



Authorship

A guide supporting *The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

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Terms and abbreviations used in this guide

AP - The Aurum Project

AP Code - The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Author - An individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and who has agreed to be listed as an author.

Corresponding Author - The author who is, as agreed by all co-authors, responsible for communication between the publishers, managing communication between the authors and AP, managing communication between the co-authors, and maintaining records of the authorship agreement.

Research Output - A research output communicates or makes available the findings of research that may be in hardcopy, electronic or other form. Examples of research outputs include journal articles, book chapters, books, conference papers, blog posts or other social media publications, reports, datasets, patents and patent applications, performances, videos and exhibitions.

Introduction

This guide supports the implementation of The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (AP Code), which articulates the broad principles and responsibilities that underpin the responsible conduct of AP research.

Using this guide, AP maintains authorship policies that facilitate the recognition of significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to a research output and reflect that authorship:

- must be an honest reflection of contribution to research
- must be assigned fairly, and consistently with established disciplinary practice
- must be communicated clearly and transparently between contributors to the research.

AP Code and this guide apply to all research conducted under AP auspices.

Authorship criteria

An author is an individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output, and agrees to be listed as an author.

A significant intellectual or scholarly contribution must include one and should include a combination of two or more (although some journals may require a higher threshold) of the following:

- conception and design of the project or output
- acquisition of research data where the acquisition has required significant intellectual judgement, planning, design, or input
- contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Indigenous knowledge
- analysis or interpretation of research data
- drafting significant parts of the research output or critically revising it so as to contribute to its interpretation.

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.

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 AP Code. Similarly, it is a breach of AP 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 may be 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 who has played a significant role in the intellectual shaping of a publication.

All listed authors are collectively accountable for the whole research output. An individual author is directly responsible for the accuracy and integrity of their contribution to the output. Authors should have confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of their cop-authors.

AP Responsibilities

AP 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.

AP 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.

This authorship policy is readily accessible via AP's website.

Responsibilities of researchers

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.

‘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 AP 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.

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.

Contributions to research that do not meet the criteria for authorship should be acknowledged where appropriate; for example, contributions from individuals providing technical support. It is also good practice to recognise the contribution of research infrastructure.

Researchers intending to publish Indigenous knowledge obtained through sources including unpublished manuscripts, or audio or video recordings, should seek approval from the Indigenous people involved in the project or the community from which that knowledge originates and the individual and collective contributors of the knowledge should be acknowledged, as appropriate.

As a general rule, researchers should obtain permission from named contributors before acknowledging them in research outputs, since acknowledgement may imply a contributor's endorsement of the research output.

Although authors are accountable for the whole research output, the responsibilities associated with this accountability are dependent on the extent and type of contribution made.

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. In such instances, it may be appropriate for AP to provide written agreement for the inclusion of an author.

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.

Resolution of disputes

Disputes may involve:

- power imbalances between researchers
- researchers who are unwilling to accept authorship and/or accountability for their contribution, obstruct progress of a research output, or fail to cooperate with co-authors
- researchers from multiple institutions.

Researchers must treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect.

The parties to the dispute should maintain records of agreements reached through direct dialogue or mediation.

Breaches of the Code

AP should manage and investigate concerns or complaints about potential breaches of AP Code in accordance with the *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the AP Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Examples of breaches of AP Code that are related to authorship include, but are not limited to:

- crediting authorship to or accepting authorship from individuals who do not meet the criteria for authorship (for example, honorary, gift or guest authorship)
- failing to ascribe authorship to individuals where those individuals meet the requirements of authorship (for example, ghost authorship)
- attributing authorship to individuals without their consent
- publishing research without the final approval of the attributed authors
- failure to comply with an authorship agreement
- making false claims about the authorship in a grant application.

Researchers should be aware that denial of authorship may raise the potential for plagiarism. Denial of authorship refers to when a person who has met the authorship criteria rejects their inclusion as an author. There may be a potential for plagiarism.

When managing and investigating a potential breach of AP Code regarding authorship, AP should consider the extent to which each author met their authorship responsibilities.

Development of AP Authorship Guide

(Review frequency - 2 yearly)

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