Good Research Practice: Publication and Authorship

Introduction

The UK Research Integrity Office '*Code of Practice or Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct*' highlighted the need for both of universities and its researcher to consider and address issues relating to publication and authorship. The UUK *Concordat to Support Research Integrity[1]* also provided clear expectations for both universities and researchers alike.

With the aim of research being to engage and promote the advancement of knowledge, Aberystwyth University recognises the integral role these elements have in the publication and dissemination of research findings and of the wider-integrity and reputation of the university.

Authorship

Due to wide-ranging research disciplines and practices, there is no universally accepted definition for *authorship*. The *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)* [2]and *Committee on Publication Ethics[3]* provide widely accepted guidelines and best practice.

Authors should always comply with university policies and procedures, in addition to that stipulated by the relevant sponsor or funder.

An author is considered as someone who has:

i) Made a substantial contribution to the *conception, design, acquisition of data* or *interpretation* of the research.

ii) *Drafted*, *substantively reviewed* or *revised* the intellectual content of the publication.

iii) *Approved* the final version of the publication.

All of the above criterion should be met; the acquisition of funding, collection of data or day-to-day supervision does not justify authorship (ICMJE).

Further ICMJE resources are available from: http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/

Guidelines

The guidance is not intended to be prescriptive, it aims to summarise the key principles relating to publication and authorship. This guidance acts alongside any existing policies and procedures as laid out on the HR website and in the Researcher Induction Handbook and as communicated by the relevant funding organisations.

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[1] http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf
[2] http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html
[3] http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines

Researchers should:

- Ensure **appropriate ethical approval** has been sought prior to the commencement of any data collection.
- Seek guidance from the University, or other parties where appropriate, in the handling of data which may have strong scientific **impact** and/or be of a **sensitive or commercial nature[4].**
- Ensure that research and any data is published by appropriate means, in an appropriate form.
- **Fully acknowledge** and cite the work of authors (where applicable), attributing relevant sources.
- Take a **coherent** approach in publishing their work/ reporting their data.
- Ensure that appropriate methods of statistical **analysis** are used for data analysis.
- Report on and discuss the **outcomes** of their research, including all data generated by the study.
- **Provide final reports** or the opportunity for those who took part in, or contributed to the study to make contact with you. This should be in a format understandable to those outside of your discipline.
- Ensure that paramount care is taken in the accuracy of the data reported and respond immediately to remedy any **genuine errors** that might have become apparent in the data or during its interpretation.
- **Acknowledge** the funding, sponsorship and support (where appropriate) provided to the work in an appropriate manner.
- Be transparent and declare any potential **conflicts of interest** that may occur throughout the study.
- Give notice of **intention to publish**, and seek approval if needed, to publish from all parties and authors.
- Seek guidance and/or approval before reporting findings to the media.[5]

Additionally, it may be useful to note the following where the study has more than one author:

- To avoid any potential disputes over the attribution of academic credit, you should consider who will be credited for what role (i.e. author, contributor) as early as possible in the planning of the study.
- You should maintain a record of **offers of authorship** and any relevant formal documentation in the event of disputes.
- You should carry out the study in the spirit of the above guidance and never **under/over state** a contributors input in a way that would justify their inclusion as an author or co-author. As such, **honorary authorship** is not permitted.

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