

Authorship of Research Outputs Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy states the requirements for the attribution and management of research authorship in line with criteria set out in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) (the Code). The primary objectives of this Policy are to:

- a. Clarify the criteria for honestly and fairly attributing authorship for research outputs;
- b. Ensure that researchers appropriately and consistently attribute authorship for all research outputs;
- c. Minimise disputes about authorship; and
- d. Ensure that researchers appropriately affiliate research outputs to La Trobe University.

(2) Attributions of authorship must be based on a substantial intellectual contribution to the research output. The purpose of this document is to:

- a. establish procedures that implement the Authorship of Research Outputs Policy,
- b. establish processes to minimise authorship disputes and assist in resolving those that do arise, and
- c. ensure that all individuals who have contributed to a research output are included as authors or otherwise appropriately acknowledged.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to the research outputs of:

- a. All La Trobe University staff and students involved in research;
- b. All visitors involved in research associated with or supported by the University including fellows, scholars and students;
- c. All La Trobe University campuses and external research locations.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) The University is committed to ensuring that researchers appropriately and fairly attribute authorship to outputs. It also seeks to minimise disputes about authorship and to help resolve them if they arise.

Attribution of Authorship

(5) Authorship must be based on a substantial scholarly or intellectual contribution to the research output and authors must be able and willing to take responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of at least that component of the research output which they have contributed.

(6) As outlined in the Code, attributing authorship can vary according to discipline but in every case must reflect a substantial contribution in any or all of the following:

- a. Conception and design of the project that underpins the output;
- b. Interpretation and analysis of research data;
- c. Drafting or otherwise producing significant components of the output or critically revising it so as to contribute to interpretation.

(7) The right to authorship is not tied to a position or profession and is not justified by any of the following contributions in and of themselves:

- a. Being Head of School or Department or holding other positions of authority;
- b. Providing materials, technical support or to have made measurements without other intellectual input;
- c. Acquiring funding;
- d. Providing general supervision of the research team;
- e. Supervision of students engaged in research.

(8) Authorship does not depend on whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary.

(9) Researchers must offer authorship to all people, including students, research assistants and technicians, who meet the criteria set out above.

(10) A person who qualifies as an author must not be included or excluded without their written permission which should also include a brief description of their contribution to the output.

Multiple Authors

(11) Collaborating researchers should agree on authorship at an early stage in the research project and review this agreement periodically.

(12) Where an output has more than one author, one researcher should be appointed as coordinating author with responsibility for managing communication and record keeping. Coordinating authors subject to this policy must record and maintain written documentation of authorship agreements in accordance with these Procedures.

School Responsibility

(13) Where discipline-specific authorship conventions exist, the Schools within the University must develop and maintain local guidelines for the specific discipline(s) within their School. In the absence of local guidelines for the attribution of authorship, those criteria outlined above shall apply.

(14) All local authorship guidelines must be endorsed by the Research and Graduate Studies Committee (RGSC) before being introduced and must not include practices that contravene criteria set out in this policy and procedure and the Code.

Researcher Responsibilities

(15) Researchers are responsible for knowing and applying discipline-specific authorship criteria as outlined in School guidelines as well as those set out in the Code and this policy and attending procedure.

(16) All authors have the responsibility to ensure that the contributions of others to the research project are appropriately recognised and attributed, including the contribution of students. Where the contribution does not meet the criteria for authorship, individuals must be properly acknowledged in the resulting research output(s).

Institutional Affiliation

(17) La Trobe University staff and students must affiliate to La Trobe University, with the name of the institution written out in full, as their primary affiliation in their by-line on any research output. When multiple affiliations exist La Trobe University must be listed first wherever possible. This requirement also applies to work conducted at the University and published after staff or students have left the institution.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Relevant Legislation and Guidelines

(18) All staff, students and visitors involved in research at the University are required to comply with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) and other State and Federal codes.

(19) Where outputs are prepared for submission to medical journals they should conform to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journals (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, ICMJE, 2008).

Part B - Responsibilities of Collaborating and Nominated Authors

(20) Where there is more than one author of a research output, collaborating authors should agree on authorship details early in the collaboration process and must do so prior to submission of the output for publication or other form of public dissemination.

(21) Collaborating authors will nominate an author to manage all communication about the research output. The coordinating author will:

- a. ensure that authorship has been offered to all individuals, including students, who meet the authorship criteria stipulated in this Policy and any discipline-specific local guidelines;
- b. manage and retain all correspondence between co-authors relating to authorship confirmation and the order of authorship;
- c. confirm that all authors approve of the manuscript or other research output that will be submitted for publication;
- d. manage communication about the research output with the publisher/venue/facilitator.

(22) If the coordinating author is based at another institution, co-authors affiliated with La Trobe University should designate one La Trobe co-author as a University-responsible author who will ensure, to the best of their ability, that the coordinating author fulfils the above responsibilities.

(23) Inclusion of authors who are deceased or who cannot be contacted can proceed only if they fulfil the requirements for authorship and if there are no grounds to believe that the person would have objected to being included as an author.

Part C - Acknowledging Other Contributions

(24) Contributions to the research output must be acknowledged fairly, including technical contributions, routine assistance and supervision, provision of data already published or provided by third parties without intellectual input, and/or provision of facilities and materials.

(25) Authors must obtain the consent of individuals proposed to be acknowledged in writing. Where there is more than one author, the coordinating author should be responsible for ensuring that all individuals are acknowledged appropriately and for managing and maintaining correspondence related to acknowledgements.

(26) Where the contributions of supervisors of students who engage in research do not qualify for the attribution of authorship according to this Policy or local guidelines, they have the right to be acknowledged in any outputs resulting from the research under supervision.

Part D - Content and Management of Authorship Agreements

(27) All authors of all research outputs will confirm authorship and order of authorship by providing written acknowledgement of authorship to the nominated author (see Part B) prior to submission or public dissemination of the research output.

(28) At minimum, the following information should be specified in authorship agreements:

- a. the signatories are the only qualified authors;
- b. the order of authors' names in the authorship list on the research output is agreed by all authors;
- c. all authors agree that they have met the criteria for authorship attribution as detailed in this policy;
- d. all authors have approved the manuscript or research output that will be submitted for publication;
- e. all authors agree that they are responsible for their contributions to the content of the research output;
- f. all authors have provided appropriate information about their institutional affiliations according to the this policy;
- g. individuals being acknowledged by name have provided their written consent. Emailed advice regarding consent is acceptable.

(29) La Trobe authors will retain a copy of all documentation used for assigning and/or acknowledging authorship for their own records. La Trobe staff and students who are nominated to manage communication about the research output must maintain documentation for all authors and acknowledged contributors (see Part B above).

Part E - Method of Citing La Trobe University Affiliation

(30) When listing institution of affiliation, the name of the university must be spelled out in full - La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, No specific campus of the University is to be mentioned. When multiple affiliations exist La Trobe University must be listed first wherever possible. This requirement also applies to work conducted at the University and published after staff or students have left the institution.

Part F - Authorship Disputes and Research Misconduct

(31) An authorship dispute does not constitute an allegation of research misconduct unless it is alleged that there has been an intentional and reckless breach of this Policy and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#). Research misconduct includes intentional and misleading ascription of authorship such as the inappropriate omission or inclusion of authors.

(32) Authors who wish to make an allegation of research misconduct in relation to the authorship dispute will follow the University's [Research Misconduct Procedure](#). Where a higher degree student undertaking research is the subject of the allegation, the Higher Degree Student Research Misconduct Procedure applies. Where a student undertaking coursework is the subject of the allegation, the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) apply.

(33) Authorship disputes not involving an allegation of research misconduct will follow the dispute resolution procedure outlined in Part G below.

Part G - Authorship Dispute Resolution Procedure for Staff and

Students

Authorship Disputes Occurring Before Publication

(34) If a dispute arises between co-authors over the inclusion, exclusion or order of potential authors, authors will first attempt to resolve the dispute and reach an agreement through direct dialogue with each other. Where the dispute cannot be resolved and it involves co-authors from other institutions, the dispute should be managed by the institution of the author nominated to manage communication about the research output or as agreed by the co-authors. La Trobe co-authors are encouraged to seek support from their Head of Department/School in the event that the dispute resolution is being managed by another institution. Authors may also consult with a Research Integrity Advisor at any time for informal advice in relation to the authorship of research outputs.

(35) Where the dispute cannot be resolved and it involves co-authors who are all affiliated with La Trobe University, the co-authors will refer the dispute to their Head(s) of School. The Head(s) of School will attempt to resolve the conflict at the local level. If the dispute cannot be resolved, or if a Head of School has a conflict of interest with the dispute, the Head of School will refer the author(s) to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellors (Research)(APVC(R)) of the relevant College(s).

(36) The College APVCs (R) will attempt to resolve the dispute by agreement. If the dispute cannot be resolved in this way, the dispute will be referred in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (DVC(R)), or a nominated delegate, via the Manager, Research Integrity.

(37) The DVC(R) or a nominated delegate will attempt to resolve the dispute by agreement. To assist the DVC(R), author(s) may be required to provide the following information:

- a. a copy of the documentation used for agreeing and acknowledging authorship;
- b. copies of any key documentation to show how each of the authors have met the criteria for authorship attribution as detailed in this Policy and have given final approval of the version to be published;
- c. a list of all authors believed to be valid authors, and why; and/or,
- d. a list of all individuals believed to have contributed to the paper and who should be fully acknowledged, and why.

(38) In making a resolution, the DVC(R) will review the relevant material, seek advice from an independent person with expertise in the area (as required), and make a determination.

(39) Possible outcomes may include:

- a. removing individuals who were deemed not to have met the authorship criteria as set out in this Policy and acknowledging their contributions, if appropriate.
- b. including all individuals who were deemed to have met the authorship criteria as articulated in this Policy.
- c. revising the order of authorship on the publication.

(40) The research output may only be published when all valid authors agree on authorship of the publication.

(41) Where a dispute occurs between a higher degree student and a supervisor of their research project and the dispute has been escalated to the DVC(R), the Chair, Board of Graduate Research will be informed of the outcome.

Authorship Disputes Occurring After Publication

(42) Where an individual has concerns about the authorship of an existing publication, the individual should refer the dispute in writing to the DVC(R) or nominated delegate in the first instance via the Manager, Research Integrity. The DVC(R) will consider the matter and may determine to proceed under the procedures outlined above or to invoke the

relevant [Research Misconduct Procedure](#).

Section 5 - Definitions

(43) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Affiliation: Being officially attached or connected to an organisation.
- b. Authorship: Being the producer or creator of a new work, in particular, all written work.
- c. Higher degree student: a student enrolled in a Master's degree or a Doctoral degree, whether by coursework or research or a combination of coursework and research.
- d. Research output: A research output can be any article in hardcopy, electronic or other form that communicates or makes available the products of research. Example research outputs include but are not limited to journal article, book chapter, book, report, conference paper, original creative work, live performance, recorded performance, film or public exhibition.
- e. Staff: All employees of the University or affiliated enterprises with which the University has a formal agreement and includes casual employees, clinical staff and unpaid members of the University such as Honorary and Adjunct appointments, all of which are registered on the HR system.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); Heads of School.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – College Pro Vice-Chancellors (Research).

Status and Details

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Effective Date	28th November 2016
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