

Information Regarding Authorship and Joint Authorship

Higher Degree by Research Students and Supervisors

The information provided here should be considered in conjunction with Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research. These documents are available on the Curtin website at http://policies.curtin.edu.au/legislation/internallegislation/statutes_rules.cfm.

The information below draws from the relevant sections of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* [jointly issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHRMC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia], and the *Universities Australia Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities*.

Focus on Research

A core activity of the University's Strategic Plan (2006 – 2008) is a focus on areas of high impact, high quality research. An objective of this activity is to strengthen Curtin's international reputation in research training. One way to do this is to encourage students to publish, either individually or jointly in refereed scholarly media. Joint publishing of research findings has many benefits for students and supervisors, and this information aims to encourage and assist in this regard.

A Definition of Research

"Research", as defined in the University Research and Development Policy on Research Management, means:

... creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications. Research necessarily involves a significant element of novelty (innovation), uncertainty with respect to outcomes, potential for publication of outcomes in peer-reviewed scholarly media and/or a high level of technical complexity requiring innovative resolution. Research is taken to include the activities of Higher Degree by Research Students.

Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings

In the Introduction to Section 4 "Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings" of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, there is a statement regarding the obligation to communicate research results:

Dissemination of research findings is an important part of the research process, passing on the benefits to other researchers, professional practitioners and the wider community. Research activities supported by public funding are rarely complete until the results have been made widely available.

There are many ways of disseminating research findings. Formal publication of the results of research will usually take place in academic journals or books, but this is not always the case. This section of the Code applies to all forms of dissemination, including non-refereed publications, such as web pages, and other media such as exhibitions or films, as well as professional and institutional repositories.

Authorship of any publication or paper arising from a candidate's research should be discussed well in advance of the development of the publication. Such discussion should, where relevant, include acknowledgement of funding, support from others, ownership of data, and so on. Section B, "Guidelines for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Degrees", of the *Universities Australia Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities* (2002, pp. 24-25) outlines several principles of joint authorship:

- 59 *Agreement should be reached between the student and supervisor concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgement of contributions during and after the candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate's and supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project.*
- 61 *Academic endeavour is centred on the generation, exploration and expansion of new and original ideas. The intellectual work undertaken by higher degree students is the foundation of their future careers. Supervisors and universities have a key responsibility to assist students in publishing their work both during the course of candidature and immediately following submission of their theses.*

- 62 *Joint publication is one significant way in which a supervisor can assist a student in these terms. However, care needs to be taken, in the context of what is a power imbalance between supervisor and student, to ensure supervisors do not usurp credit for a student's work. To ensure that this does not happen and that possibilities of misunderstanding are minimised, supervisors and students should negotiate the basis for acknowledgement of joint authorship, particularly the order in which authorship is listed, in the early stages of a student's candidature, and preferably before the research is conducted. Supervisors should respect the ethical guidelines that might be laid down by the profession associated with their discipline in this regard.*

Who Qualifies as an Author?

In the Introduction to section 5 "Authorship" of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, there is a detailed description of what constitutes authorship:

To be named as an author, a researcher must have made a substantial scholarly contribution to the work, and be able to take responsibility for at least that part of the work they contributed. Attribution of Authorship depends to some extent on the discipline, but 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 permission. This should be in writing, and include a brief description of their contribution to the work.

Other examples of where authorship of a research output cannot be claimed include where participation is solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data, or general supervision of a research group.

Acknowledgement versus Authorship

Following on from the above definition of authorship, due recognition of all participants is part of a proper research process, and authors must ensure that others who have contributed to the work are recognised in the research output. Authors should ensure that the work of research students/trainees, research assistants and technical officers is properly acknowledged. Courtesy demands that individuals and organisations providing facilities should also be acknowledged.

Responsibilities of Researchers - Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings

Section 4, "Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings", of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* has a sub-section that deals with responsibilities of researchers. Sub-sections 4.4 – 4.12 are reproduced below:

4.4 Disseminate all research findings

Researchers have a responsibility to their colleagues and the wider community to disseminate a full account of their research as broadly as possible.

4.4.1 *The account should be complete, and, where applicable, include negative findings and results contrary to their hypotheses.*

4.4.2 *Publication activities must take account of any restrictions relating to intellectual property or culturally sensitive data.*

4.4.3 *Researchers must, where feasible, also provide research participants with an appropriate summary of the research results; see, for example, the Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research (see Appendix 3).*

4.5 Ensure accuracy of publication and dissemination

Researchers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their findings are accurate and properly reported. If they become aware of misleading or inaccurate statements about their work, they must correct the record as soon as possible.

- 4.6 Cite the work of other authors fully and accurately**
Researchers must ensure that they cite other relevant work appropriately and accurately when disseminating research findings. Use of the work of other authors without acknowledgement is unethical.
- 4.7 Multiple submissions of research findings**
It is not acceptable to include the same research findings in several publications, except in particular and clearly explained circumstances, such as review articles, anthologies, collections, or translations into another language. An author who submits substantially similar work to more than one publisher, or who submits work similar to work already published, must disclose this at the time of submission.
- 4.8 Obtain permission for republishing**
Researchers must take all reasonable steps to obtain permission from the original publisher before republishing research findings.
- 4.9 Disclose research support accurately**
A publication must include information on all sources of financial and in-kind support for the research and any potential conflicts of interest. Researchers must acknowledge the host institution and funding sources of the research.
- 4.10 Register clinical trials**
Researchers must register clinical trials with a recognised register to promote access to information about all clinical trials.
- 4.11 Manage confidentiality**
Sometimes the confidentiality requirements of a sponsor can prevent or delay peer review until after the research results are delivered to the sponsor. In such cases, the researcher must explain to the sponsor that the work has not been subject to peer review. The importance of peer review in the research process is discussed in Section 6. Whenever a sponsor's confidentiality requirements prevent peer review of a research report before its delivery to the sponsor, the researcher must inform the sponsor.
- 4.12 Responsibly communicating research findings in the public arena**
Subject to any conditions imposed by the research sponsor, researchers should seek to communicate their research findings to a range of audiences, which may include the sponsor, professional organisations, peer researchers, policy makers and the community. Researchers may be interviewed by the media, invited to participate in debates, and approached by individuals for comment. It is important that all these activities are considered and supported where possible. However, while it is straightforward to discuss research findings with peers, it is harder to do so effectively with other groups and the media, where the scope for misunderstanding is much greater and frequently there is no opportunity to review the report of discussions before it becomes public. Researchers should seek opportunities and be ready to participate in workshops and other activities where professional assistance is provided in communicating with the media and the wider community. The following points should be noted in relation to publicly communicating research findings:
- 4.12.1 Discussing research findings in the public arena should not occur until the findings have been tested through peer review. In discussing the outcomes of a research project, special care should be taken to explain the status of the project — for example, whether it is still in progress or has been finalised.*
 - 4.12.2 To minimise misunderstanding about research outcomes, researchers should undertake to promptly inform those directly impacted by the research, including interested parties, before informing the popular media.*
 - 4.12.3 The outcomes of research with a strong commercial element may have to be presented to a stock exchange or financial body before any public release.*
 - 4.12.4 Any restrictions on communications that have been agreed with the sponsor must be honoured.*

Responsibilities of Institutions and Researchers - Authorship

The following extracts relating to the responsibilities of institutions and researchers are taken from Section 5, "Authorship", of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*:

5.1 Have criteria for authorship

Institutions must have a policy on the criteria for authorship consistent with this Code, seeking to minimise disputes about authorship and helping to resolve them if they arise. Where a work has several authors, one should be appointed executive author to record authorship and to manage communication about the work with the publisher.

5.2 Follow policies on authorship

Researchers should adhere to the authorship criteria of this Code and their institution's policies.

5.3 Agree on authorship

Collaborating researchers should agree on authorship of a publication at an early stage in the research project and should review their decisions periodically.

5.4 Include all authors

Researchers must offer authorship to all people, including research trainees, who meet the criteria for authorship listed above. Those offered authorship must accept or decline in writing.

5.5 Do not allow unacceptable inclusions of authorship

Authorship should not be offered to those who do not meet the requirements set out above. For example, none of the following contributions, in and of themselves, justifies including a person as an author:

- *being head of department, holding other positions of authority, or personal friendship with the authors*
- *providing a technical contribution but no other intellectual input to the project or publication*
- *providing routine assistance in some aspects of the project, the acquisition of funding or general supervision of the research team*
- *providing data that has already been published or materials obtained from third parties, but with no other intellectual input.*

5.6 Acknowledge other contributions fairly

Researchers must ensure that all those who have contributed to the research, facilities or materials are properly acknowledged, such as research assistants and technical writers. Where individuals are to be named, their written consent must be obtained.

5.7 Extend the authorship policy to web-based publications

Authors of web-based publications must be able to take responsibility for the publication's content and must be clearly identified in the publication.

5.8 Maintain signed acknowledgments of authorship for all publications

The department of the executive or senior author must retain the written acknowledgment of authorship discussed above in the form of an original hand-written signature. Where it is not practical to obtain an original signature, it is acceptable to use faxed or emailed consent. This also applies to published conference abstracts and similar publications. If an author is deceased or cannot be contacted, the publication can proceed provided that there are no grounds to believe that this person would have objected to being included as an author.

Joint Publications included in a Thesis

Where a student wishes to include text from one or more jointly-written articles in their thesis, care needs to be taken. If the copyright is held by the publisher of the journal, then the student must obtain permission to re-use the material from the publisher. If the copyright resides with the authors, or if permission has been obtained from a publisher, then the student needs to obtain copyright permission from the co-authors in order to reproduce the material. (Usually the copyright is assigned to the journal, therefore the candidate must take steps to avoid copyright infringement. Laws may differ from country to country, therefore it is important to check with each publisher. This should be done at the time the paper is accepted for publication.)

The student must also indicate in the thesis that they have obtained permission from the Publisher and co-authors.

I warrant that I have obtained, where necessary, permission from the copyright owners to use any third-party copyright material reproduced in the thesis (e.g. questionnaires, artwork, unpublished letters), or to use any of my own published work (e.g. journal articles) in which the copyright is held by another party (e.g., publisher, co-author).

Copies of permission statements should be included in an appendix to the thesis.

For a thesis that includes published papers of which the student is a joint author, the student must clearly identify in the thesis their contribution to those papers. A written statement from each co-author attesting to the student's contribution in the joint publication(s) must be included in the thesis.

This is consistent with the Rules (extract from Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research), section 11 (e):

- (vi) *Any published paper of which the candidate is a joint author may only be included in the thesis provided the work done by the candidate is clearly identified. The candidate must provide to the University Graduate Studies Committee at the time of submission of the thesis a written statement from each co-author attesting to the candidate's contribution to a joint publication included as part of the thesis.*

The written statements of the co-authors may take the following form and copies of these statements should be included as appendices at the end of the thesis:

To Whom It May Concern	
I, <i>[Full Name of Candidate]</i> , contributed <i>(insert details of the Candidate's contributions to each component of the research reported in the publication)</i> to the paper/publication entitled <i>(insert reference details)</i> .	
<i>(Signature of Candidate)</i>	
I, as a Co-Author, endorse that this level of contribution by the candidate indicated above is appropriate.	
<i>(Full Name of Co-Author 1)</i>	<i>(Signature of Co-Author 1)</i>
<i>(Full Name of Co-Author 2)</i>	<i>(Signature of Co-Author 2)</i>
<i>(Full Name of Co-Author 3)</i>	<i>(Signature of Co-Author 3)</i>

Checklist of Things Candidates and Supervisors Should Do to Ensure Ethical Research Conduct:

- Discuss, at the commencement or during the course of candidature, any publication likely to arise during or on the basis of the research project, to ensure appropriate and adequate recognition of the candidate's and supervisor's contributions to the publication. Any agreement should be recorded in writing and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation.
- Discuss issues of ownership of data and the consequences for an early or unexpected end of the supervisory relationship with regard to the use of these data. Any agreement should be recorded in writing.
- Develop a timetable for preparation and submission of material for publication with appropriate agreements about co-authorship.
- Discuss opportunities for presentation at seminars/conferences.
- Discuss opportunities for any prospective publications arising from the final thesis.
- Discuss who will be the Executive Author (See item 5.1 of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*).

Related Guidelines and Forms - Curtin

- *Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research*
http://policies.curtin.edu.au/legislation/internallegislation/statutes_rules.cfm
- *Guidelines for Thesis by Publication*
<http://research.curtin.edu.au/postgraduate-research/current-research-students/student-policies-and-procedures/>
- *Intellectual Property – Ownership and Commercialisation Policy and Procedures*
<http://policies.curtin.edu.au/findapolicy/>
- *Guidelines for Establishing the Supervisory Relationship*
<http://research.curtin.edu.au/postgraduate-research/hdr-staff/>
- *Copyright and Release of Thesis for Examination*
<http://research.curtin.edu.au/postgraduate-research/current-research-students/student-forms/>
- *Including Copyright Material in a Higher Degree Thesis*
<http://copyright.curtin.edu.au/resources/>
- *Copying by Thesis Authors*
http://copyright.curtin.edu.au/research/high_degree_theses.cfm
- *Sample letter requesting permission to reproduce material in a thesis*
http://copyright.curtin.edu.au/docs/hdr_students_permission_request.pdf
- *Authorship, Peer Review and Publication of Research Findings Policy*
<http://policies.curtin.edu.au/findapolicy/>

Related Guidelines - External to Curtin

- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)*
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>

There are a number of published guidelines for authorship, including:

- *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors
<http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/full/126/1/36?ck=nck>
- *Publication Policies*, Nature
<http://www.nature.com/nature/submit/policies/index.html>