Authorship: Do’s and don’ts

General principles for who is listed first:

First Author:
- Conducts and/or supervises the data analysis and the proper presentation and interpretation of the results
- Puts paper together and submits the paper to journal

Co-Author(s):
- Makes intellectual contributions to the data analysis and contributes to data interpretation
- Reviews each paper draft
- Must be able to present the results, defend the implications and discuss study limitations

Abuses to be avoided:

Ghost Authors:
- Leaving out authors who should be included

Scientific Writers and Gift Authors:
- Including authors when they did not contribute significantly
Q. What does it mean to be an Author?

A researcher completes her paper. Along the way she consulted her advisor for guidance on the experiment, the data analysis and writing and revising the final article.

A professor in India assisted her in analyzing the data only. A lab assistant helped her in preparing the experimental design and maintaining and operating the equipment. Two fellow grad students read her paper and edited it, though they had no hand in the experiment.

- Who is listed as an Author?
- Who is listed first?
Authorship Policies

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors who declared that an author must:

1. substantially contribute to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data AND
2. draft the article or revise it critically for important intellectual content AND
3. give their approval of the final version to be published all three conditions must be fulfilled to be an author

- Applying this set of policies to our example, only the researcher and her advisor would qualify as authors
- All others would qualify as “Acknowledged Individuals”
Authorship disputes

- Must be resolved by Authors
- Editors cannot adjudicate or act as judge
- Delay publication: Editor has to get agreement from all Authors about any changes
- After publication, can be published as a correction, but needs agreement from all Authors with justification
Submissions issues

Multiple, redundant, or concurrent publication issues

- Should be avoided where manuscripts that describe essentially the same research are published in more than one journal or primary publication.
- An author should avoid submitting a previously published paper for consideration in another journal.
- Duplication of the same paper in multiple journals of different languages should be avoided.
- “Salami Slicing”, or creating several publications from the same research, is manipulative and discouraged.
The most serious issues to avoid

These are the 3 most common forms of ethical misconduct that the research community is challenged with:

1. Fabrication
   Making up research data

2. Falsification
   Manipulation of existing research data

3. Plagiarism
   Previous work taken and passed off as one’s own
What is plagiarism?

“Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of others’ research proposals and manuscripts.”

*Federal Office of Science and Technology Policy, 1999*

“Presenting the data or interpretations of others without crediting them, and thereby gaining for yourself the rewards earned by others, is theft, and it eliminates the motivation of working scientists to generate new data and interpretations.”

*Professor Bruce Railsback, Department of Geology, University of Georgia*
What may be plagiarised?

Work that can be plagiarised includes…

- Words (language)
- Ideas
- Findings
- Writings
- Graphic representations
- Computer programs
- Diagrams
- Graphs
- Illustrations
- Information
- Lectures
- Printed material
- Electronic material
- Any other original work

Higher Education Academy, UK
Correct citation is key

Crediting the work of others (including your advisor’s or your own previous work) by citation is important for at least three reasons:

- To place your own work in context
- To acknowledge the findings of others on which you have built your research
- To maintain the credibility and accuracy of the scientific literature
Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is restating someone else's ideas while not copying their actual words verbatim.

It is unacceptable:

- Using exact phrases from the original source without enclosing them in quotation marks
- Emulating sentence structure even when using different words
- Emulating paragraph organization even when using different wording or sentence structure

– Statement on Plagiarism
Department of Biology, Davidson College.
www.bio.davidson.edu/dept/plagiarism.html
How can plagiarism be detected?

- Huge database of 30+ million articles, from 50,000+ journals, from 400+ publishers
- Software alerts Editors to any similarities between the article and this huge database of published articles
- Many Elsevier journals now check every submitted article using CrossCheck
Can you plagiarise your own work? Text re-cycling/self-plagiarism

A grey area, but best to err on the side of caution: always cite/quote even your own previous work

For example
You publish a paper and in a later paper, copy your Introduction word-for-word and perhaps a figure or two without citing the first paper

Editors may conclude that you intentionally exaggerated your output
Consequences question

A researcher has plagiarized another author’s article
What are the potential consequences and what actions can the publisher or researcher’s institution/funding body take?
Consequences answer

Potential consequences can vary according to the severity of the misconduct and the standards set by the journal editors, institutions and funding bodies.

Possible actions include:

- Written letters of concern and reprimand
- Article retractions
- Some form of disciplinary action on the part of the researcher’s institute or funding body
Article Retraction

This article has been retracted at the request of the Editor-in-Chief.

The authors have falsified mathematical findings and have made unsubstantiated claims regarding Euclid's parallel postulate (Appl. Math. Lett., 23 (2010) 1137–1139, doi:10.1016/j.aml.2010.05.003). This article represents a severe abuse of the scientific publishing system. The scientific community takes a strong view on this matter and apologies are offered to readers of the journal that published it during the submission process.

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Publication ethics – How it can end

Hungarian president resigns over doctorate plagiarism scandal

Pal Schmitt steps down after university revokes doctorate, saying Olympics thesis was mostly copied from two authors

Associated Press in Budapest
guardian.co.uk, Monday 2 April 2012 13:29 BST

Hungarian president, Pal Schmitt, who has announced his resignation. Photograph: Matej Divizna/EPA

The Hungarian president, Pal Schmitt, has announced he will resign after losing his doctorate in a plagiarism scandal.

German minister loses doctorate after plagiarism row

Germany's defence minister has been stripped of his university doctorate after he was found to have copied large parts of his work from others.

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, an aristocrat who lives in a Bavarian castle, admitted breaching standards but denied deliberately cheating.

Analysis revealed that more than half of his thesis had long sections lifted word-for-word from the work of others.

So far the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has stood by the minister.

The University of Bayreuth decided that Mr Guttenberg had "violated scientific duties to a considerable extent."

It deplored the fact that he had lifted sections of text without attribution.

Last week Mr Guttenberg said he would temporarily give up his PhD title while the university investigated the charges of plagiarism. He admitted that he had made "serious mistakes."


Chancellor Merkel insisted on Monday that she was standing by her defence minister, who was seen as something of a rising star in her conservative coalition.
Who is really responsible for Ethics?

All Stakeholders

Authors

Institutions/Companies/Agencies/Funding Bodies

Publishers/Journal Editors

All Elsevier journals are members of: COPE

Elsevier Publishing Campus Publishing Connect