



POLICY STATEMENT 27

Authorship Guidelines and Dispute Resolution

POLICY DIGEST

Monitoring Unit: Office of Research & Economic Development
Initially Issued: November 9, 2018

I. PURPOSE

Louisiana State University (LSU) is committed to the highest standard of integrity in all areas of research and intellectual inquiry, including those related to the publication and presentation of scholarly and creative works. This commitment to ethical conduct is critical to research and academic progress, to maintaining public trust, and for the public to benefit from academic pursuits. In every discipline, publication and presentation are essential to professional development and career advancement, and authorship is often a significant means by which to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of collaborators. At the same time, the benefits of authorship are accompanied by a number of responsibilities for the proper planning, execution, analysis, and reporting of research and the content and conclusions of other scholarly works.

This policy establishes the standards and procedures that should be followed with regard to determination and attribution of authorship for purposes of creative and scholarly works, the responsibilities of authors, and the procedure for authorship dispute resolution.

II. DEFINITIONS

Publication: as used in this policy is meant generically, representing as inclusively as possible any publicly shared academic or creative work, including any manner of report, paper, manuscript, article, electronic publication, discovered or derived dataset, artistic creation, or other research manifestation.

Author: an individual who has made significant intellectual contributions to a publication (see section IV.A.1 Attribution of Authorship).

Conflict of Interest: any real or perceived interference of a person or entity's interests with the interests of another person or entity, where potential bias may occur due to current, past, or contemplated personal or professional relationships.

Covered Individual: LSU faculty and all individuals engaged in any form of research and/or creative or scholarly work at, in collaboration with, or on behalf of LSU, including any person paid by, under the control of, or affiliated with LSU.

Relevant Information: that information having any tendency to make the existence of any fact that is of consequence to the resolution of the dispute more probable or less probable than it would be without the information.

III. GENERAL POLICY

In recognition of the collaborative nature of academia, LSU has instituted authorship guidelines and dispute resolution procedures to describe the essential considerations and requirements of responsible authorship and publication, and to supplement PS 69: *Research Misconduct*. This separate but complementary policy is necessary, because some allegations of misconduct actually stem from or involve disputes over authorship, and authorship disputes are excluded from the provisions of PS 69. These guidelines and procedures for dispute resolution do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the institution, its agencies, or employees.

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in any form of research and/or creative or scholarly work at, in collaboration with, or on behalf of LSU, including any person paid by, under the control of, or affiliated with LSU. Individuals covered by this policy are expected to cooperate fully if they are requested to provide relevant information by an institutional official engaged in the dispute resolution procedure.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Authorship Guidelines

A salient fact about authorship is that markedly different traditions of collaborative authorship exist among different disciplines. Given these variances, the application of specific and universal rules would be inappropriate. These generalized guidelines are intended to allow for such variation of accepted best practices across academic disciplines while ensuring responsible authorship as a function of the ethical conduct of scholarship.

Further, given that there is often some level of expectation with regard to authorship or acknowledgment for those contributing to scholarly work or research, all participants are expected and required to engage in open and clear communication about the attribution, responsibilities, and order of authorship at the earliest practical stage and thereafter as contributions may change.

1. Attribution of Authorship.

Authorship should be limited to those individuals who have made meaningful and substantial intellectual contributions to a scholarly work or project. All authors should meet the following criteria, and all those who meet the criteria should be designated as authors:

- a. Provide substantive intellectual contributions to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of information or data; and
- b. Participate in drafting and/or revising the work for scholarly content; and
- c. Approve the final version of the work to be published or presented.

Regardless of authorship, there must be appropriate acknowledgment of the work, ideas, and words of others which are used in any publication. (See PS 69.)

2. Authorship Roles

As a practical issue for multi-author publications in disciplines where "lead" (also known in some fields as "corresponding") authors are the norm, collaborators should designate one author as lead author as early in the planning process as possible. Lead designation is often intended as an administrative role and does not necessarily imply greater individual contribution to the publication. In disciplines where authorship practices are typically more consensus based, collaborators are encouraged to proactively discuss responsibility for administrative matters relating to publication submittal.

In any discipline, proactive communication about responsibilities and expectations helps to clarify roles and minimize potential authorship disputes. Additionally, written agreements specifying the details of authorship and contributions may be warranted in many cases, and are good practice in all cases.

- a. **Lead Author:** Depending on the discipline and the nature of the collaborative work, the lead author need not be the first, last, or most senior author, nor necessarily the principal investigator or project leader. The lead author assumes overall responsibility for the execution of the work, and also often serves as the managerial and/or corresponding author. In some disciplines, the terms "lead author" and "corresponding author" are used interchangeably, while in others the terms are used to signify separate roles and responsibilities. This variation underscores the importance of communication at the earliest practical stage. The lead author is responsible for:
 - i. Including as co-authors all and only those individuals who meet the authorship criteria set forth in this policy; and

- ii. The integrity of the work as a whole, and ensuring that reasonable care has been taken to confirm that all data are complete, accurate, reasonably interpreted, and accessible to others within the norms of the discipline and requirements of the publishing venue.
- b. **Co-Author.** All co-authors should have participated sufficiently in the work to take responsibility for their contributions. All co-authors should also be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work, and should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors. All co-authors are responsible for:
 - i. Fairly evaluating and describing their roles in the project as well as the roles of their co-authors to ensure that authorship is attributed according to these standards in all publications for which they will be listed as an author; and
 - ii. Reviewing and approving the final version of the work, including designation of the lead author and the order of authors; and
 - iii. Verifying the integrity of their portions of the work, including any applicable research.

Every individual retains the right to decline co-authorship of a scholarly or creative work in all circumstances, especially if they believe the criteria for authorship have not been satisfied. However, all contributions should be acknowledged in an appropriate manner.

- c. **Order of Authorship:** Several different ways of determining order of authorship exist across disciplines and publications. Such examples of authorship policies include descending order of contribution, placing the person who took the lead in writing the manuscript or doing the research first and the most senior contributor last, and alphabetical or random order. While the meaning of a particular order may be recognized in a given setting or discipline, order of authorship has no generally agreed-upon meaning at LSU.

Given this variation, the lead author should facilitate discussions regarding the contributions, recognition, and order of authors. All authors, regardless of position, have a voice in this discussion. Ideally, the order of authorship is agreed to proactively, formally, and in writing as soon as practical. A sample agreement that allows for formal recognition and agreement on authorship can be found as an appendix to this policy. (See Appendix I.

<http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-agreement.pdf>)

As the study or work evolves, agreements regarding authorship may need to be further discussed and modified. Most journals and other scholarly outlets do not include statements on author order, so the lead author should guide this process and adhere to the norm of the discipline.

- d. **Acknowledgements and Disclosures:** Anyone who does not meet the authorship criteria or who has declined authorship credit, but who has made other substantial contributions, should be acknowledged and/or disclosed in the final product as appropriate to the publication and discipline. Failure to make proper attribution could constitute plagiarism or another form of research misconduct prohibited under PS-69. These principles are meant to provide guidance but not contradict the requirements prescribed by specific publications or PS 69.
- i. Acknowledgements: Acknowledgements convey specific identifiable contributions that are insufficient under this policy to justify authorship. Such contributions may include general supervision of a research group, assistance in obtaining funding, technical support, enabling research or work, and assistance in compiling and editing the manuscript.
 - ii. Disclosures: All authors must disclose the source(s) of financial support for the scholarly work, unless otherwise instructed by the journal or publication. Examples of support include but are not limited to research and educational grants, contracts, corporate sponsorships, gifts, and institutional sources. Authors should also fully disclose any conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, in accordance with LSU's existing policies regarding research conduct. (See PS 98)
- e. **Unacceptable Authorship Practices:** Individuals do not satisfy the criteria for authorship merely because they have made possible the conduct of research or the preparation of a scholarly work. Regardless of the standard applied, the following practices do not satisfy the criteria for authorship:
- i. Acceptance or ascription of an honorary authorship. Honorary (guest, courtesy, or prestige) authorship is defined as granting authorship out of appreciation or respect for an individual, or based on the belief that the expert standing of the honored person will increase the likelihood of publication, credibility, or status of the work.
 - ii. Acceptance or ascription of a gift authorship. Gift authorship is credit, offered based on a sense of obligation, tribute, or dependence, within the context of an anticipated benefit, to an individual who has not appropriately contributed to the work.
 - iii. Acceptance or ascription of ghost authorship. Ghost authorship is the failure to identify as an author someone who made substantial contributions to the scholarly work, thus meriting authorship or allowing significant editorial control by an unnamed party, which may constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest that should be disclosed.

3. Dispute Resolution

It is understood that even when these principles of authorship are followed, conflicts may arise. Disputes in authorship typically occur when either a contributing author is not properly credited or there is a question as to whether a listed author's contribution (if any) merits inclusion in the authorship list. Other disputes can include misidentification of an author, ranking or placement of an author's name on the authorship list, and whether the contributing author's work should be listed as a citation or acknowledgement within the document rather than as a secondary author.

The procedures described in this policy do not limit or otherwise affect any dispute resolution procedure for other matters as described in any other LSU Policy Statement or Permanent Memorandum. For illustrative purposes only, this includes but is not limited to those procedures described in Grievance Procedures for Professional, Other Academic, and Classified Employees (PS 80) or Student Appeals Procedure (PS 48).

In the course of any dispute resolution, all parties shall refrain from unilateral actions that may damage the authorship interests and rights of other authors. Confidentiality may be required in accordance with university policies and/or state and federal law (See PS 30, PS 40, and PS 51).

a. Resolution Procedure

- i. **Stage 1:** Parties involved in authorship disputes should undertake best professional efforts to resolve any dispute in a fair, consistent, clearly communicated manner. The disputing parties, in conjunction with the other authors of the work at issue, should first attempt to resolve any dispute amongst themselves through open discussion. The parties to the dispute should consider including the other authors to share their perspectives.
- ii. **Stage 2:** If the procedure in Stage 1 is unsuccessful, the disputing parties should seek mediation by the Chair or Director of the relevant unit. In instances in which multiple departments are involved, the corresponding Chair/Director(s) may decide to jointly mediate as appropriate. Such mediation may include equivalent representatives from other institutions or universities when parties from such institutions or universities are involved in the dispute. The Chair/Director shall have discretion to include all authors.

If there is a change in authorship resulting from informal resolution, this change should be agreed upon by all authors and properly documented. This documentation should be kept by the lead author and by the Chair(s). If the dispute cannot be resolved by the Chair(s) as set forth above, then the dispute should be referred to the appropriate Dean(s).

- iii. **Stage 3:** To refer the dispute to a Dean, the requesting party should provide the Dean(s) with a written position statement with a copy to all other authors and parties. The other involved parties and authors shall be provided at least seven 7 business days to provide their own position statements. The appropriate Dean(s)

should meet with the parties to mediate the dispute.

If the Dean(s) cannot mediate a consent resolution, then any author or party may request an Authorship Dispute Panel.

iv. **Stage 4:** Authorship Dispute Panel: An Authorship Dispute Panel (Panel) shall be convened by the appropriate Dean(s) to resolve a dispute under this Policy when one of the following circumstances arises:

- Any disputing party requests resolution by an Authorship Dispute Panel after all means of resolution described in Stages 1 – 3 have been exhausted, provided that the party makes such request in writing to the appropriate Dean(s) within ten (10) business days after the conclusion of the mediation described in Stage 3; or
- If, after a dispute has finished a Stage 3 review, a Chair or Dean of a department-level unit or college involved in any stage of the attempted resolution believes that the dispute involves any of the Unacceptable Authorship Practices; or
- Allegations that any of the Unacceptable Authorship Practices were committed are brought to the attention of a department-level unit or college in a context other than a dispute between authors and/or potential authors (e.g., allegation received from a non-author who reviewed the article; allegations from a journal; allegation received through Ethics & Integrity Hotline). Additionally, the author(s) against whom the allegations are made shall be the sole “disputing party,” and whether the Unacceptable Authorship Practice occurred and if so what actions should be taken shall be considered the “dispute” for purposes of the process under this section. If the individual who brings the allegations forward has self-identified, then that individual may provide relevant information to the Authorship Dispute Panel, but shall not participate in the process under this Policy as a disputing party.

b. Composition of Authorship Dispute Panel

Except as otherwise provided in this Policy, the Authorship Dispute Panel shall consist of three faculty members from the college of the disputing parties as chosen by the appropriate college Dean.

In the event that the disputing parties are from two different colleges, the relevant Deans may each appoint one faculty member from their respective college, and the third member shall be mutually agreed upon by the Deans or chosen by the Vice President for Research (or their representative), who serves as the University's Research Integrity Officer if no agreement can be reached.

In the rare event that three or more colleges are involved, the Authorship Dispute Panel shall be comprised of one appointed faculty member from each college.

If the disputing parties include persons at institutions other than LSU, the relevant LSU college(s) of the LSU disputing parties will work with the other institution(s) as deemed appropriate and/or as agreed upon by the multiple institutions. In such cases, a faculty member for another institution may serve on the Panel.

c. Notice of Formation

The Authorship Dispute Panel shall be formed and written notice of its formation shall be provided to the disputing parties within 30 calendar days after a qualifying request or reason to convene. No member of the Panel may be an author or content contributor to the work that is the subject of the authorship dispute, or otherwise have a Conflict of Interest. The disputing parties shall have 10 days from the receipt of this notice in which to provide any written “good faith” objection to the composition of the panel (i.e., the party has a reasonable belief in the basis of the objection without a knowing or reckless disregard for information negating the basis of objection) to the membership of the Panel.

If no objection is received within this period, then any objection on the part of the disputing parties shall be considered waived. If an objection is made, then in order for it to be considered, it must set forth in sufficient detail a reasonable basis for the objection (e.g., Conflict of Interest). The Dean(s) shall consider any objection, and if the Dean(s) determine that the objection is reasonable, shall appoint a new member of the Panel. If the Dean(s) determine that the objection is not reasonable, the membership of the Panel shall stand.

- d. Panel Procedure: The Authorship Dispute Panel shall interview the disputing parties and may interview additional persons who are identified as possessing information relevant to the dispute at its sole discretion. The Panel, at its sole discretion, may also consider any relevant information provided or obtained during the course of their review by the disputing parties or as requested by the membership of the Panel, and may also request written statements from the parties. The Panel may request assistance from the Dean(s) in obtaining relevant information. The Panel must also determine and identify in their recommendation the written standards of authorship the Panel will apply to the dispute at hand. In this regard, if the scholarly work at issue has been submitted to a publication outlet, the Panel will apply that publication’s authorship principles. If, however, the publication to which a work has been submitted has no such principles, or if the work has not yet been submitted to a publication, then the Panel may select and apply a written standard that is widely regarded as acceptable in the relevant discipline or field. If the Panel selects and applies a written standard of a relevant discipline, the Panel must cite to the written standard selected and explain for basis for its selection.

After consideration of the opinions and information and application of the selected authorship standards, the Panel shall provide a written recommendation for the resolution of the dispute to the relevant Dean(s), along with the rationale for their recommendations.

Upon receipt of the written recommendation, the relevant Dean(s) shall make an administrative determination as to whether to accept the recommendations of the Panel. In making this administrative determination, the Dean(s) shall give considerable weight to the recommendations of the Panel. In the event that the Dean(s) reject the Panel's recommendations, they/he/she shall set forth in the written administrative determination the reasons therefore. The Dean(s) shall provide a copy of the administrative determination (which shall include a summary of the Panel's recommendations and rationale therefore) to the parties, and shall enforce the administrative determination, including correspondence from the Dean(s) to relevant academic journals or publications as appropriate. In most instances, the administrative determination should be provided within 60 calendar days of the Panel's formation; provided, however, that extensions of time may be granted at the Dean(s) sole discretion.

- e. Appeal: Any disputing party shall have the option to appeal the administrative determination to the Vice President for Research & Economic Development within 10 business days of receipt by the party of the final administrative determination. The only grounds for appeal are procedural error or substantive new relevant information. The Authorship Dispute Panel's determination of which written standards of authorship apply to the dispute is considered a substantive determination and is not a basis of appeal.

The appeal must be in writing and must specifically enumerate the grounds for appeal and provide documentation or affidavits of any substantive new information for consideration. If no appeal is received by the end of the 10 business day period, the parties shall be deemed to have waived any objection to the administrative determination.

If an appeal enumerating qualifying grounds is received in a timely fashion, the Vice President for Research or their designee shall have 30 calendar days within which to review the record of proceedings and the substantive new evidence (if any), and issue an appeals decision to the Dean(s) as follows:

- i. If the Vice President for Research determines that there were no procedural errors and there is no substantive new information that could justify reversing the administrative determination, then the appeal shall be denied, and the decision of the Dean(s) upheld.
- ii. If the Vice President for Research determines that there were procedural errors or that there is substantive new information that could justify reversing the administrative determination, then the Vice President for Research may either grant the appeal and recommend re-initiating dispute resolution by formation of a new Authorship Dispute Panel or consider the dispute *de novo* and render a final decision.

B. Institutional Administrative Action

In the event that improper authorship practices are identified and substantiated, the Vice President for Research or their designee may consult with appropriate collegiate or departmental offices in determining appropriate sanctions and whether to pursue formal disciplinary action.

C. Related Procedures

To the extent that the subject matter of the authorship dispute falls within the scope of another LSU policy or falls under the jurisdiction of another LSU unit, such matters shall be handled in accordance with the relevant LSU policy and referred to the relevant LSU unit as appropriate. Non-limiting examples include referrals to the following units:

1. Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) for matters falling within the scope of IRB policies and procedures;
2. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for matters falling within the scope of IACUC policies, procedures, and guidelines; and

3. Office of Research and Economic Development for matters falling within the scope of the Policy on Research Misconduct (PS 69) or the Policy on Reporting Financial Irregularities (PS 76). In the event an authorship dispute is identified in the context of allegations of research misconduct covered under PS-69, then the RIO shall have discretion as to when and what extent to refer the authorship dispute for handling under this policy.

In cases of potentially contradictory policies, the University's Research Integrity Office shall determine which policy or policy provisions shall apply.

Appendix I

Sample agreement can be found at:

<http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-agreement.pdf/>

Appendix II

PUBLICATION RESOURCES

Nature Publications:

<http://www.nature.com/authors/policies/authorship.html>

Science Magazine / AAAS:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/authors/science-editorial-policies>

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

<http://www.pnas.org/content/101/29/10495.full>

Online Ethics Center for Engineering & Science:

<http://www.onlineethics.org/cms/research/modindex/auth.asp>

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American Psychological Association:

<http://www.apa.org/research/responsible/publication/>

<http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2015/06/determining-authorship.aspx>

Committee on Publication Ethics:

<http://publicationethics.org/>

Appendix III

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Authorship Agreement:

<http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-agreement.pdf>

Authorship Determination Scorecard:

<http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-determination-scorecard.pdf>

Authorship Tie-breaker Scorecard:

<http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-tie-breaker-scorecard.pdf>