

PGP 2.5.2 Co-authorship Protocol

Summary

The publication or presentation of work derived from a PGR student's research should follow the accepted principles of (co)authorship attribution for research projects.

Supervisors of PGR students should be aware of and considerate with regard to the power imbalance that exists between them as supervisors, and established scholars in their area of expertise, and the student they are supervising.

Authorship should only be allocated to individuals who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and who agree to be listed as an author.

Purpose

This protocol outlines the principles, and approaches that should be used when considering and agreeing upon the attribution of co-authorship on any "outputs" arising from a PGR student's research.

Scope

This protocol provides guidance for the allocation/attribution of (co)authorship for any outputs (e.g. publications, presentations) arising from research related to a postgraduate student's theses/dissertations/exegeses of Doctoral, Masters and Bachelor with Honours level. It may also be applied for students who may be involved in publication or presentation of other works derived from their studies at AUT.

Application

Definitions

A **research output** is any dissemination into the public arena of work derived from a student's research or work being included in their materials being part of their formal assessment for the qualification they are pursuing. This includes, but is not limited to, work presented for examination as a thesis, dissertation or research project and practice-based materials and supporting exegesis. This includes materials within or derived from a student's work after they have graduated.

An **author** is an individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output, and agrees to be listed as an author.

A **significant intellectual or scholarly contribution**¹ must include one, and should include a combination of two or more, of the following:

- Conception and design of the project or output;
- Acquisition of research data where the acquisition has required significant intellectual judgement, planning, design, or input;
- Contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Indigenous knowledge;

¹ In the context of postgraduate research supervision a "significant intellectual contribution" includes contributions such as:

- a. The postgraduate research student's project is derived from or contributing to a larger project which has been initiated and/or led by the supervisor (e.g. an externally funded research programme).
- b. The data-set that the postgraduate research student is utilising for their research is a data-set that has been collected/compiled by the supervisor.
- c. A research project designed by the supervisor for which a scholarship or other financial support for the postgraduate research student has been provided.

- Analysis or interpretation of research data;
- Drafting significant parts of the research output or critically revising it so as to contribute to its interpretation.

Principles

Authorship should be attributed when an individual has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to a research output.

- All authors must agree to be authors.
- All named authors must have confidence in the integrity and accuracy of their contributions.
- All named authors are accountable for their contributions.
- The order of multiple (co)authorships should follow the conventions of the discipline or scholarly community (e.g. for many the first author is the person who is the primary/lead researcher with regard to the output).
- Contributions to research that do not meet the criteria for authorship should be acknowledged where appropriate.

Authorship should not be attributed solely on the basis of:

- The provision of funding, data, materials, infrastructure or access to equipment;
- The provision of routine technical support, technical advice or technical assistance;
- The position or profession of an individual, such as their role as the student's supervisor or head of department ('gift authorship');
- Whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary;
- Whether the student is supported by a scholarship or not;
- The status of an individual who has not made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution being such that it would elevate the esteem of the research ('guest authorship').

Supervision Agreement

All postgraduate research students and their supervisors should discuss authorship in their meetings in the early months of their enrolment using this protocol as a guide. As part of developing their Supervision Agreement students and supervisors should discuss and record in the agreement that before any research output is produced:

- the co-authors of any research output will be identified;
- each co-author's contribution to the research output will be described;
- the order in which the authors are listed will be specified.

The agreed order of authors should be consistent with any applicable disciplinary norms and publication requirements.

Note: normally, when the student has been an active co-author, the student should be listed as the first author (subject to disciplinary norms). There are some instances where the student may not be the first author such as when the student's project is part of a bigger project led by the supervisor, then potentially some outputs could have the project lead as the first author. These situations should be discussed and agreed in the supervision agreement in advance.

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 postgraduate research student and their Primary Supervisor should retain a record of any agreed changes to the Supervision Agreement.

The Supervision Agreement may include a specific publication/co-authorship agreement and/or an agreement with regard to intellectual property and the rights to use/develop/disseminate intellectual property arising from the research the student is involved with.

Resolution of Disagreements

If there is a disagreement with regard to authorship attribution, supervisors must be cognisant of the power imbalance that exists between them and the student. The principles of this protocol should be referred to and used as a guide when seeking to resolve disagreements. If the disagreement is unable to be resolved then the parties involved may seek the advice of the relevant Faculty Associate Dean Postgraduate and/or the Dean of the Graduate Research School.

Students are able to seek the support of independent Postgraduate Student Advocates from the AUT Student Association who can advise and help the student work through the processes available to support them.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specified via a formal agreement, the intellectual property rights for the research being undertaken as part of a student's formally approved study leading to the qualification they are enrolled in resides with the student.

External Funded/Supported Research Projects

Where a student's work/research is funded or supported by an external party (such as via an external research grant or consultancy or via a placement at an external entity) there may be obligations that exist which influence intellectual property rights and authorship of research outputs. Any such obligations need to be detailed (or appended to) the Supervision Agreement so it is clear and explicit what these obligations are. Such obligations should not compromise the student's ability to submit the work they are undertaking for the qualification they are enrolled in, nor should these obligations be in conflict with the principles of authorship outlined in this protocol.

Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project by Manuscript (Format 2)

Where a student's research is presented for assessment using Format 2 (Manuscript Structure) the manuscripts are required:

- To be resultant from work completed during the student's enrolment in the research degree;
- to have the student as the principal author of the manuscript(s);
- that the student has a stated contribution which constitutes the leadership and writing up of the work reported in the manuscript(s);
- to include a signed declaration (from all co-authors) which specifies the extent and nature of the contribution and co-authors' contribution to each of the manuscripts.

Co-authorship allocation for manuscripts submitted under Format 2 for assessment should follow the principles and approaches set out in this protocol. A student maybe questioned on the attribution of authorship and required by their examiners to outline the process used for this. In addition, as the principal author, the student may be asked by their examiners to describe their role in the manuscript in relation to other co-authors.

For more detailed guidance on allocation of (co)authorship please refer to:

[Authorship: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.](#)

Outcome

The attribution of authorship for outputs arising from postgraduate research student's work are allocated fairly and in accordance with accepted practice in the scholarly community.

Review

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Related Protocols

PGP 2.5.1 Postgraduate Research Formats