

## Authorship Guidelines

### Introduction

The *Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* outlines standards of conduct expected of all persons engaged in research under the auspices of Macquarie University, including academic staff, higher degree research candidates, professional and technical staff, as well as visiting staff and conjoint appointees. A link to a pdf of the *Macquarie Code* can be found here: <https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/research-integrity>

Appropriate designation of authorship is central to ethical research practice. The *Macquarie Code* therefore sets out clear and detailed criteria for assigning authorship as distinct from acknowledgement. All staff and HDR candidates should familiarise themselves with these criteria (see *Code* section 10).

The purpose of the *Authorship Guidelines* and the *Macquarie University Authorship Agreement Form* is to assist researchers in the Faculty of Arts assign authorship appropriately in line with both the requirements set out in the *Macquarie Code* and the disciplinary expectations relevant to research in humanities and social sciences.

### Attributing Authorship

The *Macquarie Code* states:

‘For a person to be recorded as an author of an output requires that he or she is directly involved in the creation by making substantial contributions through a combination of the following criteria:

- (a) conceiving or designing the project
- (b) analysing and interpreting the data on which it is based; or
- (c) writing or critically revising the intellectual content in the output’.

The *Macquarie Code* emphasises the importance of honesty in attributing authorship and specifically states that ‘ghost, gift or honorary authorship is unacceptable’.

If a person has made a significant contribution to the research underpinning a publication but that contribution does not meet the above criteria, that person should not be listed as an author. For example, acquisition of funding, supervision of a research group, provision of research assistance, technical assistance or materials, is not sufficient to justify authorship. However, it is appropriate to acknowledge these contributions in an acknowledgment note or in footnotes.

### Agreements about Authorship, Author Order and Publication Content

Disputes about authorship can damage productive research collaborations. It is therefore crucial to put in place written agreements that diminish the likelihood of such disputes arising. Authorship disputes usually relate to author order and publication content.

In many humanities disciplines, the default position seems to be that author order is decided alphabetically. This is acceptable if the authors have contributed equally to the output. However, it is unfair in cases where the contributions of the authors vary significantly. In such cases, the order of authorship should be decided on the basis of the relative contributions of each author. The Macquarie Code advises that co-authors should ‘discuss and reach an early agreement on the order in which authors shall be listed. A record of any agreements that are made must be kept.’

With respect to content, the *Macquarie Code* states that ‘all authors must give final agreement to the version to be submitted for publication and ... retain a record of that agreement’, even if only one author is listed as the corresponding author for the publication. All co-authors must therefore be advised of and agree to any substantive changes to content and any significant editorial changes prior to publication. The corresponding author may handle minor corrections to proofs without the need for further agreement.

The *Macquarie University Authorship Agreement Form* should be used to record authorship agreements.

### **Co-authoring with HDR candidates**

In HASS disciplines co-authorship between supervisors and HDR candidates is relatively less common, compared with STEM disciplines where it is the norm. We would like to encourage supervisors and HDR candidates to co-author publications.

Co-authorship with supervisors can be of significant benefit to HDR candidates. For example, supervisors can use co-authorship to mentor HDR candidates into good research practice and the research publication process and to assist them to develop more competitive track records.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that co-authorship with supervisors can be risky for HDR candidates if their contributions to the output are not sufficiently acknowledged. To address these risks:

- Supervisors must acknowledge and be sensitive to the power imbalance inherent in the supervisory relationship
- Supervisors must ensure that the candidate’s contributions to the output are appropriately acknowledged in the author order
- Any output arising from the work of an HDR candidate must include that candidate’s name as an author, usually as first author
- If an HDR candidate has been employed by the supervisor as a research assistant on a project and the candidate’s contribution to the resulting output(s) meets the criteria for authorship outlined in the *Code*, the candidate must be listed as an author
- Articles co-authored with supervisors which are then submitted as part of a Thesis by Publication require particular care. The MQ Thesis by Publication Policy requires HDR candidates to clearly state which elements of an article are their own work. Consequently, statements about content and co- authorship for a thesis may differ from the requirements for publication as a journal article or book chapter. HDR candidates and supervisors should be aware of and ensure that any co-authored outputs comply with the MQ Thesis by Publication Policy, which can be found at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/higher-degree-research-thesis-preparation,-submission-and-examination>

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