

Planning for **success** and **avoiding pitfalls**

The preparation, submission and publication of a research output is a compulsory component of research training for a Griffith Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate. Mentoring this process is an important role of HDR supervisors. In Australia and internationally, the production of a research output involving both supervisor, candidate, and sometimes other collaborators and research participants, is a common source of disputes, distress, and complaints within the candidate-supervisor relationship.

Over 30% of all research outputs by Griffith University include an HDR candidate as an author. It is vitally important that the production of research outputs and decisions on authorship between candidates, supervisors, and collaborators is a transparent and open process. This paper suggests strategies to avoid the missteps and pitfalls, as well as ideas on how to achieve favourable outcomes.

1.0 Defining authorship

Conceptions of authorship can be (sub)discipline, and methodology specific but generally reflects there being a substantive intellectual contribution to the book, exhibition, paper, performance, post, report or other research output as well as often (but not always) to the research project that underpinned it.

2.0 Advantages of co-authorship

Increasingly research outputs are co-authored, this can often reflect the multidisciplinary nature of work and can be a useful way to bring in wider perspectives to a topic. While often advantageous it is not without its challenges.

3.0 National and Griffith University policy frameworks

The Australian standard on matters such as authorship, publication ethics and supervision are the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). The [Griffith University Responsible Conduct of Research policy](#) is the University's implementation of the Australian Code. The Australian Code was updated in June 2018. Griffith University's implementation of the Australian Code is currently being updated to reflect the revised Australian Code.

The requirement that doctoral candidates publish at least one first author¹ publication during their candidature is specified by the [Higher Degree Research Policy](#) and [explained by this web page](#). The role and

University policies

Code of Practice for the Supervision of HDR Candidates
[PDF](#) | [DOC](#)

Conflict of Interest Policy
[PDF](#) | [DOC](#)

Griffith University Responsible Conduct of Research policy
[PDF](#) | [DOC](#)

Higher Degree Research Policy
[PDF](#) | [DOC](#)

National policies

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
[PDF](#) | [Webpage](#)

International

COPE policies and resources
[Webpage](#)

ICMJE policies, roles and responsibilities
[Webpage](#)

(US) ORI [Webpage](#) | [Misconduct case summaries](#) | [Video case studies](#)

University resources

Griffith Graduate Research School – Videos forms and resources
[Webpage](#)

Office for Research - Research Integrity Resource Sheets and links to the Research Integrity Adviser network
[Resources section of webpage](#)

¹ Disciplinary differences such as for creative outputs can be approved by GGRS

responsibilities of Griffith University HDR supervisors are articulated in the [Code of Practice for the Supervision of HDR Candidates](#).

It is essential for HDR supervisors and HDR candidates to have read and understood these documents.

4.0 International guidelines

There is guidance material on these matters - such as the material issued by the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#) (COPE), [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) (ICMJE) and the [Office of Research Integrity](#) (ORI).

If a HDR candidate's research output involves collaboration with a researcher who is based outside of Australia it will be important know which research integrity framework they are working from, its divergence from the Australian Code and then to mentor your HDR candidate through the discussions with the international collaborator.

5.0 Who can/should be listed as authors for a candidate's research outputs?

Authorship is an area that can be a source of disagreement, frustration and complaint. Fortunately, it is also a matter where prior planning and good collegiate communication can generally forestall any difficulty.

The provisions of the research integrity policy frameworks discussed above provide criteria for who can be listed as (co)authors of a research output.

In accordance with **RIRS#4** to be listed as an author a person must have been involved in:

- (i) the conception/design of the original research project;
- (ii) the collection/generation and/or analysis of the data; and
- (iii) the write up of the research output, beyond merely an editorial role.

To be listed as an author, a person should be able to take responsibility for at least that part of the work to which they contributed and should have expressed in writing (if only in an email) their willingness to be listed as an author.

In some project designs the participants might usefully be considered co-researchers of a project (such as in participatory action research designs), and as such be listed as co-authors of the associated research output.

Tips for conversations about an output

Keep it collegiate and remember you are the candidate's mentor.

Try to make the process memorable and pleasant.

Discuss the authorship criteria.

Talk about potential co-authors, what their roles will be (to ensure it addresses the criteria), who will approach them and how.

Discuss the approach to order of authorship (especially if the HDR candidate won't be first author).

Ensure there is an open discussion about potentially perceived conflicts of interest for all co-authors and an understanding to revisit as needed. Who should the conflicts be disclosed to and does the conflict need additional management?

Discuss ideas on where to publish.

Reflect on where further advice will be needed beyond the co-authors, who will seek that advice and how the advice will be acknowledged.

Discuss likely timeframes, milestones and a plan for ongoing communication.

Later by email confirm with the HDR candidate and other co-authors there is a shared understanding of these points.

No-one who meets these criteria should be omitted from authorship and no-one who doesn't meet the criteria can be included.

Persons must *not* be included by virtue of 'just':

- (a) securing the funding or resources for the work;
- (b) having made the measurements on which the publication is based;
- (c) their position.

In practice this means supervisors of a HDR candidate are not automatically named as co-authors of an output produced by the candidate. Similarly a research assistant should not be excluded from the list of authors (if they meet the criteria) purely because they were paid for their contribution.

There will be persons who make a valuable contribution to the work and while they do not meet the criteria for authorship, should be acknowledged for their contribution (e.g. statistician or someone from the University's Indigenous Research Network). Such an acknowledgement might appear in the notes section of a research output.

6.0 Order of authorship

Generally the order in which authors are listed should reflect the significance of their contribution to the output; so the co-author who is listed first should have made the most important contribution to the work.

Supervisors should therefore *not* automatically be listed as the first author on papers produced with their HDR candidates.

Nevertheless some outputs have their own conventions in terms of order of authorship as do some disciplines. For example publication may traditionally list the authors by seniority.

As Griffith HDR candidates must publish at least once as first author prior to submission of their thesis², where any such conventions are being applied to a research output, this is something that the collaborators must discuss as early as possible in the research collaboration (see discussion below).

In disciplines where the convention is to place more senior staff as a first author, supervisors must discuss with each candidate a plan for them to become published as first author prior to the submission of their thesis. A useful strategy can be to identifying a portion of work to be undertaken primarily by the candidate, which could then be the basis for the output where the candidate can be the listed first author.

Recommended reading

Bakker, C. & Riegelman, A., (2018). [Retracted Publications in Mental Health Literature: Discovery across Bibliographic Platforms](#). *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*. 6(1), p.eP2199.

Koerth-Baker, M (2017, 19 December) Politics Moves Fast. [Peer Review Moves Slow. What's A Political Scientist To Do?](#) *FiveThirtyEight*.

Authorship

Fontanarosa P, Bauchner H, Flanagan A. (2017, 26 December) [Authorship and Team Science](#). *JAMA*.

IAP (InterAcademy Partnership). 2016. [Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise](#). Princeton: Princeton University

McFarlane, B (2015, 10 December) [Authorship abuse is the dark side of collaboration](#). Times Higher Education

McCook, A. (2016, 4 October) [You cited which paper?? Reference errors are more common than many realize](#). *Retraction Watch*

Offord, C. (1 May, 2017) [Coming to Grips with Coauthor Responsibility](#). *The Scientist*.

Sarna-Wojcicki D, Perret M, Eitzel MV, Fortmann L (2017) [Where Are the Missing Coauthors? Authorship Practices in Participatory Research](#). *Rural Sociology*.

Trinkle BS, Phillips T, Hall A, Moffatt B (2017) [Neutralising fair credit: factors that influence unethical authorship practices](#). *Journal of Medical Ethics*

² Disciplinary differences such as for creative outputs can be approved by GGRS

7.0 Publication Plan

A good practice for collaborators is to create a publication plan. Such a plan may deal separately with regards to known outputs and separately discuss future outputs.

7.1 KNOWN OUTPUTS

For known outputs the plan might discuss roles for the different collaborators, possible order of authorship, persons to be acknowledged and possible timeframes.

7.2 FUTURE OUTPUTS

The plan might simply discuss the intention of collaborators to tell each other if/when they are planning on working on a related research output and give each other right of refusal or not if they want to work on the new output.

8.0 Publication Ethics

As a general principle the Australian research integrity arrangements direct there should be only one research output from a research analysis. This does not mean that there can only be one output from one dataset, but it does mean that when there is a substantive analysis of a dataset there should only be one output. When there is more than one output this should be clearly referenced. When there is more than one output this should be clearly differentiated from previous published work and the previous work clearly referenced.

8.1 CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

The above principle also applies to conference presentations, especially when there will be published proceedings from the conference. Good

practice for a candidate would be, to speak to the conference organisers and the publishers/editors of the subsequent publication to explain the relationship between the conference presentation and their research output to check they do not have any concerns. In the notes for the publication there might be a statement explaining the fact the concepts of the paper were introduced at an earlier conference presentation.

8.2 OTHER LANGUAGES

The direction that there be only one output also applies when an output is translated into another language. Once again the candidate should speak with the publisher/editor of both the original publication and the translated publication to seek permission for there being two versions of the output.

Recommended reading

UK Research Integrity Office (2017, 31 March) [New guidance from UKRIO:authorship in academic publications](#)

Impact of retractions

Azoulay, A., Bonatti, A. and Krieger, J (2015). [The Career Effects of Scandal: Evidence From Scientific Retractions](#). Retrieved from NBR web site

Fanelli D, Costas R, Larivière V (2015) [Misconduct Policies, Academic Culture and Career Stage, Not Gender or Pressures to Publish, Affect Scientific Integrity](#). *PLoS ONE* 10(6): e0127556. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0127556

McCook, A. (2017 December) [Work with someone who later commits misconduct? You may pay the price](#) Retraction Watch

McCook, A (2017, 3 October) [Co-author of now-retracted paper about video games apparently demoted to "lecturer" by uni](#). Retraction Watch

McCook, A (2015, 16 June) [The consequences of retraction: Do scientists forgive and forget?](#) Retraction Watch

Shuai, X., Rollins, J., Moulinier, I., Custis, T., Edmunds, M. and Schilder, F. (2017), [A Multidimensional Investigation of the Effects of Publication Retraction on Scholarly Impact](#). *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 68: 2225–2236. doi:10.1002/asi.23826

Recommended reading

Illegitimate/predatory publishers

(2017 December 11) [When Authors Get Caught in the Predatory \(Illegitimate Publishing\) Net.](#) *Scholarly Kitchen.*

Anderson, R. (2017 December 4) [Federal Trade Commission and National Institutes of Health Take Action Against Predatory Publishing Practices.](#) *Scholarly Kitchen*

Corneliusson, S. (2017 September 20) [Is predatory scientific publishing “becoming an organized industry”?](#) *Physics Today.*

Larissa Shamseer, David Moher, Onyi Maduekwe, Lucy Turner, Virginia Barbour, Rebecca Burch, Jocalyn Clark, James Galipeau, Jason Roberts and Beverley J. Shea (2017) [Potential predatory and legitimate biomedical journals: can you tell the difference? A cross-sectional comparison.](#) *BMC Medicine* 2017 15:28

Lauer M (2017, 8 November) [Continuing Steps to Ensuring Credibility of NIH Research: Selecting Journals with Credible Practices.](#) *Extramural Nexus (Open Mike).*

McCook, A. (2017, 6 September) [Authorship for sale: Some journals willing to add authors to papers they didn't write.](#) [Retraction Watch]

Meadows, A. (2017, 5 December) [Illegitimate Journals and How to Stop Them: An Interview with Kelly Cobey and Larissa Shamseer.](#) *Scholarly Kitchen.*

Oransky, I. (2018, 5 January) [Ask Retraction Watch: Is it OK to cite a retracted paper?](#) [Retraction Watch]

8.3 FAILURE TO OBSERVE

Failure to observe the kind of approach discussed above could result in a forced retraction of the research output and/or some form of research integrity proceedings. Experience of previous cases suggests that something like this occurring could impact upon the academic/research careers of all the listed co-authors; such an impact can harm the reputation, citation and impact of the collaborators and can have long lasting effects.

International commentary also suggests that such deleterious impacts are the same even if the misstep was made in good faith and impacts co-authors even if they were unaware/innocent of the actions taken by a less scrupulous co-author.

8.4 HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

An important component of publication ethics is that the work be honest, be correct as far as the collaborators known and have integrity.

8.5 PLAGIARISM AND SELF PLAGIARISM/TEXT RECYCLING

Supervisors should ensure that new candidates have good practice in terms of citing the work of others and consider whether a candidate requires professional development in that regard. There were a number of high-profile and painful cases internationally where there has been embarrassing retractions and media reporting about plagiarism. In the instance of one recent case in the US a candidate had her PhD revoked and then was demoted by the other university where she worked. Self-plagiarism or text recycling can also be a research integrity concern or perhaps a copyright concern. Rather than copying passages or even single sentences from one publication to another the candidate should be encouraged to rephrase the expression they want to reuse.

8.6 SALAMI SLICING

This refers to the practice of making only small differences to an analysis so as to justify a separate research output. HDR supervisors should be vigilant to ensure that their candidate is not engaging in salami slicing and that there really is enough difference to justify separate outputs.

9.0 Conflicts of Interest

Where a conflict of interest exists (see sidebar), the supervisor and candidate should discuss whether or not to disclose it to the editor/publisher and whether a note about the conflict should be included in the research output. Refer to [Research Integrity Resource Sheet #5](#) for more on Conflicts of interest in research.

10.0 Selecting a Publisher

Most early career researchers, and sometimes even experienced researchers, can struggle with the question of where to publish their research output.

Given the advice to publish only once (see 5.0) this decision is critically important and an HDR candidate will need plenty of advice in this regard.

The first step is to encourage an HDR candidate to treat any email with the offer to publish their work (in flattering terms) with suspicion, especially if the publisher has not seen the HDR candidate's research output.

Within the Strategic Publishing Guidelines, there is some interesting guidance material inside the "[Relevance](#)", "[Quality and Credibility](#)" and "[Reach](#)" links that candidates should consider when selecting a publisher.

10.1 Knowing Where **Not** to Publish

Since the disappearance of Jeffrey Beall's list of predatory publishers it might seem even harder to identify publishers to be avoided³, but as the readings in the sidebar discuss, perhaps we always needed to reflect carefully what publishers to avoid. The [Think, Check Submit](#) checklist is a resource produced by a coalition of scholarly bodies. It could be used as a means of sifting out questionable publishers. [Your local research librarian](#) can be a valuable resource in this regard.

11.0 Professional and collegiate discussion but prudent practice

Very early in the supervision of a candidate, a supervisor should meet with the candidate to talk through these matters. This should be a professional, friendly and collegiate discussion. After all a HDR candidate's first research outputs are memorable and exciting milestone in their research career.

Good practice is for the supervisor to send an email to their HDR candidate outlining the matters discussed and asking the candidate to reply to indicate that the email reflects their recollection of the discussion. The email exchange then becomes a key record of shared understanding on these important topics. The email exchange shouldn't be adversarial or legalistic but could be a key record of a shared understanding on these important topics.

12.0 Sources of advice

The Research Integrity Resource Sheets (available from the [University's research integrity page](#)) can be the useful reference, and the officers listed to the right may be helpful, but the best source of collegiate advice for supervisors who require advice with regard to the matters discussed in this paper is a Research Integrity Adviser [for your Group](#).

13.0 Specialist Workshops

There are many areas of the University, such as the [Library and Learning Services](#), Office for Research, the Copyright Officer or external relations who provide workshops for professional development services that might be valuable for candidates in your area.

Smith, K.L., (2017). [Examining publishing practices: moving beyond the idea of predatory open access](#). *Insights*. 30(3), pp.4–10.

Swauger, S. (2017) [Open access, power, and privilege](#). *College & Research Libraries News*. 78(11)

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³ For example not all open access publishers are illegitimate, author payments aren't always unscrupulous and different models of peer review aren't always questionable.