

# University of Limpopo

## Authorship guidelines <sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Definition of a publication

A *publication* is any document produced by a member of staff or student in the University of Limpopo, including project reports (and interim project reports), monographs, peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed articles and publication in electronic media.

### 1.2 Authorship and Co-Authorship

The University defines authorship as *substantial* participation in the writing of a publication. Substantial participation includes:

- a) writing;
- b) analysis *and* interpretation of data
- c) drafting or revising the article critically for important intellectual content
- d) in appropriate instances of empirical research, conception and design.

Where substantial contributions (as defined above) are made by several persons to a common project, they will be *joint authors of the product*. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. One or more authors should take responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole, from inception to published article. In a nutshell, Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. Transparency about the contributions of authors is encouraged, for example in the form of a contributorship statement<sup>2</sup>.

Authors should be able to provide a description of what each contributed. All others who contributed to the work who are not authors should be named in the Acknowledgements, and what they did should be described.

#### ***Order of author names on a jointly authored document:***

- a) Different levels of contribution: the person who has made the greatest contribution to the paper (often the project leader) is to be listed first with remaining authors listed in order of their contribution, unless stated otherwise by the specific publication platform.
- b) The same level of contribution: normally the person who led the production of the document is listed first. Remaining authors will be listed alphabetically. Where there is no principal author, all names are to be listed alphabetically, and where all authors are regarded as having made an equivalent contribution, this should be noted in the author credits.
- c) Share of subsidy earnings for accredited output authorship shall be split in line with the approved Research Development and Support, Incentives and Awards Programmes and Procedures (RDA-RDSIAPP1-2010/ November).

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Cape Town's Faculty of Law is acknowledged for allowing UL to use their *Guidelines on Authorship* for the purpose of benchmarking this policy guideline

<sup>2</sup> A **contributorship statement** should make clear who has contributed what to the planning, conduct, and reporting of the work described in the article, and should identify one, or occasionally more, contributor(s) as being responsible for the overall content as guarantor(s).

### **Authorship Agreement:**

Authorship is a matter that should be discussed between colleagues at an early stage in a project, and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation. The project leader must initiate this discussion. The agreement must deal with the allocation of financial incentives resulting from publication. The agreement may be altered by mutual consent during the course of the project.

### **1.3 Student – Staff- Supervisor Co-Publication**

The conditions listed in clause 1.2 above apply in the first instance. In the case of a co-authored publication by a student and her/his research supervisor that is substantially based on the student's dissertation or thesis the student will normally be the first author.

### **1.4 Exclusions**

- a) Participation solely in the acquisition of funding for the collection of data does not justify authorship.
- b) General supervision or leadership of a research group is not by itself sufficient for authorship.
- c) Mere institutional position, such as the Head of Department, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publications are appropriately acknowledged, such as in footnotes, in an introductory statement or as directed by the publisher.

### **1.5 Acknowledgement of contribution to a research product**

It is good practice to acknowledge those who contribute to a publication. The Faculty should follow an inclusive principle of acknowledgement as far as is possible. The significance of the contribution of those who are acknowledged should be signalled.

### **1.6 Disputes**

- a) Disputes concerning any aspects of authorship described above should in the first instance be resolved between the researchers concerned.
- b) Where this is not possible, the head of the department or research centre within which the principal researcher or student is based is responsible for attempting to facilitate a mediated settlement.
- c) If this mechanism fails, or where there is a conflict of interest, the matter may be referred to the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee.

This Committee may:

- recommend the appointment of an independent arbitrator;
- facilitate a mediated settlement; or,
- where there is a conflict of interest, refer the matter to the University's Senate Research and Ethics Committee.

### **1.7 Complaints**

Any staff member or student who wishes to make a complaint about a matter concerning authorship that cannot be managed in terms of the above dispute process, should put the complaint in writing and address it to the Chairperson of the Senate Research and Ethics Committee.

The Chairperson of the Senate Research and Ethics Committee will decide, after appropriate consultation, whether and how to take the matter forward. The main objective is to find a satisfactory solution. However, if the preliminary finding is that the complaint indicates that research misconduct is involved, then the procedures for alleging research misconduct must be followed.



# Exemplar of Memorandum of Understanding recording authorship arrangements

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RE AUTHORSHIP

**Title of paper/project/study:**

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**Co-authors and roles/contributions:**

*(Corresponding author, then names in sequence as currently envisaged for publication)*

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**Researchers to be acknowledged:**

*(Include reason for acknowledgement)*

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Signed by all current co-authors (note any withdrawn or withdrawing co-authors):

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Current date: .....

Proposed next Authorship Review date:.....