

# Checklist for participants in a research project to agree authorship

## When planning the research

### ***Agree the principles of authorship***

The rights, responsibilities and obligations of the parties involved in the research project must be agreed in a manner approved by all parties immediately at the start of the project. The authors of publications that will arise from the research are often not yet known and it is not always possible to agree the order of the authors who will be named in the list of authors at the start of the research, for example. The principles of authorship can, however, be agreed before the research work begins.

The agreement should be checked and supplemented as the project progresses. Responsibility for the agreement rests with the head of the project or the project's principal investigator. When agreeing authorship, attention must be paid to ensuring that there is no conflict with responsible conduct of research.

The agreement may be free-form and a memorandum of the agreement is to contain at least:

- the parties involved in the project, the date of signature and period of validity
- what contributions conferring authorship, contributorship or editorship mean in the project
- on what basis a person is named in the acknowledgements or is credited in other ways
- on what principle the order of authors listed is decided.

The authorship and contribution of participants in research work can be evaluated using the table in Appendix 1, for example.

### ***Be prepared for disputes***

Disputes should be resolved before the manuscript is submitted for publication as in the worst case they lead to investigations of violation of responsible conduct of research (RCR). Write down how to act in the event of potential disputes. If a difference of opinion arises regarding authorship, help to resolve it can be requested, for example, from the research organisation's research integrity adviser. Make sure that all participants in the project are familiar with the principles of responsible conduct of research.

***Write a data management plan***

The rights to use and manage the material gathered in the research and to possibly archive or otherwise store it in the longer term, citing the material, possible further use, or destruction after the research is complete may be agreed in a separate agreement. The research material may also be associated with copyright factors. Further information on data management can be found, for example in the Data management guidelines maintained by the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.

***Discuss the project publication schedule and possible publication channels***

The members of the project will have different motives for publication. For some, the schedule may be affected by the progress of a dissertation, for example. It is also good to be aware that not all publications use ethically sustainable publication processes. In Finland, publishers that regularly publish scientific publications can apply for a peer-review label which shows that peer review of the publication in question has been carried out in line with the quality and ethical requirements of the international scientific community.

## During the research

***Agree the order of names in the list of authors***

Where applicable, agree whose names will be included in the list of authors and in what order. Make an agreement in writing in advance and separately for each publication. Check the actual contribution at the publication stage. Make sure that each person participating in the project as a researcher, person in charge or assistant is aware of what is agreed regarding authorship to the publications to be produced during the project. For example, the example table in Appendix 2 can be used as an aid when agreeing authors. Appendix 3 shows an example of Åbo Akademi University's electronic form which enables the order in which authors are listed and their contributorship to be agreed.

***Check and supplement the agreement drawn up at the start of the research project***

The principles concerning authorship should be raised when new people join a research group, or the situation otherwise changes. Responsibility for maintaining the discussion rests with the head of the research group or the principal investigator.

## At the research publication stage

### ***Make sure that everyone approves the choices***

Before submitting each manuscript version for publication, check that all the contributors to the research are aware of the list of authors and approve it, and the people mentioned in the acknowledgements, and any editors and the order in which they are listed.

Agree who will act as a corresponding author, liaising between the authors and the publisher.

Make sure that each of the authors named in the list of authors has approved the final version of the manuscript to be submitted for publication. Approval may be by e-mail, for example, so that it can be checked subsequently.

### ***Remember responsibility for research integrity***

Remind authors of the responsibility for research integrity that authorship brings. All authors are fully responsible for the content of a publication unless otherwise specified. Each person should make their own critical assessment of whether the criteria for authorship are met with respect to their own contribution and whether they should give permission for the use of their name. State any conflicts of interest of the authors.

## At the end of the research project

### ***Take care of the data created during the research***

Agree how the data collected during the research is to be safely stored during the research period and what will happen to it once the research is over. Make sure that the material is stored or destroyed appropriately in terms of data protection. Regarding storing material for further use, see the Data management guidelines maintained by the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.

### ***Authorship should also be stated when communicating with a wider audience***

Make sure that authorship is correctly stated in conference presentations and in teaching or when communicating research to an audience wider than the scientific community, e.g. in social media.