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# 1. Introduction

This guide supports the implementation of the [\*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research\*](#)

Authorship must not be attributed when an individual has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to a research output and, as a general rule, all those who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution should be named as authors. If an individual is unwilling to be accountable for their contribution by being named as an author, their contribution should generally not be included in the research output. Institutional policies should clarify the circumstances in which these contributions should be included and how inclusion of such contributions should be handled, and require that all named authors must have confidence in the integrity and accuracy of these contributions.

Authorship should not be attributed solely on the basis of:

- the provision of funding, data, materials, infrastructure or access to equipment
- the provision of routine technical support, technical advice or technical assistance
- the position or profession of an individual, such as their role as the author's supervisor or head of department ('gift authorship')
- whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary
- the status of an individual who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution being such that it would elevate the esteem of the research ('guest authorship').

For a person to claim, demand, or accept authorship without having made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution is a breach of the Code. Similarly, it is a breach of the Code for a person to offer or attribute authorship to someone who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution.

Students and junior researchers who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution are entitled to authorship, notwithstanding that they may have been more closely supervised.

Sometimes the editor of a significant collective work or anthology of research papers has made contributions analogous to those of authors and, in such cases, similar criteria may apply to 'editor' as to 'author'. However, the term 'editor' should be applied only to a person

The institutional policies should include guidance on:

- criteria used to determine who is eligible to be an author and their responsibilities
- the use and applicability of discipline-specific guidelines
- dealing with authorship disputes (see Section 5).

The institutional policies should apply to the authorship of all research outputs (including non-traditional research outputs) and the attribution of authorship in other documents related to research, such as research proposals, grant applications, reports for funding agencies, tenders, patents and patent applications, etc.

The institutional policies should also apply to web-based publications and applications, including professional blogs and any form of authored research output that is made publicly available.

Institutions should ensure that their authorship policies are readily accessible via the institution's website.

Institutions may develop or adopt discipline-specific guidelines that are consistent with this guide, the institutional authorship policies and established disciplinary norms.

## 3.2 Provide training for researchers

Institutions must provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct and assists all researchers and those in other relevant roles to follow the institution's authorship policies and other relevant disciplinary-specific policies.

### ***Under the Code, institutions have responsibilities to:***

- R4 Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles.*
- R5 Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources.*

# 4. Responsibilities of researchers

This section provides guidance on the responsibilities that researchers have in relation to authorship. Researchers should also refer to their institutional policies and the Code.

## 4.1 Ensure appropriate and fair attribution of authorship

The corresponding author has primary responsibility for ensuring that all contributors to the research output are properly recognised regardless of their position or any changes in their position or role. All authors should alert the corresponding author to any author or contributor who may have been inadvertently omitted. References in this paragraph should be interpreted to include contributions from student and junior researchers.

### ***Under the Code, researchers have the responsibility to:***

- R25 Ensure that authors of research outputs are all those, and only those, who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author.*

'Ghost authorship'—where an individual such as a research assistant or industry researcher meets the criteria for authorship but is not acknowledged as an author—is not an acceptable practice, and is inconsistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code and this guide.

A person who qualifies as an author must not be included or excluded without their written agreement. This written agreement should be provided by each author in a timely fashion. A record of each written agreement must be kept.

If an author is deceased, this should be noted in the publication.

## 4.2 Formalise authorship arrangements

All researchers should discuss authorship at an early stage in the research, as well as throughout the research project. Where there is more than one author, it is good practice to have an authorship agreement in place before the commencement of writing up a research project. An authorship agreement does not need to be a formal legal document. It can be in the form of emails, a transcript of an online discussion or other similar evidence of agreement.

The authorship agreement should include:

- identification of those who will be recognised as the authors of the research output
- a description of the contribution that each author has made (or will make) to the research output
- an indication of the order in which the authors appear. The agreed order of authors should be consistent with any applicable disciplinary norms and publication requirements
- identification of at least one corresponding author who is responsible for communication with the publisher and managing communication between the co-authors.

It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to maintain records of the authorship agreement. Where the corresponding author is not from the same institution as other listed authors, authors are encouraged to keep their own records.

As a project evolves, it is important to continue to discuss authorship, especially if new people become involved in the research and make a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution. The corresponding author should retain a record of any agreed changes to the authorship of a research output.

## 4.3 Acknowledge contributions other than authorship

Contributions to research that do not meet the criteria for authorship should be acknowledged

An author is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and integrity of their direct contribution to the research output. To achieve this, authors must adhere to the principles and responsibilities of the Code.

Authors are also responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of all other co-authors. This means that authors should, where feasible, be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work and that they should raise any concerns about the accuracy and integrity of the research before submission or publication.

If an individual does not agree to be accountable for their contribution, the contribution should not be included in the research output.

Following publication, all authors must also ensure that any concerns about the accuracy or integrity of any part of the output are appropriately responded to. This may mean providing all necessary evidence to demonstrate the accuracy and integrity of their contribution, or seeking such evidence from the other co-authors. It may result in correcting the public record by way of erratum or retraction.

If an author is deceased (or cannot be contacted after reasonable attempts have been made), all the co-authors must still have confidence in the accuracy and integrity of that author's contribution. This may require consideration of the underlying data and methodology.

## 4.5 Approve research output

Authors must approve the research output before its submission for publication and, in doing so, agree to be accountable for it. Authors must also approve the final version before publication. The final approval process may be coordinated by the publisher, often through the corresponding author.

The corresponding author must keep written records that confirm that approval has been obtained from all authors.

If an author is deceased, or after all reasonable efforts that have been made (n) JETC12. ooub1.3 (e)-15.2 (e)-1





