

Research Authorship and 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) and supporting Authorship-A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Guide).

(2) The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a. Establish procedures to ensure the University and researchers meet the relevant principles outlined by the Code:
 - i. Principle 4, 'Fairness in the treatment of others', which requires researchers to 'give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.'
 - ii. Principle 6, 'Recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them', which requires researchers to credit the contributions of Indigenous people and knowledge.
- b. Clarify the principles of attributing authorship for research outputs;
- c. Ensure that researchers appropriately and consistently attribute authorship for all research outputs;
- d. Provide a mechanism for raising concerns, for the fair and timely resolution of disputes about authorship and for authorship disputes involving:
 - i. Power imbalances between researchers;
 - ii. Researchers who are unwilling to accept authorship and/or accountability for their contribution, obstruct progress of a research project or output, or fail to cooperate with co-authors; and
 - iii. Researchers from multiple institutions.
 - iv. Talking to your co-authors at regular intervals to maintain the authorship conversations and agreements.
- e. Ensure that researchers appropriately affiliate research outputs to La Trobe University.

Section 2 - Scope

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

- a. All La Trobe University staff and students;
- 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.

(5) It also seeks to minimise disputes about authorship and to help resolve them if they arise.

Attribution of Authorship

(6) For a person to claim, demand, or accept authorship without having made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution is a breach of the Code. Similarly, it is a breach of the Code for a person to offer or attribute authorship to someone who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution.

(7) Authorship must be based on a substantial scholarly or intellectual contribution (which is not necessarily quantitatively large) to the research output and authors must be able and willing to take responsibility for the final approval of the version to be published and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. An individual author is directly responsible for the accuracy and integrity of their contribution to the output. Authors should have confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

(8) The minimum authorship threshold changes between some journals, disciplines and institutions. For this reason, the minimum authorship conventions must include point (6) above and at least two of the following criteria:

- a. Conception and design of the project or output;
- b. Acquisition of research data where the acquisition has required significant intellectual, judgement, planning, design, or input;
- c. Contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Indigenous knowledge;
- d. Analysis or interpretation of research data;
- e. Drafting significant parts of the research output or critically revising, reviewing and translating it so as to contribute to its interpretation.

(9) For matters in which the journals or discipline requires a higher minimum threshold, these requirements take precedence over this Policy.

(10) Authorship cannot be attributed solely on the basis of:

- a. The position or profession of an individual, such as their role as the author's supervisor or head of school/department ('gift authorship');
- b. The provision of funding, data, materials, infrastructure or access to equipment;
- c. The provision of routine technical support, technical advice or technical assistance;
- d. Providing general supervision of the research team;
- e. Supervision of students engaged in research;
- f. Whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary;
- g. Offering 'guest authorship' to an individual who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to elevate the esteem of the research.

(11) Researchers must offer authorship to all people who meet the criteria set out above.

(12) A person who qualifies as an author must not be included or excluded without authorship evidence as outlined in Part D of this Policy.

(13) For research output related to research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, researchers must ensure agreed arrangements are in place as per AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies 2012 and Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018:

- a. Information obtained from Indigenous peoples should be acknowledged in any research outputs
- b. Involvement of individuals in the interpretation of the results and the preparation of any publications (including whether they should be co-authors) must be agreed
- c. Clear provisions relating to joint sign-off prior to publication of the research results
- d. Identification and agreement over individuals involved in the research who should be acknowledged in any publication

(14) Where an output has more than one author, one researcher should be appointed as coordinating author and act as the corresponding author with responsibility for managing communication and record keeping. The coordinating author must record and maintain written documentation of authorship agreements in accordance with these Procedures.

Researcher Responsibilities

(15) The corresponding author has primary responsibility for ensuring that all contributors to the research output are properly recognised regardless of their position or any changes in their position or role.

(16) All authors should:

- a. Alert the corresponding author to any author or contributor who may have been inadvertently omitted.
- b. Formalise authorship arrangements per Part D of this Policy.
- c. Acknowledge contribution other than authorship, for example contributions from individuals providing technical support and/or research infrastructure.
- d. Obtain permission from named contributors before acknowledging them in.

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 relevant legislation and guidelines.

Part B - Responsibilities of Collaborating and Coordinating Authors

(19) 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. The coordinating author is usually the corresponding author for any peer reviewed scientific journals. This may not be applicable for other types of research outputs.

(20) 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;
- b. Manage and retain all correspondence between co-authors relating to authorship confirmation and the order of authorship, including taking relevant evidence pertaining to authorship agreements to any new institution;
- 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.

(21) 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.

(22) 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. If an author is deceased, this should be noted in the publication.

Part C - Authorship Agreements

(23) All researchers should discuss authorship at an early stage in the research, as well as throughout the research project. Where there is more than one author, an authorship agreement should be in place before the commencement of writing up each research paper. An authorship agreement does not need to be a formal legal document. It can be in the form of emails, a transcript of an online discussion or other similar evidence that can be recognised as an agreement.

(24) At minimum, the following information should be specified in the evidence pertaining to authorship:

- a. identification of those who will be recognised as the authors of the research output as per the criteria for authorship attribution as detailed in this Policy;
- b. a description of the contribution that each author has made (or will make) to the research output as defined by this Policy;
- c. an indication of the order in which the authors appear. The agreed order of authors should be consistent with any applicable disciplinary norms and publication requirements;
- d. identification of at least one corresponding author who is responsible for communication with the publisher and managing communication between the co-authors.

(25) 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.

(26) Records of agreement must include:

- a. Order of authors' names in the authorship list on the research output as agreed by all authors;
- b. Evidence of discussions (e.g. emails) of authorship considerations from all authors;
- c. Written evidence of agreement of authorship from all authors. Written evidence can be obtained by email or by completion and signing of the Authorship Agreement Form;
- d. Written evidence of final approval of submission of the research output for publication or release from each author and that all authors agree that they are responsible for their contributions to the content of the research

output;

- e. Agreement that all authors have met the criteria for authorship attribution as detailed in this Policy;
- f. Approval from all authors that the manuscript or research output will be submitted for publication;
- g. Record of any agreed changes to the authorship of a research output;
- h. Provision of appropriate information by all authors about their institutional affiliations according to this Policy;
- i. Individuals being acknowledged by name have provided their written consent. Emailed advice regarding consent is acceptable.

(27) 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) or the authorship template available for download on the Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety website.

(28) It is the responsibility of the coordinating author to maintain records of the authorship agreement from conception to publication. Where the coordinating author is not from the same institution as other listed authors, authors are encouraged to keep their own records. As a project evolves, it is important to continue to discuss authorship, especially if new people become involved in the research and make a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution. The Coordinating author must also document if some researchers originally involved in the design and conception do not have any ongoing involvement in the project and what the agreed authorship arrangements are for future outputs related to the research.

Part D - Citing La Trobe University Affiliation

(29) When listing institution of affiliation, the name of the university must be spelled out in full - La Trobe University. 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 E - Training and Education

(30) Researchers must engage with the training provided by the Research Education and Development (RED) Unit and the Research Office through the Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety Team in regard to their responsibilities under the Research Code, including authorship.

Part F - 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 \(2018\)](#).

(32) Research misconduct pertaining to authorship can include any of the following deliberate actions:

- a. Misleading ascription of authorship such as inappropriate omission or inclusion of authors.
- b. Accepting credit or authorship on a research output where the researcher does not meet the criteria for authorship;
- c. Failing to attribute authorship where a researcher meets the criteria for authorship;
- d. Attributing authorship to a researcher without their consent;
- e. Publishing a research output without the final approval of the attributed authors;
- f. Failing to comply with an authorship agreement;
- g. Making a false claim about authorship in a grant application.

(33) 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 [Research - Higher Degree Student Misconduct Procedure](#) applies. Where a student undertaking coursework is the subject of the allegation, the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) applies.

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

Part G - Resolution of disputes

(35) 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.

(36) When La Trobe staff or students are listed as the Coordinating author, and they cannot resolve a dispute through mediation, then advice should be sought from Senior Manager of Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety (EIB) (or delegate) and/or Research Integrity Advisor (or appropriate delegate with research experience) who has experience in the discipline where the dispute has arisen. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, to ensure timely dispute resolution, the Senior Manager of Ethics will undertake the following steps:

- a. Within four weeks of receiving a request, contact all co-authors and put in writing a request for evidence pertaining to the dispute;
- b. Co-authors have two weeks from the date of the letter to submit all evidence pertaining to the dispute. Evidence can include (i) A copy of the documentation used for agreeing and acknowledging authorship; (ii) 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. (iii) A list of all authors believed to be valid authors, and why; and/or (iv) A list of all individuals believed to have contributed to the paper and who should be fully acknowledged, and why;
- c. Within two weeks of receiving evidence, a Panel which includes the Senior Manager of EIB and at least one discipline expert will be convened. Co-authors will be contacted to attend a mediation session with the panel and will be asked to bring a support person.
- d. Two weeks after the panel have convened, a letter will be sent to co-authors notifying them of the panel's decision.
- e. If co-authors wish to appeal the decision of the panel, they can do so within four weeks of receiving the letter.

(37) 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.
- d. Implementing or revising an authorship agreement as per this Policy prior to the dissemination of the research output.

(38) Appeals are to be sent to the Senior Manager of EIB, who will then send the reasons for appeal to the Panel and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research, Industry and Engagement (DVCR&IE) (or delegate). Within four weeks of receiving the appeal, the DVCR&IE (or delegate) will provide a decision as to whether there are grounds for appeal or not, and if so, will attempt to resolve the dispute by agreement.

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

(40) Any review should consider:

- a. If there is a power imbalance between the researchers, for example, a dispute between student and supervisor;
- b. If researcher/s are unwilling to accept authorship and/or accountability for their contribution, obstruct progress of a research project or output or fail to cooperate with co-authors;
- c. If researcher/s are from multiple institutions.

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

(42) Where a dispute occurs between a higher degree student and a supervisor of their research project, the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research will be informed by the Senior Manager of EIB when a Panel has been convened and of the outcome.

(43) Where an individual has concerns about the authorship of an existing publication, the individual should refer the dispute in writing to the DVC(R&IE) or nominated delegate in the first instance via the Senior Manager of EIB. The DVC(R&IE) 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

(44) For the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Affiliation: Being officially attached or connected to an organisation.
- b. Author: An individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and who has agreed to be listed as an author.
- c. Authorship: Being the producer or creator of a new work, in particular, all written work.
- d. Corresponding author: The author who is, as agreed by all co-authors, responsible for communication between the publishers, managing communication between the co-authors and maintaining records of the authorship agreement.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	23rd June 2020
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Responsible Policy Officer	Alistair Duncan Executive Director, Research Office
Author	Heidi Gaulke Senior Manager, Ethics Integrity and Biosafety
Enquiries Contact	Research Office