

## UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

### GUIDELINES FOR CO-AUTHORSHIP WITH POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS (PG), USE OF PG STUDENT-GENERATED DATA OR RESEARCH MATERIAL, AND RELATED DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

#### **A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This document provides guidance to Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) staff and postgraduate students regarding co-authorship of publications stemming from research undertaken as part of a postgraduate programme. It also describes the process to be followed in resolving any authorship disputes. This document acknowledges that each such situation is unique and requires distinctive consideration.

#### **1. General philosophy on co-authorship of publications**

1.1 Earned co-authorship - A person (a student or staff member or research collaborator) has earned co-authorship on an individual publication when they satisfy each of the following three requirements. They must be directly involved in the:

- planning and contributing to some component of the work (e.g. conceptualisation, data collection);
- writing or critical review of a draft of the intellectual content;
- final approval of the version to be published.

Each individual research product (e.g., journal article, book chapter) should be assessed for these three requirements.

1.2 Responsibilities of co-authorship - Co-authorship means that each individual co-author takes personal responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the published content.

1.3 Co-authorship of publications beyond the first publication stemming from a dissertation or thesis. Additional publications, beyond the first publication, must be scrutinized for the three requirements listed in Section 1.1 to determine authorship. Supervisor or student co-authorship beyond the first publication is not automatic.

#### **2. Authorship sequence**

Authorship sequence depends on an individual's contribution in general and per measure i.e. based on active participation, scientific input, data involvement, time spent/effort, resource support/supply.

Requirements to qualify as first author:

- Own initiative
- Conceptualisation
- Must prepare and publish the manuscript
- Supervisor and co-supervisor as part of the research agreement leading to the thesis or dissertation

Requirement to qualify as second author:

- Sequence of the co-author depends on the scientific contribution

Requirement to qualify as co-authors:

- Definite scientific, technological or valuable contribution to the final publication
- Not necessarily if:
  - Routine work (no matter the volume & extent)
  - Direct application of existing techniques

Requirements for senior authorship

- Project team leader or principal investigator of the project, who served as the driving force behind the concept, organised the project and provided guidance throughout execution of the project

Requirements for joint authorship

- It is common practice to indicate that two authors have contributed equally to a publication, especially for first authors. It needs to be stated clearly that this is acceptable for PhD students, where a PhD student is typically expected to submit a first author paper as part of satisfying the requirements for their degree.

### **3. Co-authorship between staff and postgraduate students**

3.1. Supervisors and students should discuss co-authorship of future publications at the start of the project. A preliminary author list is normally included in the study proposal. Co-authorship of individual publications stemming from the dissertation or thesis should be detailed in the required Memorandum of Agreement between supervisor and student. Co-authorship should be revisited throughout the research process and upon completion of studies.

3.2. Co-authorship on the dissertation or thesis itself: per programme requirements, this must be the student's own work, and these research products should be solely authored by the student.

In the case of an article-based PhD, the sole authorship refers to the actual bound PhD thesis (where the student is the sole author). The sole authorship does not refer to the authorship reflected in the individual articles published as part of the article-based PhD.

3.3. Co-authorship of publications arising from a dissertation or thesis: all publications from dissertations and theses should acknowledge that the research comes from [student's name]'s dissertation/thesis at the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Health Sciences.

#### **3.3.1. Supervisor and co-supervisor**

It is common practice that the supervisor will be the last and corresponding author on publications stemming from a dissertation or thesis. This is commonly accepted as reciprocity for the time and energy the supervisor has devoted to the student's research.

#### **3.3.2. Student**

Even if the student does not meet each of the three requirements specified in Section 1.1, the student should be the lead author on the first paper coming from a dissertation or thesis. In the case of two authors on a particular publication, the student will be the first author and the supervisor will be second author.

### **4. Staff publishing from postgraduate student work without student co-authorship**

4.1. Guidelines for staff publishing work related to a student dissertation or thesis without student authorship

A student has likely not earned authorship, and instead should be simply acknowledged in a staff member's publication in any of the following cases:

- When the student's work is just one of several sources the supervisor has consulted in saying something new in his or her publication.
- When the student's contribution doesn't meet the requirements listed in 1.1 above.
- When the supervisor takes material from a student's work to tell a "whole new story" in the publication rather than restating arguments/the story in the student's thesis or dissertation. In colloquial terms, this is the difference between "making a new meal" and "reheating a student's leftovers", the former would be a case of no student co-authorship, whereas the latter would necessitate student co-authorship.

#### 4.2. Integrity Rights

A student may leave his or her connection with the university (e.g. upon graduation), and, from time to time, a supervisor may wish to use the student's data or other material compiled as part of the student's dissertation or thesis work. Supervisors must realize that there is an inherent risk of dispute of intellectual property rights in moving forward with publication of students' work without their co-authorship. Even when data or material is only tangentially related to the student's work, the supervisor is required to go back to the student to verify that:

- The student agrees with the supervisor's assessment that the student has not earned co-authorship on the publication. (Again, see requirements in 1.1 to guide co-authorship). A waiver of the student's right to co-authorship on the publication should ideally be obtained in writing by the supervisor or department.
- Integrity rights have been met, i.e. the student should provide his or her agreement with any modifications to the student's original work. Even where the student is not a co-author, the supervisor should obtain written agreement in the spirit of: "Do you agree with what I've done?" Agreement stated in an email is sufficient. Ethics requirements in terms of storage of data must be considered .

### 5. The case of a traceable and uncontactable student

In cases where the student has left the University and is traceable and uncontactable, use of the student's work should always result in the student being included as a co-author. If the manuscript is written by the supervisor, the supervisor should have the right to be first author, but should discuss this with the student first and obtain written acknowledgement from the student. It is suggested that after a certain amount of time (three months) has passed after many attempts to contact the student and no responses have been received, the supervisor should be allowed to continue with submission to the identified journal. The declaration of authorship required by the journal for submission should then be signed by the supervisor or Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies.

### 6. The case of postgraduate students who are staff at other institutions

Agreement on the co-authorship of future publications is crucial when students are staff at other institutions, and will be interested in further projects/publications based on the original research project and/or data. The student should obtain written permission from the supervisor or home department to engage in solo projects (without the supervisor) with the data/ideas following the initial publication. UP owns the intellectual property rights to the data collected in theses and dissertations. Because of this, even if the student is no longer affiliated with UP, UP must still be acknowledged as the sponsor of the research and the institution where the dissertation/thesis work was conducted.

### 7. Dispute resolution process

When there is disagreement between supervisor and student on co-authorship on publications and/or ownership of data or other research material, and this policy has not been instrumental in resolving the matter, the following dispute resolution steps should be followed.

- Supervisor or student should notify the FHS Deputy Dean (DD) for Research & Postgraduate Studies and provide all available documentation on the matter.
- The DD will speak with both the supervisor and the student, either individually or together.
- The DD will assess the situation and prescribe a course of action.
- If the course of action is not satisfactory to the supervisor or the student, that party may escalate the matter to the Dean of FHS.
- If the course of action is not satisfactory to the supervisor or the student, that party may escalate the matter to the UP Registrar, who will make the final determination.