

# Authorship

Authorship of a scientific publication implies contribution and accountability for the work and approval of the final submitted manuscript. All authors must be listed, their roles specified and their details provided. Scientific publications include journal articles and conference abstracts.

## Definition of authorship

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) provides the following criteria that define whether or not someone is an author of a particular work:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; *and*
- Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; *and*
- Final approval of the version to be published; *and*
- 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.

## Authorship changes and rearrangement after submission

The following information needs to be provided:

- Reason for addition, deletion or rearrangement of authorship, provided by the corresponding author
- Written confirmation from all authors, including any authors being added or removed, that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement
- Disclosure of conflicts of interests by additional authors

*Note that publication and review will be suspended until evidence of unanimous author agreement has been provided.*

For case reports, the statement of authorship needs to detail which of the authors were responsible for patient care (at least one of the authors must have been so).

## Authorship roles

The CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) specifies 14 roles:

- Conceptualization
- Data curation
- Formal analysis
- Funding acquisition
- Investigation
- Methodology
- Project administration
- Resources
- Software
- Supervision
- Validation
- Visualization
- Writing – original draft
- Writing – review and editing

Authorship problems include:

- Gift authors or guest authors: people listed as authors not fulfilling authorship criteria
- Ghost authors: people not included in the author list despite fulfilling authorship criteria
- The number of authors: needs to be commensurate with the work (there must not be not be unfeasibly few or many authors)

## Further information

Brand, A., et al. Beyond authorship: attribution, contribution, collaboration, and credit *Learned Publishing*, 28 (2015), 151–155, <https://doi.org/10.1087/20150211>

COPE. How to recognise potential authorship problems <https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/recognising-authorship-problems-cope-infographic.pdf>

ICMJE. Defining the role of authors and contributors <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>