

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE POSTDOC AUTHORSHIP POLICY

The BPP Advisory Committee and the Medical Faculty Senate have agreed unanimously to develop a single policy on authorship for all postdoctoral trainees in the School of Medicine. This policy was devised in accordance with the Graduate Council of Faculties' *Policy on Fairness of Authorship Credit in Collaborative Faculty-Student Publications* and closely follows the policy currently in place for BGS graduate students. It has received the approval of the Vice-Dean for Research.

Most journals in which SOM faculty and postdocs would publish are represented in the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). This committee (formerly known as the Vancouver Group) has met annually since 1978 to develop and revise its Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. Their Requirements form the basis of section 1 below, Qualifications for Authorship. Issues of authorship in publications by SOM postdocs and faculty should be determined as follows:

1. Qualifications for Authorship¹ All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship.

- a. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content
- b. Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to each of the following areas:
 1. conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data
 2. drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
 3. final approval of the version to be published
- c. Conditions 1, 2, and 3 must all be met in assignment of authorship
- d. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship
- e. General supervision of the research group is not sufficient for authorship
- f. Appropriate credit for the contributions of other individuals to the work described in the publication should be made as an acknowledgment
- g. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusions must be the responsibility of at least one author. If that author is a student, then the faculty mentor shares the responsibility

2. The Order of Authors²

- a. The first author is that person who contributed most to the work, including writing of the manuscript (an author is a person who writes) and takes responsibility for its completion.
- b. The sequence of author listing is determined by the relative contributions to the work. In the instance that equal credit is due, this should be footnoted (by asterisk) and authors should be listed alphabetically (you may wish to note this policy on your CV)
- c. Decisions about authors and the order in which their names appear should be discussed as early as possible. It may be necessary to modify this order throughout the submission process if more work is required to make the work publishable.
- d. Decisions about authors and the order in which their names appear should be made by group consensus, and under the guidance of the lead investigator(s)

3. Other General Rules

- a. The data presented in the publication must preserve full protection of patients' rights to privacy at their institution(s) as specified in Informed Consent and IRB approval documents
- b. The data presented in the publication must be generated under the approval of, and in full compliance with, Animal and Human Subject codes at the authors' institution(s)
- c. All authors are responsible for recognizing and disclosing financial and other conflicts of interest that might bias their work
- d. Decisions of the suitability of a manuscript for a particular journal should be made by group consensus and under the guidance of the lead investigator(s)
- e. All items presented in the publication must be original (inclusive of other submitted publications), unless otherwise specifically stated in the publication
- f. Secondary publication of manuscripts, either in full or in part, in a review form, in another language and/or in another country, is justifiable provided that the authors have received approval from the editors of both journals, that the secondary manuscript includes a footnote to this effect, and that the secondary version faithfully reflects the data and interpretations of the primary version
- g. In the instance of review articles, which may include previously published and/or unpublished data, appropriate consent and acknowledgements must be made; however, generation of such data does not necessarily warrant

authorship (for example, if a faculty member writes a review based on a student's published work and acknowledges the student's contributions, the student does not necessarily have the right to co-authorship).

4. When Conflicts Arise

It is recognized that even when the above guidelines are followed, conflicts of opinion may arise. The process for handling disagreements regarding authorship between postdocs and faculty members is as follows:

- a. The faculty member and postdoc should seek mediation with the chair of the department.
- b. If mediation with the department chair fails to satisfy both postdoc and faculty member, the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Research Training should be consulted. The Associate Dean will convene a committee of up to three standing faculty members chosen in consultation with the lead investigator and one postdoc or faculty member chosen in consultation with the postdoc for arbitration to resolve the dispute in a timely manner. The committee will consider the opinions of the postdoc, the faculty member, and the faculty member's department chair.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may represent a violation of University policies and consequently may be subject to judicial proceedings.

If the complaint alleges research misconduct by the faculty member, the investigation and adjudication of the complaint will be conducted in accordance with the University's *Procedures Regarding Misconduct in Research*, provided in the *Faculty Handbook* (<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/v49/n32/OR-misconduct.html>). If the complaint alleges research misconduct by the postdoc member, the investigation and adjudication of the complaint will be conducted in accordance with the University's *Procedures Regarding Misconduct in Research for Nonfaculty members of the Research Community*, described in the *Almanac, Vol 51, July 13, 2004* (<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v51/n01/OR-research.html>)

¹Based on ICMJE Requirements, *Ann Intern Med.* 1977;126:36-47

²Based on editorial by D. Riesenbergs and G. Lundberg, *JAMA* 1990;264:1857