Responsible authorship
An institutional perspective

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Overview

- Common authorship issues
- The need for clear definitions
- Responding to breaches of *The Code*
- Process for resolving authorship concerns
- Possible outcomes for breaches of authorship policy
- The need for mentoring and professional development
- Useful COPE flowcharts
- Case discussion
- Questions to consider

Common authorship issues

- Institutional investigations of authorship issues were conducted or suggested for 42 cases handled by COPE

- Authorship cases involved issues relating to:
  - Intellectual property
  - Data
  - Work done at multiple institutions and by large groups of authors, either at separate or single institutions.
  - Disputes between post-docs and their former supervisors

The need for clear definitions

Criteria for authorship at UniSA (based on 2007 Code for RCR):

…in all cases, authorship must be based on substantial contributions in a combination of:

- conception and design of the project

- analysis and interpretation of research data

- drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation.

The right to authorship is not tied to position or profession and does not depend on whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary. It is not enough to have provided materials or routine technical support, or to have made the measurements on which the publication is based. **Substantial intellectual involvement is required.**

- A person who qualifies as an author must not be included or excluded as an author without their express permission…

"Authorship" in 2018 Code for RCR

- Authorship is mentioned very broadly under the principle of "fairness":
  - Give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.

No definition of authorship is provided. In the associated *Guide to managing and investigating potential breaches* a breach of authorship is defined as:

  - Failure to acknowledge the contributions of others fairly
  - Misleading ascription of authorship including failing to offer authorship to those who qualify or awarding authorship to those who do not meet the requirements.

Responding to breaches of The Code

"A complaint that a researcher has not acted responsibly* requires a response that may include the following steps:

- a discreet investigation

- a formal inquiry

- the imposition of a sanction or penalty

- actions to remedy the situation

- advice to expert groups and public statements as appropriate." http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/r39.pdf

* An authorship dispute is just one of many forms of potential research misconduct

The process for resolving authorship disputes at UniSA

- Confidential discussion with Research Integrity Advisor:
    - Take no further action, or
    - Speak directly with the person against whom the concern has been raised, or
    - with advice, consult further with
- Direct supervisor
    - resolve the issue at the local level or
- Confidential discussion with Head of School/Department/Faculty/Institute
- If matter still not resolved, raise a formal complaint with Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation

https://i.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/policies-and-procedures/docs/research_misconduct_procedures.pdf

The Formal Investigation

- Preliminary investigation by DVC:R&I based on:
  - Further information from the person making the formal complaint;
  - A written response from the person subject to the formal complaint; and
  - Information from other people including internal and/or external experts.
- Written report to Vice Chancellor with recommendations for outcomes

Possible outcomes for breach of authorship policy

- Dismiss the complaint

- Refer the matter back to local area

- Determine that *research misconduct* has occurred and respond according to the disciplinary procedures of the Enterprise Agreement for staff (need to involve HR)

- In the case of research misconduct, and where appropriate, relevant notify relevant funding bodies (eg ARC, NHMRC) in accordance with funding agreements and/or policies

- Where appropriate contact Editor of journal

https://i.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/policies-and-procedures/docs/research_misconduct_procedures.pdf

Need for training and professional development

- The 2018 Code makes it a requirement of institutions to "provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research", including having
  - Trained Research Integrity Advisors and
  - Mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints…and to investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code.

Q. What actually happens in practice?

COPE flowcharts

Covers every aspect of the publication process, with many resources on authorship:

- How to spot authorship problems of interest
- Suspected ghost or gift authorship
- Author requests for 'extra' authors
- Author requests removal of authors
- Authorship requests after publication

Authorship

How to spot authorship problems

Download "How to spot authorship problems" flowchart [PDF, 106 KB]

Suspected ghost, guest or gift authorship

Download "Suspected ghost, guest or gift authorship" flowchart [PDF, 154KB]

Corresponding author requests addition of extra author before publication

Download flowchart: Corresponding author requests addition of extra author before publication [PDF, 128KB]

Corresponding author requests removal of author before publication

Download "Corresponding author requests removal of author before publication" flowchart [PDF, 134KB]

Request for addition of extra author after publication

Download "Request for addition of extra author after publication" flowchart [PDF, 133KB]

Request for removal of author after publication

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Case Discussion: Authorship

- A student completes her PhD. During the course of her PhD she has published one journal article, with her as the lead author and her two supervisors as co-authors. She now has a plan to publish a <u>new article</u> based on the previously unanalyzed data from her PhD.

- During her PhD candidature she worked as a research assistant for one of her supervisors. She was involved in <u>data collection</u> and entry as well as editing the final document.

- Her supervisor is preparing a <u>theoretical article</u> which includes much of the literature gathered by the student for her PhD.

Questions

1. Should her supervisors be included on the student's new article using the PhD data?

2. Should the student be included on the article based on the data she collected as a research assistant?

3. Should the student be included on the theoretical article?

Questions to consider

- How might an institution investigate cases involving multiple institutions or countries?

- How might editors assist institutions to investigate cases?

- What can editors expect from the institution as the investigation proceeds?

- What happens when cases are unresolved?

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Most recent research project:
www.cheatingandassessment.edu.au

References

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NHMRC (2018). *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research,* https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/guide-managing-and-investigating-potential-breaches-code#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Authorship flowcharts https://publicationethics.org/

Exemplary Academic Integrity Project (nd). www.unisa.edu.au/EAIP