original creative works, live performance of creative works, recorded/rendered creative works, curated or produced substantial public exhibitions and events, research reports for an external body portfolio.

**Research Output** can be anything in hardcopy, electronic or other form that communicates or makes available the products of research, inclusive of non-traditional research outputs. This includes, but is not limited to: journal articles, books and book chapters, conference abstracts, creative works, exhibitions, videos, performances, web-based publications and the making of any form of scholarly work available over the Internet.

**Researcher** means any University Student, Employee and honorary (noting that an honorary may be a clinical fellow or an emeritus appointment) who is, engaged in research and/or research support at the University, as defined in the University Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy (MPF1318). This is inclusive of Graduate Researchers and Research Assistants.

## The Code means the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018).

## POLICY APPROVER

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

## POLICY STEWARD

The Director, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity.

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by XXXX.

## VERSION HISTORY

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Approved By** | **Approval Date** | **Effective Date** | **Sections Modified** |
| 1 | Academic Board | 29 April 2013 | 29 April 2013 | N/A |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |