



University of Copenhagen guidelines on authorship of scholarly publications

1. General: Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

According to article 4 of [The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) fair attribution of authorship and appropriate acknowledgement of contributions that do not meet the criteria for authorship contribute to the transparency and credibility of research. Both elements are key to upholding the responsible conduct of research.

These guidelines, which are based on the principles of the Danish Code of Conduct, contain practical advice and considerations which may be useful in the deliberations of how and by which criteria it is decided to credit authors of scholarly publications.

These guidelines replace the University of Copenhagen's Code of Conduct for Authorship of 22 February 2017.

Parts of the guidelines have been updated in view of the latest version of the Vancouver authorship guidelines. The guidelines also take into account comments from the Practice Committee at the University of Copenhagen.

2. Individual or joint authorship

- i. It follows from the principle of freedom of research and freedom of publication that each researcher (i.e. everyone who contributes to the research project, including students working as research assistants and PhD students) can decide for themselves whether they want to work alone or with others. It is a consequence of each researcher's choice of working method whether the research outcome should be published alone or with one or more co-authors.
- ii. Before an academic collaboration begins, the participants should align their expectations as to authorship of the publications which the collaboration is expected to result in. The discussion, which should include all participants, should, among other things, clarify criteria for attributing co-authorship. Aligning expectations is particularly appropriate in the case of interdisciplinary research collaborations.

3. Attributing authorship

- i. Attributing authorship should be based on the criteria a-d as set out in the

ICMJE / Vancouver guidelines.¹ All researchers who meet the following criteria should therefore be acknowledged as authors:

- a. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data for the work; *and*
- b. Drafting the text or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; *and*
- c. Final approval of the version to be published; *and*
- d. Agreeing to be accountable for all aspects of the work by ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The key requirement for (co-)authorship is criterion a, according to which the author must have provided a significant (substantial) contribution to the research on which a publication is based (which in theoretical research will be of a different kind than contributing to the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of ‘data’).

Since the Vancouver guidelines do not specify a precise limit for what is required for a contribution to be “substantial”, it is to some extent possible, subject to the traditions of the individual academic areas, to have different views as to when a contribution is at a level so that it meets criterion a.

Thus, authorship does not require being author of the text in a literal or traditional sense; however, it is still a requirement that an author must at least contribute to a critical review of the text.

- ii. If a researcher meets criterion a, the author(s) responsible for the publication should allow the researcher the opportunity to meet criteria b-d on reasonable terms. If it is not possible to agree on what constitutes reasonable terms, there may be grounds for seeking mediation – e.g. from a Named Person (see 6 below).
- iii. Decisions concerning publication should be taken jointly and should be notified to all co-authors. Any modifications to the manuscript during the editorial process should be made in agreement with all authors.
- iv. Researchers who otherwise meet the criteria for authorship may choose not to be credited as author regardless of their reasons here for. Irrespective of the researcher's reasons for not wanting to be credited as author, their important work or intellectual contribution to the publication must be disclosed, e.g. under acknowledgements. If listed in the acknowledgements, the researcher should be informed. At the request of the researcher, their reason for not being credited as

¹International Committee of Medical Journal Editors – Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals, updated January 2024: [ICMJE | Recommendations](#)

author should be stated.

- v. Important work and intellectual contributions of others that have influenced the reported research without meeting the criteria for co-authorship should be appropriately acknowledged, e.g. in acknowledgements.
- vi. It is recommended to specify the contributions provided by co-authors either in the publication itself or in a document attached to the publication. This can be done by using CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy), which is an internationally recognised terminology for author contributions.
- vii. If authorship is listed under a group name, all members of the group must fully meet the criteria for claiming authorship, unless otherwise indicated.
- viii. If authorship is listed under a group name, it is also possible to credit the members of the group who are not authors but solely collaborative partners (sometimes referred to as non-author contributors). In such cases, the publication must clearly state which members of the group are authors and which are not.
- ix. There are different perspectives, often linked to different traditions, as to the order in which the authors are listed in a publication. Before beginning a collaboration, participants in a research project, particularly an interdisciplinary collaboration, should align their expectations on this matter. If the order in which authors are listed is intended to reflect their respective roles, this should be stated. Scientific journals increasingly impose this requirement (see above).
- x. In cases where the research group behind the creation of a dataset or other material suitable for publication are unable to agree on the form of publication, the potential authors should consider signing an agreement to publish the material in several forms. Such an agreement should be accompanied by terms and conditions stipulating that the relevant publications specify that the publication is based on the same material as the other publication(s). Without such indication, the matter may under the circumstances be deemed as questionable research practice in the form of a hidden duplicate publication.

4. Author responsibility

- i. In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work authored by themselves, each author is obligated to help identify which co-authors are responsible for other specific parts of the work.
- ii. All authors have academic responsibility for their own contributions to the publication and must also be able to trust the integrity of the other authors' contributions. However, the responsibility of each author should be assessed subject to their individual role in the research by taking into account their area of expertise, their experience and seniority, a possible supervisory role and other relevant factors. They may agree that one author in particular must be able to vouch for the integrity of the entire publication.

- iii. Researchers with author roles are jointly responsible for ensuring that everyone listed as author is qualified as such and for duly acknowledging contributions that do not meet the authorship criteria as listed above.
- iv. Researchers should deal with authorship issues – especially concerning partners’ and contributors’ roles – as early as possible while also acknowledging that roles and contributions may change in the course of the research work. Co-authors of a joint publication should take care to maintain regular contact and discuss how developments in the work will affect authorship roles, e.g. in the case of maternity/paternity leave, illness, job changes or stays abroad.
- v. In a PhD student/supervisor relationship, the supervisory role does not in itself justify co-authorship. However, the supervisor may directly or indirectly through a supervision have contributed substantially to a publication thus qualifying the supervisor to be invited in as a co-author of the publication, cf. Vancouver criterion a.

5. Blacklist

The following ways of attributing authorship violate the rules on responsible research:

- i. Authorship solely based on assistance that does not involve a substantial contribution to the content of the research (cf. Vancouver criterion a.), e.g. through funding or by making research facilities available, providing general administrative support, assisting in writing reporting texts, technical editing, language revision or proofreading.
- ii. Not citing individuals who have made a substantial contribution (known as ghost authorship), e.g. motivated by a desire to hide financial interests – see 3, iv listing alternatives to authorship as a way of acknowledging substantial contributions.

These examples are not exhaustive.

6. Disagreements about authorship

Disagreements about authorship should be handled in accordance with the following guidelines:

- i. In the first instance, disagreements should be sought resolved through mediation. The mediator could be the faculty's Named Person, a research director, the PhD school head/coordinator or another independent expert in whom all parties to the disagreement have confidence.
- ii. If part of the disagreement concerns tasks, responsibilities, superiority / sub-

ordination or other matters that are not exclusively concerned with the scholarly and intellectual conditions for authorship, the issue should be submitted to the local management. If one of the parties finds that the local management are subject to conflicts of interest, a higher management level should be involved.

7. Using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies

If AI-assisted technologies such as large language models, chatbots or image creating programs have been used in the scholarly work, this must be clearly stated and declared in the publication.

Chatbots and the like cannot be listed as co-authors of scholarly work; researchers who use AI-assisted technologies in their work must be able to account for the results.

8. Accessibility and information

- i. The University of Copenhagen ensures that these guidelines are freely and easily accessible to anyone with a research association to the University, including on a searchable central website.
- ii. The University of Copenhagen ensures that new employees and visiting researchers are made aware of these guidelines.
- iii. The University of Copenhagen ensures that these guidelines are included in courses on responsible research.

Approved by the executive management at the University of Copenhagen on 19 September 2024.

Henrik C. Wegener

Rector