

# #4 Responsible research outputs

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## 1) About this sheet

This sheet in the Research Integrity Resource Sheets series brings together guidance material about authorship and publication ethics matters, as well as some tips for selecting a publisher for your next research output.

## 2) National guidelines

The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2018) is the Australian standard for research integrity/the responsible conduct of research.

## 3) Career impacts

Dissemination of research findings is an important part of the research process, and doing this well not only benefits other researchers, practitioners and the wider community, but also build a researcher's reputation and profile. Problems with a research output however, can lead to a forced retraction. There is analysis that suggests the scholarly impact of researchers who have had a forced retraction suffers by at least 10% and that drop lasts for in excess of 10 years. Similar impacts are typically seen even for honest mistakes/errors and to co-authors. Impacts in excess of 85% can be seen when a retraction relates to research misconduct (such as where an output is based upon fabricated or fraudulent data).

**Adhering to the standards and obligations is not 'just' a matter of complying with national standards and University policy, it is also about protecting your reputation and career.**

There is also commentary that suggests that co-authoring a research output with someone who has previously had a forced retraction or committed research misconduct can have a tangible negative reputational impact.

## ---- PUBLICATION ETHICS ----

## 4) Disseminate full and honest account

**Principles 1 and 2, and Researcher Responsibility 21 and 23** of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) relate to this responsible practice.

Griffith University researchers must provide a full and honest report of the results of their research, even if those results don't match the anticipated, or desired results.



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When negotiating agreements/contracts with funding bodies/sponsors/gatekeepers, Griffith University researchers are urged to seek unfettered agreement for the full, honest and timely reporting of results (subject to the other matters discussed in this resource sheet). This is especially important where there are public risks associated with the results (e.g. a trialled technique is unsafe, could cause injury and so alternatives should be explored). Researchers should contact the Office for Research (see Contact details on the sidebar of p9) in the event a party (e.g. an organisation funding the research) attempts to limit the timing and candour of the research outputs).

#### 5) Registering clinical trials

One way Griffith University adheres to the principle of disseminating full and honest accounts of research is the requirement that Griffith University researchers who conduct a clinical trial must ensure the trial is promptly listed on an established and reputable clinical trial register (e.g. [Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry](#))

#### 6) Cite work of others and avoid plagiarism

**Principle 4** and **Researcher Responsibility 27** of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) relate to this responsible practice.

Griffith University researchers must always correctly cite the work of others and avoid plagiarism.

#### 7) Multiple submissions

Many publishers in their submission guidelines specifically preclude multiple submissions (items concurrently submitted elsewhere). Griffith University researchers must always adhere to any such policy. Even if a potential publisher doesn't have such a policy Griffith University researchers should consult with the respective editors prior to making a concurrent submission.

Dual publication is generally considered a serious breach of the Code and may even constitute research misconduct.

#### 8) Permission for republication

Prior to republishing an output, Griffith University researchers must first seek the permission of the original publisher and then discuss the situation with the new publisher. This includes reprinting a research output in another language.

#### 9) Disclosure

As per **Researcher Responsibility 24** of the [Australian Code 2018](#) a research output may need to include one or several disclosures, such



## Useful Resources

Internal and external resources

### Figshare

“Figshare is an online open access repository where researchers can preserve and share their research outputs, including figures, datasets, images, and videos. It is free to upload content and free to access, in adherence to the principle of open data. [Wikipedia](#)”

[Website](#)

### Griffith Research Online

Griffith Research Online (GRO) is a digital archive of research and scholarship from Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

GRO delivers free online full-text versions of journal articles, conference papers, and more, where this is possible with the appropriate permissions of copyright owners. GRO increases the impact and influence of Griffith research and scholarship by ensuring it is visible, discoverable and accessible via search engines like Google and Google Scholar and discovery services like the National Library's Trove.

[Website](#)

### !Think. ✓Check. Submit campaign

“Think. Check. Submit. helps researchers identify trusted journals for their research.

Through a range of tools and practical resources, this international, cross-sector initiative aims to educate researchers, promote integrity, and build trust in credible research and publications.”

[Website](#)

as any perceived conflicts of interest, any limitations in the data collection and/or the general applicability of the overall findings, and the degree to which the research output builds upon ideas previously discussed in an earlier publication.

Failing to make such disclosures (where required) can have serious consequences, not only for the individual output, but potentially for the authors and possibly even for the entire line of enquiry.

#### 10) Confidentiality

A research output produced by a Griffith University researcher must adhere to any confidentiality or anonymity assurances provided to research participants, gatekeepers or stakeholders. This does not imply that participants should always be anonymous. There are many circumstances where anonymity is impossible or would be disrespectful. The above direction should also not be read as implying research outputs can't be used to expose illegal, inappropriate or dangerous behaviour/situations. In the case of human research, this is a matter that should be canvassed in the application for ethics approval and justification provided for any potential harms. Researchers should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity team in the Office for Research (see the sidebar on p9) if such matters become apparent after research ethics review.

#### 11) One output for one analysis

As a general principle there should be only one research output per research analysis, which does not mean there can only be one research output for every project. Where there is a genuine new analysis, this work can result in another research output, but Griffith University researchers must take care to avoid 'salami slicing' (see 15 below). Where work is an iterative progression from previous work this should be discussed in the subsequent output.

#### 12) Responsibly communicating

As per **Researcher Responsibility 23** of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#), Griffith University researchers are expected to carefully consider any harms (including reputational, legal, financial and social) that might arise from the research output. Such harms should be handled and justified like any risk (e.g. justified by the benefits of the research). If a researcher becomes aware of any inaccuracies or other problems with regard to reporting about the research (including media reports about the project) they must act promptly to address the matter.

#### 13) Text recycling/self-plagiarism

The notion of self-plagiarism might appear odd (after all “How can I misappropriate my own ideas?”). But it is an issue for three reasons:

- (1) Most publishers insist authors sign the copyright of an item over to them, so reusing substantial portions of text

#### Griffith University Research Integrity web page

[https://www.griffith.edu.au/  
research/research-  
services/research-ethics-  
integrity/research-integrity](https://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-services/research-ethics-integrity/research-integrity)

#### ON THE WEBSITE



**Link to Australian Code**



**Link to Griffith University's  
responsible research policy**



**The Research Integrity  
Resource Sheets**



**A resource paper about  
HDR candidate research  
outputs**



**List of RIAs and their  
contact details**



**Aboriginal Knowledge and  
Intellectual Property  
Protocol Community Guide**



**Research Data  
Management**



**International links**



from a publication you authored without permission is a breach of copyright.

- (2) As a general rule of thumb, some text recycling in the early sections of a research output can be acceptable, though preferably it should be cited and the relationship between the research outputs discussed. Text recycling later in a research output (e.g. with regard to data collected and the analysis/conclusion) is less acceptable.
- (3) Anything that might create the impression the work had been done more than once is a serious matter.

#### **14) Image reuse**

Some research outputs can include illustrations, graphics, diagrams, photographs an author has produced themselves or media they have commissioned/permission to use in the output.

If the author signs the copyright for the output over to the publisher, reusing that media would be a copyright violation.

One solution, before the first use of the media, is to register it on figshare.com with creative commons license. Each time the media is used, the figshare.com web service must be referenced. This approach has also been used for charts, tables and even entire datasets.

When using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media (such as artwork, music or dance created/performed by Indigenous artists) researchers must adhere to the [Australian Councils for the Arts policy on these matters](#) and respect Indigenous intellectual property.

#### **15) Salami-slicing**

Just like the mental image the term evokes, in the context of research outputs, salami-slicing refers to situations where additional outputs are justified by only the slimmest of changes in variables, circumstances or conditions from the previous research output.

While it is arguable whether salami-slicing is a breach of the Australian Code, it is not a route for building a strong reputation as a researcher or to have a high scholarly impact on your field. As such, Griffith University researchers are urged to avoid this practice.

**For advice with regard to matters (13) and (14) above contact the Manager Research Ethics and Integrity (see contacts below p9).**

## Recommended reading

A code of ethics to get scientists talking

[Nature](#)

ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of *In Vivo* Experiments)

[Guidelines](#)

Avoiding Plagiarism, Self-plagiarism, and Other Questionable Writing Practices: A Guide to Ethical Writing

[US ORI guidance](#) | [Website](#)

The cost of salami slicing

[Nature Materials](#)

Dropping the Hammer — Predatory Publishers Get Pounded by Regulators and the Press

[Scholarly Kitchen](#)

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## ---- AUTHORSHIP ----

Authorship disputes are one of the most common areas of complaints and disagreements between researchers (see item 23 on p7). But there are simple strategies Griffith University researchers can use to avoid common missteps/problems. The Principle 4 (Fairness) of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) includes “Give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research”. The following researcher responsibilities relate to authorship: R25 Ensure that authors of research outputs are all those, and only those, who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author; R26 Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research.

Griffith University has produced the following guidance to assist researchers to apply the principle and responsibilities to their practice.

### 16) Criteria and ex/inclusion

Griffith University uses the following authorship criteria (which are from the 2007 version of the Australian Code):

- I. conception and design of the project
- II. analysis and interpretation of research data
- III. drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation of it.

As per **Researcher Responsibility 25** of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) only persons who meet a combination (but not necessarily all) of the above can be included as an author of a research output. Persons who meet this standard must not be excluded from being named as a co-author (without their permission).

### 17) Early agreement

Griffith University researchers are urged to reach an early agreement in terms of the criteria that will be used to determine the contributors that are listed as co-authors, as opposed to others who will be acknowledged for their important contributions (see 20 below).

Given the shift from nationally articulated criteria there may be significant difference in interpretation between Australian institutions.

International authorship standards, like those issued by [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#) and [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#), provide standards that are similar, but not identical to the 2007 version of the Australian Code. As such, it is even more importance that Griffith University researchers establish a shared understanding with international collaborators.

The agreement should also discuss roles, an approach to order of

#### Recommended reading 2 of 4

Eminent sociologist accused of serial 'self-plagiarism'

[Times Higher Education](#)

How much text recycling is okay? - Retraction Watch

[Discussion piece](#)

How to review a manuscript

[Guidance, APA](#)

Moving to a World Beyond "p < 0.05"

[Special issue of The American Statistician](#)

New guidance from UKRIO: authorship in academic publications

[Announcement](#) | [Guidance Note](#) | [Website](#)

Continued overleaf



authorship and anticipated timeframe for submission (see 19 below and RIRS#5 *Collaborative research: Hints and tips*).

Real international cases and painful consequences have highlighted the importance of these early agreements.

#### 18) Full and fair inclusion

When working on a research output, Griffith University researchers must ensure there is a full and fair recognition of contributors as co-authors or in the form of an acknowledgement. The type of recognition must be based on the authorship criteria (see 16 above) and any agreement made between the collaborators (see 17 above).

#### 19) Researcher responsibilities

As discussed throughout this Research Integrity Resource Sheet, this guidance document relates to the following **Researcher Responsibilities: 21, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27.**

#### 20) Acknowledgements

As per **Researcher Responsibility 26**, Griffith University researchers must acknowledge the contribution of others to their research and/or output (e.g. important advice from a statistician, cultural adviser or technician). When a person's contribution is not sufficient for them to be named as a co-author (see 16 above), then the contributor must be acknowledged in the research output. Typically, this will be in the form of an endnote.

#### 21) Corresponding author

In the case of co-authored research outputs, one of the authors must be appointed as corresponding author. This is the author who will correspond with the assigned editor, compile the response to the feedback from peer reviewers and otherwise respond to correspondence about the output. The corresponding author is not necessarily the first or last author.

#### 22) Order of authorship

As a general practice, the order of authorship should reflect the significance of the contribution to the research or output. There are however valid disciplinary and publisher conventions/requirements that may override that general practice (e.g. alphabetically by author's surname or in order of seniority).

While it is acceptable to follow such a convention/requirement, this must be discussed as part of the early agreement (see 17 above).

### Recommended reading 3 of 4

Peer Review – Authors and Reviewers – our “North Star”

[Scholarly Kitchen](#)

The pitfalls of "salami slicing": Focus on quality and not quantity of publications

[Editage Insights](#)

Predatory journals: Not just a problem in developing world countries, says new Nature paper

[Retraction Watch](#)

RePAIR consensus guidelines: Responsibilities of Publishers, Agencies, Institutions, and Researchers in protecting the integrity of the research record

[Paper](#)

Text recycling: acceptable or misconduct? (Papers: Stephanie Harriman and Jigisha Patel | 2014)

[Papers](#) | [Guidelines](#)

Continued overleaf



### 23) Disputes

As was noted at the beginning of the authorship section, authorship disputes are far too common. This is especially unfortunate, because with a few simple strategies (see 17-18 above) they can be avoided. Disagreements can still happen, but hopefully they will be identified early enough so they can be resolved constructively or so the researchers can decide not to collaborate before they have invested too much time and energy in an output.

Disputes can quickly escalate into acrimonious and adversarial conflict that can be stressful, time consuming and damaging.

See [RIRS#12](#) for more about disputes.

---- SELECTING A PUBLISHER ----

### 24) Assessing a potential publisher

Given that an analysis can ordinarily only be published once (see 11 above), and because publisher agreements do not usually permit pre-publication of a work, it is essential researchers select the best possible publisher for their work. This will be influenced by the scholarly impact factor, reputation, quality and reach of the publication, but may also be constrained by the career stage of the author(s) and the quality of the output.

Even experienced researchers can struggle to identify the most appropriate publisher for their work.

All Griffith University researchers are urged to follow the prompts suggested by the [Think.Check.Submit campaign](#), to [consult your local research librarian](#) and use [Journal Citation reports](#) as a guide of the indexed, reputable and highly regarded journals in specific research fields prior to submitting your work.

Some reflections and strategies that can be helpful in assessing a potential publisher are:

- (i) Did the publisher email you out of the blue, praising your work and inviting you to submit a paper;
- (ii) Does the website of the publication contain glaring typographical errors;
- (iii) Do the papers they have already published directly relate to your field and are they of sufficient quality that you would reference them in your own work; and
- (iv) If you know an author who has previously published with them, or a listed editor, contact them directly (rather than via the publication) to enquire about their experiences with the publisher.

**Some diligence and caution in advance may save you considerable grief down the road.**

### Recommended reading 4 of 4

Tips for negotiating the peer-reviewed journal publication process as an early-career researcher

[LSE Impact Blog](#)

What does it mean to “take responsibility for” a paper?

[Blog post](#)

Where Are the Missing Coauthors? Authorship Practices in Participatory Research

[Paper](#)

Who is Actually Harmed by Predatory Publishers?

[Paper](#)



## 25) Predatory publishers

Most agree it was University of Colorado Denver librarian and researcher Jeffrey Beall who in 2010 first coined the phrase “predatory publishers”. Jeffrey Beall produced the ‘Beal’s List of Predatory Open Access Publishers’, a free ‘blacklist’ which operated for several years but was closed in early 2017. While the reasons for its closure are disputed and its closure dismayed by some, the list was not without its detractors – primarily because it tended to treat all open access publishers as suspicious and its update cycle couldn’t keep ahead of zombie, cloned and hijacked publishers (see the readings to the left for definitions of the terms).

Nevertheless, predatory publishers are real, their claims about peer review and scholarly impact are mostly false, and they can be an expensive and career-harming mistake for the unwary.

Rather than considering all open access publishers with suspicion, the four items listed in 24 should be used to assess individual publishers. There are further reasons to assess a potential publisher prior to submission.

There has been an instance (and then a very similar case) at Griffith University where:

- (i) a HDR candidate submitted a research output to a predatory publisher;
- (ii) she realised it had no real editorial process so withdrew her submission;
- (iii) she substantially revised and improved the original output which she submitted to a different publisher. But just before she did so, discovered the first publisher had gone ahead and published her original submission, despite her withdrawal; and it took several exchanges for the first publisher to take down the paper.

Other questionable practices by such publishers include:

- a) offering and then being prepared to accept for a fee of around USD500 to add co-authors to a paper (listed with the publisher) irrespective of whether they genuinely contributed to the work or if the corresponding author has listed them as a co-author; and
- b) listing eminent academics/famous people on their editorial board without their agreement or knowledge, and then stubbornly refusing to remove them.

Some have suggested that publishing with a predatory publisher has a definite deleterious scholarly impact on a researcher’s reputation and research scholarly impact factor, especially for early career researchers.

This scholarly impact is said to continue for many years after publication. Researchers who experience the kind of difficulties described above



#### OR CONTACTS

#### **Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity**

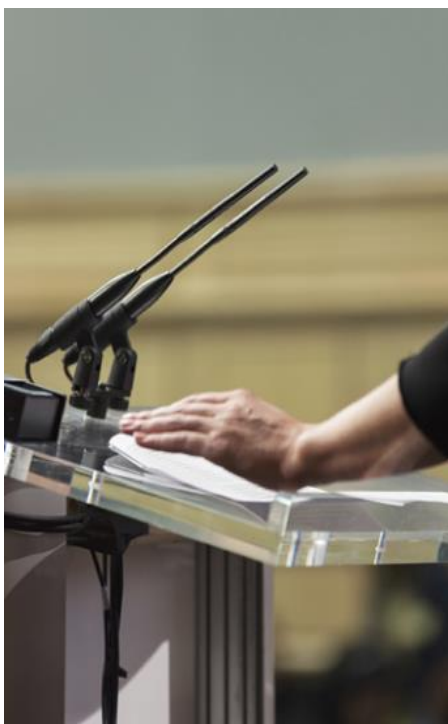
Tel: (07) 373 54375  
[research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)

#### **Animal Ethics Coordinator**

Tel: (07) 373 56618  
[animal-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:animal-ethics@griffith.edu.au)

#### **Research Ethics Systems and Support Officer**

Tel: (07) 373 5 2069  
[research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)



should contact the [Information Policy Officer](#) for assistance. In a similar vein, predatory conferences are 'sham' events, without all the speakers, organisers and activities promotional material might imply.

#### **26) Questionable publishers**

Rather than use the term predatory publishers some commentators prefer to use questionable publishers, vanity publishers or pay-to-play publishers. This is because, rather than unwary researchers being taken in by the false claims of quality and impact, there is growing evidence (see the further readings in the sidebar) that funded and experienced researchers are intentionally using those publishers precisely because of their lack of peer review. In the US this has prompted research funding bodies (such as the NIH) to direct grant recipients not to publish the results of funded work with illegitimate publishers. Recently, institutional bodies like the City University of New York warned staff that it will treat as fraud any attempt to claim performance funding or applications for promotion based upon publication with an illegitimate publisher.

**Griffith University researchers must not intentionally publish with a questionable publisher. Griffith University researchers are urged not to accept an editorial role with a questionable publisher and to act promptly if they discover they have been listed as an editor of a questionable publisher.**

#### **27) Conditions of funding**

Griffith University researchers must adhere to relevant University policy and all the funding conditions with regard to research outputs (e.g. the [ARC Open Access Policy](#)).

#### **28) Scope of these matters**

These guidelines apply to all Griffith University research, regardless of whether the work requires ethical or biosafety clearance, the expertise of the parties, the methodology/design used, and/or the funding for the work (if any).

#### **29) Sources of advice and information**

Researchers are urged to consult the [other resource sheets](#) produced in this series. Advice can then be sought from the relevant specialist area (see the sidebar on p2 of [RIRS#8](#)). Researchers with further questions should consult a Research Integrity Adviser ([RIA](#)) (whether in their Group or elsewhere in the University) or the Office for Research. HDR candidates and supervisors can also contact the [Griffith Graduate Research School](#) for advice.

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