



Policy Title

Research Authorship for Students

Identifier

USCSOMG – RSCH – 1.03

Prepared by: Office for Research	
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LCME Standards

3.2 – Community of Scholars/Research Opportunities

7.3 – Scientific Method/Clinical/Translational Research

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

Policy Statement

The policy documents the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#) recommendations regarding authorship, which implies responsibility and accountability for published work.

Reason for Policy

This policy is intended to implement a contribution policy, as well as remove much of the ambiguity surrounding research contributions.

Procedures

Decisions about authorship are to be agreed upon by the mentor and student at initiation of the project.

The following ICMJE recommendations are intended to ensure that contributors who have made substantive intellectual contributions to a paper are given credit as authors, but also that contributors credited as authors understand their role in taking responsibility and being accountable for what is published.

Because authorship does not communicate what contributions qualified an individual to be an author, some journals now request and publish information about the contributions of each person named as having participated in a submitted study, at least for original research. Thus, USC School of Medicine Greenville has adopted the ICMJE policy, which has developed criteria for authorship that can be used by all journals, including those that distinguish authors from other contributors.

The ICMJE recommends that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND

2. Drafting the work or revising it is critical for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. 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.

In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work they have done, an author will be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

All those designated as authors meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria are identified as authors. Those who do not meet all four criteria will be acknowledged, as described below. These authorship criteria are intended to preserve the status of authorship for those who deserve credit and can take responsibility for the work. The criteria are not intended for use as a means to disqualify colleagues from authorship who otherwise meet authorship criteria by denying them the opportunity to meet criterion #s 2 or 3. Therefore, all individuals who meet the first criterion have the opportunity to participate in the review, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

The individuals who conduct the work are responsible for identifying who meets these criteria and ideally do so when planning the work while making modifications as appropriate as the work progresses. It is the collective responsibility of the authors, not the journal to which the work is submitted, to determine that all people named as authors meet all four criteria; it is not the role of journal editors to determine who qualifies or does not qualify for authorship or to arbitrate authorship conflicts. If agreement cannot be reached about who qualifies for authorship, the institution(s) where the work was performed, is asked to investigate. If authors request removal or addition of an author after manuscript submission or publication, journal editors seek an explanation and signed statement of agreement for the requested change from all listed authors and from the author to be removed or added.

The corresponding author, a member of the faculty, is the one individual who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication process, and typically ensures that all the journal's applicable administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, ethics committee approval, clinical trial registration documentation, and gathering conflict of interest forms and statements, are properly completed, although these duties can be delegated to one or more coauthors. The corresponding author is available throughout the submission and peer review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely manner and be available after publication to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information if questions about the paper arise after publication. Although the corresponding author has primary responsibility for correspondence with the journal, the ICMJE recommends that editors send copies of all correspondence to all listed authors.

When a large multi-author group has conducted the work, the group ideally will decide who will be an author before the work is started and confirm who is an author before submitting the manuscript for publication. All members of the group named as authors meet all four criteria for authorship, including approval of the final manuscript, and they take public responsibility for the work and have full confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the work of other group authors. They will also be expected as individuals to complete conflict-of-interest disclosure forms.

Some large multi-author groups designate authorship by a group name, with or without the names of individuals. When submitting a manuscript authored by a group, the corresponding author will specify the group name if one exists and clearly identify the group members who can take credit and responsibility for the work as authors. The byline of the article identifies who is directly responsible for the manuscript, and MEDLINE lists as authors whichever names appear on the byline. If the byline includes a group name,

MEDLINE will list the names of individual group members who are authors or who are collaborators, sometimes called non-author contributors, if there is a note associated with the byline clearly stating that the individual names are elsewhere in the paper and whether those names are authors or collaborators.

Contributors who meet fewer than all 4 of the above criteria for authorship will not be listed as authors, but they will be acknowledged. Examples of activities that alone (without other contributions) do not qualify a contributor for authorship are: acquisition of funding; general supervision of a research group or general administrative support; and writing assistance, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading. Those whose contributions do not justify authorship can be acknowledged individually or together as a group under a single heading (e.g. "Clinical Investigators" or "Participating Investigators"), and their contributions will be specified (e.g., "served as scientific advisors," "critically reviewed the study proposal," "collected data," "provided and cared for study patients", "participated in writing or technical editing of the manuscript").

Acknowledgment signifies endorsement by the recognized individuals of a study’s data and conclusions. Therefore, editors are advised to require that the corresponding author obtain written permission to be acknowledged from all acknowledged individuals.

Affiliation references use the full proper name of the school as University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville and follow acceptable University brand guidelines. Abbreviations of the school’s name are used only in exceptional circumstances and with counsel from the USC School of Medicine Greenville Marketing and Communication Manager. Refer to branding and nomenclature guidance and editorial standards from [USC](#).

Sanctions

Dishonesty regarding authorship will be referred to the USC Office of Research Integrity for misconduct (USC – RSCH –1.00).

Contacts

Director for Research Strategy and Operations
USC Office of Research Integrity
Marketing and Communication Manager

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
USC – RSCH –1.00 Misconduct in Research and Scholarship

History

Date of Change	Change
February 2025	Updates to branding and titles. Revised to strengthen the language; provide clarity.
April 2020	Clarified branding guidance from University of South Carolina
June 2019	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles; formal approval not required.
July 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI