Practical checklist for student participation in research projects

Statement of purpose and scope

The University of Copenhagen wishes to encourage students' involvement in academic research in accordance with the University's strategy. Often, student involvement in research projects can be of great value to both the research and the student. But such collaborations may give rise to several types of challenges.

This checklist is an optional tool that specifies a number of practical questions that the student and the researcher can consider when students are involved in research projects. The purpose is to raise awareness of some of the issues that may arise later in connection with students' participation in research projects. The questions in the checklist concern different categories of issues, and not all questions will be relevant in all research projects.

The checklist is based on the premise that the student provides substantial *scientific* contributions to the research product, which, according to the general rules, will give the student a right to co-authorship, etc. Parts of the checklist may, however, also be used in cases where the student is only involved as *technical help*. In such cases, the questions regarding credits and intellectual property rights will typically not matter. In this context, it is important that the student and the researcher align their expectations as early in the process as possible. They can, for example, consider the student's role in the research project and what the student should gain from participating in the research project.

'*Student*' includes both bachelor and master's degree students, *regardless of whether* they are paid, and *regardless of whether* the research project is/becomes part of their studies or whether it is done out of sheer interest.

PhD students are not mentioned here as they are subject to special regulations.

The checklist does not concern *employment law questions*, including employment contracts, pay, working hours and holidays, etc. Such questions are handled by the relevant HR departments.

The checklist concerns students who take part in research projects as *individuals*. If *several students* are involved in a kind of group, for example because they are planning to do joint *project work* as part of their studies, a number of questions may arise between the students, which they should be encouraged to resolve themselves.

I.   Management questions

1. Which researcher *heads* the research project?[1]
2. If the head of research is not in charge of the dialogue with the student, which research project participant (hereinafter referred to as the *contact person*) is then?

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[1]The head of the research project should in all cases approve the student's affiliation. Regardless of whether the head of research is involved in answering the questions in this checklist, they should be informed about the responses given by the student and the contact person.

3. If the student is paid
    a. *Who* pays the remuneration (e.g. UCPH, a foundation or an external partner)?
    b. *When* does the student officially start on the project as an informal participant or as an employee?
    c. By what *deadline* can students be asked to *withdraw* from the project or – if they have joined as an employee – be *terminated* from their job?
    d. Is there a need to define the student's *paid work* as opposed to work that can be attributed solely to study-related project work?
4. If the student is to be employed, who initiates and follows up on the *recruitment process*?
5. Should the student have access to *office or laboratory facilities*?
6. Should the student have a separate *email address* related to the project or otherwise appear in email lists etc. associated with the project?
7. What rights should the student have to access *administrative systems* at UCPH, and who is to follow up on whether these access requirements are met?

II.   Credits questions

1. Is the student expected to receive credits for their participation in the research project at present or in future?[2]
2. If the student is expected to receive credits, will it be as a(n)
    - Bachelor project
    - Master's thesis
    - Academic internship, cf. sections 16 and 22 of the University Programme Order?[3]
3. Which researcher will be supervisor, and subsequently assessor, of the project/thesis?
4. How will the required arm's length between the supervisor and the student be ensured prior to the examination in a credits awarding project?
5. If the student participates in an academic internship, who is then the
    - *Internal* supervisor (this should not be the project's *contact person*, see I.2)?
    - *External* supervisor (typically the appointed teaching supervisor/assessor)?

III.   Publication and co-authorship

1. Is the student expected to be *co-author* of publications resulting from the project?
2. If the answer to question 1 is yes, who then *makes the decision* on whether and how (including in which order) the student will be listed as a co-author?
3. If the answer to question 1 is no, then it should be decided whether the student should be *acknowledged* and who from the project is to *approve* this acknowledgement.
4. Is the student expected to *be able to publish their* own contributions to the project, including collected data or written contributions, etc.?

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[2] Most research projects carried out within the framework of a bachelor or master's degree programme are realised as a bachelor project or a master's thesis. The rules under the University Programme Order apply to such projects. In addition, special rules apply to individual degree programmes.

[3] There are common guidelines for academic internships at UCPH and, also, separate rules at each faculty. Project students in such internships are not employees and are not to receive pay. A project contract that is approved by the faculty must be entered into. The contract sets the educational framework for the internship.

5. If the answer to question 4 is yes, can such a publication be based on material, including data, findings and analyses that the project *has not yet published*?
6. If the answer to question 4 is yes, must the student obtain *consent* from the project before publication?
7. Should the project or individual project participants have the *right to publish data, findings and analyses* that the student has obtained and produced?

IV. Confidentiality and non-disclosure etc.

1. Should the student be under *a duty to treat confidentially* the research results that are being processed in the research project?
2. If the answer to question 1 is yes, which elements must be included in this non-disclosure agreement, for example:
   a. *For how long* will confidentiality apply (defined in terms of time in relation to publication or publication of patent applications)?
   b. Who *signs* the non-disclosure agreement along with the student (typically the head of the project)?
   c. Is the *Tech Transfer Office* involved in the project?[4]
   d. If the Tech Transfer Office is involved, have any *special agreements* been made with the student?[5]
3. Has the student been made especially aware of the relevant rules on confidentiality and personal data protection, including
   a. the security rules in articles 32-34 of GDPR
   b. section 10 of the Danish Data Protection Act
   c. section 30 of the Danish Public Administration Act
   d. sections 32 and 46-48 of the Danish Health Act
   e. section 40 of the Danish Archives Act
4. Does the student need access to internal UCPH systems (see above under I.7)?
5. Has the student been made aware of the University of Copenhagen's policy for research data management[6]?

V. Intellectual property law questions

1. What intellectual property rights might the project lead to (in particular *copyright*, rights to *databases*, *etc*. and *patent law*)?

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[4]The Tech Transfer Office has prepared forms for standard contracts regarding collaboration between researchers and students. To get the forms please contact the Tech Trans Office.

[5] The Act on Inventions at Public-Sector Research Institutions only applies when the student is *employed*. According to section 2 of this Act, the legislation applies to 'inventions' made by employees as part of their work (see below) for an institution as mentioned in section 6. Within the meaning of the Act, an 'invention' is something that can be patented in accordance with the Danish Patent Act or registered as a utility model in accordance with the Consolidated Utility Models Act. The term 'work' includes all activities carried out under the contract of employment. Students are 'employees' when they receive pay and have employment contracts, just as PhD students are when they are employed by the institution. Otherwise, they are not. Pursuant to section 8 of the Act, the University is entitled to be assigned the rights associated with the invention when an employee (including a student) has made an invention as part of their work. This also applies if the invention has been made jointly by several employees at the institution.
If an employee enters into a collaboration involving employees from several institutions, the institutions shall agree on how to distribute their rights under this Act.

[6] Is expected to be given final approval at the end of June or in early August.

2. If the project is likely to lead to *patent rights*, is the student expected to have a share in these rights due to their *general* involvement in the project, or in cases where the student plays a *decisive* role in a patentable invention?
3. Will the student be listed as a *co-author* of joint publications (which are subject to copyright)?
4. If the answer to question 3 is no, an agreement should be made with the student where they explicitly *waive their* rights to co-authorship, even if the they may have such rights in accordance with copyright rules. Has such an agreement been made?
5. If the answer to question 3 is yes, is the student then to be co-author on *an equal footing* with the other co-authors (in accordance with the Danish Copyright Act's definition of joint authorship)?
6. If the answer to question 3 is yes, which rights under copyright law should the student be able to exercise in cases where
   a. the student *opposes publishing* the joint publication?
   b. the student *opposes a secondary use* of the joint publication (for example, allowing an anthology to bring it)?
   c. the student *separately wishes to publish* text that is part of a joint publication?
   d. the student wishes to *publish their own text*, which without reusing text from the joint publication contains its findings and assumptions?

VI.   Conflicts of interest

1. Is the student, when joining the research project, already involved in a conflict of interest as a result of their, or any related parties', personal involvement with
   a. other project participants, such as a current or future supervisor?[7]
   b. grant donors or external parties who may be assumed to have an individual interest in the course and outcome of the project?
2. If the answer to question 1 is yes, and the student, despite this, is desired to be associated with the project, *what steps* have been taken to mitigate the consequences of the conflict of interest. For example,
   a. Has the conflict of interest been made visible to the *head of centre or department* at UCPH who has overall responsibility for the project?
   b. Has the conflict of interest been made visible to *other participants* in the project outside UCPH, for example, other universities, foundations or external partners?
   c. Has *consent* been obtained, if possible, from the third parties concerned?
3. Is there a risk that, as a result of their involvement in the project, the student may, now or later, find themselves in a conflict of interest or be the cause of conflicts of interest between *other parties involved*? Examples of potential conflicts of interest may arise in relation to
   a. A *possible academic* disagreement between the student and other project participants who will later be the student's assessor, for example during a project exam.
   b. Disagreement between the student and other project participants on questions concerning *publication and rights*, cf. above under III.

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[7] Two participants in the same research project, who appear in the role of supervisor/assessor and student, may be influenced by contradictory motives. The student, who is dependent on the researcher's goodwill in connection with supervision and assessment, may feel inclined to agree with the supervisor's assumptions etc. in order to avoid appearing unknowledgeable or difficult. Similarly, the student may be motivated to accept terms and conditions for their research work, or to lend their name to research results that a peer researcher might not have done. Questions such as these should be addressed in advance in the research environment and in all cases be discussed between the parties involved before the project moves in a direction that may make them relevant.

    c.   The student's position in an academic or employment-related *disagreement or conflict* that has not emerged from the project itself.

    d.   The student's possible wish for *future employment* with a party that may be assumed to be in a conflict of interest with the project and its participants.

VII.   Formal and administrative questions

1. Has it been decided who has the *authority to settle disagreements* between students and other project participants (e.g. the head of research or the head of centre or department at UCPH who has overall responsibility for the project)?

2. Has a procedure been decided for use in the event that it is not possible to reach agreement on the *final content of the publication*:

    a.   For example, how to avoid a situation where several people submit a publication from the project in parallel and to the same journal?

    b.   For example, should one party be given prior access to doing so (before another party)?

3. Who is responsible for ensuring that the above questions are asked and answered before the student joins the research project?

 28 May 2021

Practice Committee