



UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG GUIDELINES ON CO-AUTHORSHIP: RESEARCH OUTPUT

1. PREAMBLE

Integral to the University of Johannesburg's vision of distinguished scholarship and its commitment to establish the University among the top research universities in the country is an acknowledgement of the contribution academic researchers, their associates/co-workers and postgraduate students make, and continue to make, in the realisation of this goal. At the same time, the University recognises that as research problems become more complex and/or interdisciplinary, greater numbers of researchers, co-workers, colleagues and postgraduate students are drawn into a research project, with a concomitant increase in the production of published research material arising from the research, which, in turn, raises the question as to who should be credited with authorship or co-authorship.

The issue is compounded by the fact that South African universities are funded, in part, on the number of papers published from which authorship brings explicit financial benefits to the institution, and often also to the author/s of a paper. In addition, authorship of papers is linked to status and standing among peers as well as opportunities for career advancement. Postgraduate students are increasingly expected to contribute to the institution's formal research output and now constitute a significant proportion of its formal authors. The more individuals involved in a research activity, the greater the potential for contestation of issues around questions of authorship.

These *Guidelines* are a key element in maintaining a climate of collegial effectiveness and efficiency, which is conducive to the highest levels of reputable research outputs and, at the same time, is as fair as possible to academic researchers, co-workers (who may include community engagement partners) and postgraduate student researchers alike.

2. PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to provide a framework to pre-empt contestation of matters pertaining to authorship as pressure to quantify research activities and output within universities increases. These guidelines aim to:

- 2.1 provide rational, fair, and ethical resolutions to questions around authorship of a published research output (i.e. whose name should appear on the published material, be it a paper in a DHET-accredited academic journal, a book or book

chapter, a conference proceeding, paper or poster, or any other form of publically or privately published research output); and

- 2.2 promote informed, empowered, transparent and rational discussions between all relevant parties in pursuit of an amicable resolution to questions relating to co-authorship.

3. SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

- 3.1 The *Guidelines* apply to all academic employees, postdoctoral research fellows pursuing research within the ambit of the University and all students registered for postgraduate (master's and doctoral) degrees at the University across all campuses, departments and faculties, as well as any community engagement research partners, where applicable.
- 3.2 These *Guidelines* do not apply to the question of ownership or inventorship of legally-protectable intellectual property such as inventions or trademarks.

4. AUTHORSHIP

- 4.1 Regardless of the different historic practices that may persist across the spectrum of academic and scientific disciplines, the fundamental principle underpinning the notion and application of authorship in an academic context is that *authorship of a publishable research output necessarily requires that anyone claiming authorship must have made a significant intellectual contribution to the particular material that is to be published.*

5. POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR DETERMINING AUTHORSHIP

- 5.1 The question of authorship must be negotiated in a fair and transparent manner, allowing all parties to put forward a claim to authorship on the basis of a *significant intellectual contribution* that they have made to the work to be published.
- 5.2 In cases of unequal relations between authors and co-authors, e.g. students and supervisors or junior and senior staff members, the process of determining authorship should be fair, equitable, transparent, participatory and based on rational discussions between all relevant parties.
- 5.3 Should disagreement occur:
 - 5.3.1 The conditions stipulated in Section 4 apply as a test to each claim on authorship; and
 - 5.3.2 The procedures laid down in Section 6 are followed to ensure a rational and objective resolution to a dispute on authorship.

6. PROCEDURES FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION ON AUTHORSHIP

- 6.1 The following three criteria must be satisfied to obtain credit for authorship and co-authorship:

- 6.1.1 The author must have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the conceptualization of the research and design, *or* to the analysis and interpretation of data; *and*
 - 6.1.2 The author must have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the drafting and content of the published output (essay, article, paper, or presentation); *and*
 - 6.1.3 Final agreement must exist between all authors/co-authors on the content of the version to be presented or published.
- 6.2 In respect of the publication of research output emerging from the research activities of enrolled postgraduate (master's or doctoral) students, the student's name must be included as an author.
 - 6.3 Upon registration, all new master's and doctoral students must be provided a copy of this guideline.
 - 6.4 Where a supervisor or co-supervisor believes he/she has a legitimate claim to authorship or co-authorship, this must be clearly communicated to the student, student-assistant or postdoctoral research fellow, citing the rationale supporting the claim. The student's views on this matter must be solicited.
 - 6.5 In the event of an agreement being reached, the supervisor(s) must obtain written, informed consent by the student, student-assistant or postdoctoral research fellow for co-presenting or co-publishing.
 - 6.6 In the event that parties to a publication (either a student, student-assistant, postdoctoral research fellow, supervisor(s) and/or staff member) are unable to reach agreement on the question of authorship and/or co-authorship, any party may appeal to the following individuals, who shall attempt to resolve the dispute:
 - 6.6.1 the Head of the Department concerned if the disagreement is between members of a department;
 - 6.6.2 the Executive Dean of the Faculty concerned in the event of a disagreement between members of a particular Faculty (but different departments); or
 - 6.6.3 the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Postgraduate Studies and Library & Information Centre) in the event that the disagreement is between members of different faculties.
 - 6.7 Should the above-mentioned prove unsuccessful, the Head of Department, or the Executive Dean or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Postgraduate Studies and Library & Information Centre) will be required to refer the matter either to the Faculty Ethics Committee, or to the Senate Academic Ethics Committee for final arbitration.
 - 6.9 Decisions regarding the inclusion of a contributor as an author and the order in which authors are cited need to be resolved in the manner outlined in this document before the research is published. Such decisions may also be affected by the guidelines of the journal in which the publication is to appear, disciplinary practices and/or the publisher of the book.
 - 6.10 Supervisors may rework and publish material from their student's dissertation or thesis in the form of a research article or conference proceeding after the particular student has left the University for 12 months or longer without showing any intention to publish such material. Before a supervisor embarks on such an

endeavour she/he must make all efforts to seek the student's written consent to rework and publish such material. In all such cases the student must be given due recognition as a co-author. If supervisors are unable to trace the student, they may proceed with such a publication (still including the student as a co-author). All such instances must be declared to the Executive Dean of the Faculty prior to proceeding with publication.

- 6.11 This guideline must be read in conjunction with the University's Code of Academic and Research Ethics.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS IN A RESEARCH OUTPUT

Significant assistance with the research activities by field workers, community stakeholders and/or partners must be duly acknowledged in any publication.

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