

Title/Subject: **AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS**

Applies to:  faculty  staff  students  student employees  visitors  contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: June 8, 2021

Contact for More Information: Office of Research and Graduate Studies

Board Policy  Administrative Policy  Procedure  Guideline

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Publication in peer reviewed research journals is an integral part of many scholarly pursuits. Academicians, graduate & undergraduate students, post-docs, etc. collectively work to generate new information which is commonly disseminated as written discourse in books and journals. While many collaborations proceed smoothly with each contributor's effort and recognition clearly established, disputes can arise as to who earns formal authorship, in what order the authors should be listed, and who/what should be acknowledged in a given paper. Furthermore, authors may not understand the need to acknowledge or disclose the source of funding supporting a given research project. This policy seeks to clarify and better define the roles of authorship, affiliation, and acknowledgements in scholarly publications.

### **PURPOSE:**

This policy outlines expectations concerning the roles of various participants in generating published works and establishes best practices to ensure that all members of the research team are properly included in works generated. This policy also advances Central Michigan University's ("CMU") commitment to integrity in research and scholarly activities. Furthermore, it provides guidance on which acknowledgments are compulsory and how author affiliations should be listed in published works.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

- **Author:** A member of the research team who contributes substantially to the overall research project commensurate with recognition as an author of the work. Examples include project conception, experimental design, data analysis and interpretation, and originator of large sections of writing in the final manuscript. All authors shall review the final manuscript before it is submitted for publication.
- **Contributor:** A member of the research team who makes a minor contribution to the overall research project and is not formally recognized as an author of the work. Typically, such contributors are listed in the paper acknowledgements. Examples include data collection, minor editing of the manuscript, or minimal scholarly input toward the final manuscript.
- **Corresponding Author:** The author who corresponds with the journal throughout the period of peer review and is listed on the finished paper as a point of contact for additional information concerning the publication.
- **First Author:** The first person listed in the authorship of the paper. Also termed senior author, commonly this person is a leader on the research project associated with the publication.
- **Affiliation:** The organization(s) the individual represents in authoring the publication.

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Authority: Robert O. Davies, President  
History: New Policy  
Indexed as: Research, scholarly activities,

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- **Acknowledgement:** A statement of gratitude to others whose work on the project does not rise to a level commensurate with co-authorship. If the project has been funded, explicit indication of the source of financial underwriting (inclusive of award numbers) of the project is compulsory.

## **POLICY:**

The policy establishes a general framework for guidance in establishing authorship, affiliations, and acknowledgements in published manuscripts with the understanding that best practices in publishing do differ amongst academic disciplines.

### **1. Authorship:**

#### *Recognized authorship*

Everyone who is listed as an author on a publication should have made active, meaningful contributions to the work. Discussions concerning authorship should occur amongst the research team early in the project whereby consensus is achieved and informed by best practices within their discipline or, if applicable, as specified by the funding agency. Slight alterations to planned authorship throughout the course of a project are common based upon unknowns at the beginning of the project. However, under no circumstances is a major professor or faculty member to displace a deserving student as first author in order to advance their own career. All authors should review the paper and must grant their approval prior to submission. In certain instances, an additional author may be added during the revision of work following peer review if their contributions rise to the level of co-authorship and help resolve the concerns of reviewers (e.g., a statistician helps to re-analyze data in a different way to provide new, meaningful results that elevate the paper to acceptance). All authors are strongly encouraged to include their Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) as a unique identifier of their contribution. In certain rare cases, posthumous awarding of authorship may be appropriate (e.g., an author has died during manuscript preparation after making substantive contributions commensurate with named authorship).

#### *Order of authors*

While accepted practices vary by discipline, the order in which authors are listed most often reflects the quantity of contribution to the work with those offering more work placed earlier in the authorship list. In instances where a graduate or undergraduate student has been a core part of the team (e.g., MS or PhD research, etc.), it is appropriate for them to be listed as the first author. In such instances, the major professor/researcher is commonly listed as second author. In some disciplines, the major professor is listed as the last author to indicate their supervision over a lab or research group. The major professor is often listed as the corresponding author. In some disciplines the practice is to list authors in alphabetical order.

#### *Resolving disagreements*

In instances of disagreement amongst authors on how to resolve a particular issue germane to the publication of the work the Vice President for Research and Innovation should be consulted. Appropriate guidance should be provided by senior members of the research team to provide depth and context such that informed decisions can be made. Authors cannot be removed from a paper for failing to provide their approval for submission, although authors do have the right to withdraw their name at any time during the project up to final publication.

2. **Affiliation:** As students and employees of the university, it is compulsory that the appropriate department at CMU be listed in the author's affiliation. In instances where authors have dual appointments or are representing multiple organizations, the dominant affiliation (based on paid appointment) should be listed first. In instances where authors have dual appointments representing multiple organizations where their appointment is equally split, CMU should be listed first. Authors should refrain from listing more than two affiliations except under highly unusual circumstances. Paid appointments/affiliations (e.g., CMU-paid faculty) should always take precedence over non-paid or honorary positions. Emeritus faculty who serve as authors on a published work should list their former CMU departmental affiliation as their affiliation of record on the publication.

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3. **Corresponding Author:** The corresponding author should be the person who actually submits the paper to the journal for review and corresponds with the editorial team and group of authors concerning needed revisions. This does not need to be the first author. Furthermore, the corresponding author's e-mail is listed as a point of contact for the published paper. If the corresponding author is a CMU employee or student, will use their CMU e-mail address for correspondence. In instances where the corresponding author is not a CMU employee or student, efforts should be made to ensure the corresponding e-mail address is professional (e.g., scubafan@yahoo.com is not permissible; jane.doe@gmail.com is permissible).
4. **Acknowledgements:** For funded research, it is compulsory that authors acknowledge all sources of funding, including individual award numbers (when available), and the agency/organization from which the funding was received. In instances where funding is received from multiple sources, those providing the most funding should be listed first. Internal funding sources from CMU (e.g., Faculty Research and Creative Endeavors grants, endowments, etc.) must also be acknowledged. Contributors whose participation in the project did not rise to the level of co-authorship should also be acknowledged.

**Settlement of disputes:** In instances where practices deviate from the above, and a dispute exists, the Department Chair, Dean of the appropriate College, and Vice President for Research and Innovation shall collectively make the ultimate determination as to which practices are allowable. The collaborative decision may, but is not required to, be informed by the Contributors Role Taxonomy (<https://credit.niso.org>).

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