Authorship Guidelines for Research Publications at Karlstad University

Contents

Introduction

Being the author of a research publication is an important achievement, but it also comes with an intellectual and moral responsibility for the published text. Research collaborations in large national or international groups are becoming more and more common and may include different traditions and conventions regarding authorship and the order of authorship. This can lead to disputes. In order to avoid as well as manage disputes in connection to publication of research material, Karlstad University (Kau) has created a set of guidelines, outlined in this document. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that individuals who have made substantial intellectual contributions to a publication are offered to be listed as co-authors, but also to inform that co-authors have a responsibility for the published material. The guidelines also provide a certain general ethical guidance related to authorship and publications.

The guidelines outlined in this document are based on the All European Academies' (ALLEA) Code of Conduct[1] for Research Integrity, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' (ICMJE) Uniform Requirements[2], the Swedish Research Council's Good Research Practice[3], and Kau's internal policy documents, primarily *Guidance in case of suspected deviations from good research practice[4]* and the principles for good research practice listed in *Quality assurance system at Karlstad University* (Appendix 1)[5].

Implementation

The following guidelines apply to all academic and non-academic staff as well as students at Kau who contribute to research publications. They also apply to researchers who have been appointed affiliated researcher.[6] The principles apply to all types of research publications that are produced at Kau regardless of discipline or type of publication.

Good research practice for authors

The Swedish Research Council's *Good Research Practice* emphasises that the author is responsible for all aspects of the published work, including the quality of the manuscript as well as approach/method and the reliability of the findings. In terms of reliability, it is of central importance that the researcher presents and discusses arguments that may speak against the thesis promoted in the work. To be able to do this, the author needs to have carried out a structured literature search that also capture works that can question the author's

---

[1] https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf
[2] https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html
[3] https://www.vr.se/english/analysis/reports/our-reports/2017-08-31-good-research-practice.html
[4] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-02/8.%20Guidance%20in%20case%20of%20suspected%20deviations%20from%20good%20research%20practice.pdf
[5] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-03/127_19%20Quality%20assurance%20system%20at%20Karlstad%20University.pdf (Appendix 1)
[6] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-03/49_23%20rev%20regler%20affiliering%202023.pdf

own theses. The author is also responsible for ensuring that the correct referencing and citation practices (including self-citations) are applied. Moreover, the author is responsible for choosing only publication channels that adhere to acknowledged guidelines for research integrity and publication ethics.

The ALLEA Code of Conduct for Research Integrity should be used at Kau to inform decisions on what constitutes a deviation from good research practice.[7] The following principles of good research practice can be mentioned as being of particular importance to authors and authorship:

- Authors must give an account of important works and intellectual contributions that have influenced their research, and that have been made by others, for example, collaboration partners, assistants and funding bodies, as well as citing the works concerned correctly.
- Authors must report any conflicts of interest[8] and financial support or other form of support for the research or for the publication of the research findings.
- Authors must promptly make efforts to have errors in already published works corrected or for the publication to be withdrawn.

The ALLEA Code of Conduct also stresses that manipulation of authorship or denigration of the role of other researchers in publications constitute a breach of research integrity.

What qualifies as authorship?

As a general rule, authorship may only be based on scientific/scholarly contributions. It is recommended that you discuss authorship issues as early as possible at the start of a new project. The discussions should also be documented, for example, in a data management plan.[9] A data management plan is a planning tool to ensure good research data management during and after a project. As more and more journals require an account of who did what in a project, even in the data processing phase, establishing a data management plan can be a good way to create an overview of roles, responsibilities and work contributions.

The author who is appointed as corresponding author is responsible for coordinating the other authors' opinions and being a link between the editor of the publication channel and the authors. In addition to the responsibility for submitting, revising and publishing the work, the corresponding author is also responsible for ensuring that the publication channel's requirements for documentation regarding the contributions of co-authors, ethical review, reporting of potential conflicts of interest and other documents are met. Co-authors have a

---

[7] Refer to *Guidance in case of suspected deviations from good research practice* (https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-02/8.%20Guidance%20in%20case%20of%20suspected%20deviations%20from%20good%20research%20practice.pdf)

[8] See section Conflicts of Interest

[9] https://www.kau.se/en/research/research-data/start-project/data-management-plan

responsibility to provide the corresponding author with correct information about the co-author's identity and contributions to the project.

Traditions differ across disciplines when it comes to determining what qualifies as authorship. In general, however, the following four criteria, which are based on the ICMJE Uniform Requirements[10], should be met to qualify for authorship.

The author should have:

1. made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; and
2. drafted the work or critically reviewed it and when applicable revised the text regarding intellectual content; and
3. given the final approval of the version to be published; and
4. agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy and integrity of any part of the work have been appropriately investigated and resolved.

The person who meets the requirements according to the above-mentioned criteria qualifies as author and should be able to give an account of their own contributions. The person who meets some but not all of the four criteria above should not be listed as author but instead be mentioned in the acknowledgements. Anyone included in the acknowledgements must have given their consent prior to publication.

The criteria above may not be used to unfairly disqualify someone from authorship. Potential authors who meet criterion 1 shall therefore early on be offered the opportunity to meet criteria 2 and 3. The person or persons leading the research project should take a special responsibility to ensure that no potential author is unjustly disqualified from authorship. However, all researchers participating in the project also share a collective responsibility to prevent this from happening.

The following contributions should **not** qualify a person for authorship:
- only providing funding or laboratory space;
- only participating in the data collection without contributing according to criteria 2-4 above;
- providing general supervision or administrative support to the research group;
- acting as supervisor of a doctoral student. A supervisor of a doctoral student must, just like everyone else, meet the criteria for authorship as listed above.
- contributing with general writing assistance or language processing and proofreading.

---

[10] https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html

Authorship order and account of authors' contributions to the work

It is up to the authors themselves to determine the authorship order. It is important that this matter is discussed as early as possible and on a regular basis since ways of determining the order of authorship differ across disciplines.

A common tradition is that the authors are presented in alphabetical order unless someone has taken a substantially dominating responsibility for the work presented in the paper. In cases that deviate from the alphabetical order, this usually means that the first-mentioned author has made the most important contribution to the work, followed by the other authors in a sequence that reflects their work contribution, with the exception of the last-mentioned author who is often to be identified as the one who had an overall responsibility for the work. It should be noted that due to the differences across disciplines, bibliometric analyses of scientific output rarely consider the order of authorship.

It has become increasingly common that journals expect each manuscript to be accompanied by a detailed report of who has done what in the study on which the manuscript is based. Many journals have chosen to apply the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) for this type of reporting, which consists of 14 different roles that concern different aspects of the research process, such as method, data analysis and data curation.[11] Authors are recommended to as early as possible establish and continuously revise a description of the work distribution in the project in line with CRediT, or where applicable, the publishing channel's own corresponding taxonomy.

Author identity

Pursuant to ALLEA Code of Conduct[12], the fundamental principles of research integrity include reliability, honesty and accountability. Following this, it is important that those who handle manuscripts and read published research findings are able to correctly identify the authors. Authors at Kau should therefore state their real name when submitting a manuscript as well as having registered an author ID, an ORCID[13], to verify their identity. If an author has used different names over time (e.g. by adding/deleting surnames, middle names or middle name initials), each name should be registered in ORCID.

According to a statement by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[14], authors who have strong reasons to conceal their identity, for example, if disclosing their name could pose a threat or danger to them, they should still be prepared to report their true identity to an editor to ensure research integrity.

---

[11] All roles are described here: https://credit.niso.org/
[12] https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf
[13] www.orcid.org
[14] https://publicationethics.org/case/authors-used-pseudonyms-published-article

Group authorship

When a researcher at Kau is part of a large group of authors (group or consortium authorship), the group should decide who should be listed as authors before work begins as well as review the list before submitting the manuscript. All members of the group must meet the four criteria for authorship listed above.

In the case of large research projects, a group name is sometimes used instead of or together with the names of the individual authors. When only a group name is employed, the corresponding author bears the responsibility of including an explanatory note[15] during submission. This note should clearly identify the group members and differentiate between those who deserve credit and responsibility as authors and those who should not be acknowledged as authors. Group members have a responsibility to provide the corresponding author with correct information about their identity and contributions to the project.

Authorship in relation to licentiate and doctoral theses

The guidelines presented in this document also cover authors of licentiate and doctoral theses. For additional regulations and recommendations for authorship related to licentiate and doctoral theses, refer to *Regulations for Third-Cycle Studies at Karlstad University.*[16] Note that there may be local guidelines for compilation theses at departmental or subject level, outlining for example how many separate papers the thesis must contain.

Use of AI tools

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) has in an official statement[17] established that tools in the research and writing process based on artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT or other so-called Large Language Models, can never be listed as authors. AI tools do not meet the requirements for authorship since they cannot take responsibility for the publication.

Authors who use AI tools in the writing process, in the production of images or other graphical elements, or in data collection and data analysis, must disclose such use in a methods and materials section (or similar). The authors are fully responsible for the content of a manuscript, including those sections produced by AI tools.

---

[15] Such explanatory notes are often included in the publication itself or as a supplemental file.
[16] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-02/C2022_389%20Regler%20forskarutbildning%20engelska.pdf
[17] https://publicationethics.org/cope-position-statements/ai-author

Organisational affiliation

In accordance with the publication policy of Karlstad University,[18] the following applies in terms of organisational affiliation:

"In publications, the researcher's organisational affiliation must be listed as Karlstad University or Karlstads universitet. No abbreviations are allowed. Department or other relevant organisational affiliation must also be included."

In cases where an author has several affiliations, for example, another higher education institution in addition to Kau, or several organisations within Kau (department or research centre), the general rule should be that the organisation where most part of the research has been conducted should be prioritised when specifying organisational affiliation. If the publication channel allows, several organisational affiliations may be used. Organisational affiliations that cannot/may not be listed as official affiliations but deserve recognition should be mentioned in the acknowledgments.

Mentioning of research funding bodies

The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that stakeholders who have supported the research financially are mentioned in the publication. This may be regulated in an agreement, but even if this is not the case, organisations or companies that have contributed to the research funding should be mentioned in the acknowledgments or in another appropriate section of the publication.

Conflicts of interest

It is important that interests that may potentially have influenced the outline or findings of the work are reported in the publication.[19] The corresponding author is responsible for collecting and reporting any such conflicts of interest in the publication, but it is the responsibility of all authors to openly share such information with the corresponding author.

This could include financial connections such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria or patents, but it could also involve non-financial connections such as personal ties to a company that has an interest in the results of the research, or the researcher's political connection to a research topic.

---

[18] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-02/C2014_596Publiceringspolicy.pdf
[19] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-03/127_19%20Quality%20assurance%20system%20at%20Karlstad%20University.pdf (Appendix 1)

8

Another form of conflict of interest is when a funding or commissioning body (profit or non-profit) sets conditions that impose restrictions on the author. The ICMJE Uniform Requirements urge authors not to enter into agreements with financial sponsors that interfere with authors' access to all of the study's data or that interfere with their ability to analyse and interpret the data and to prepare and publish manuscripts independently when and where they choose. Agreement texts that dictate where authors can publish their work go against the principle of academic freedom.[20]

Guidance in case of authorship disputes

Disagreements and disputes regarding authorship are common. These situations can be prevented by discussing the principles of authorship early on and throughout a project. When disputes do arise, they can differ in nature, from harmless differences of opinion to situations where there are suspicions of deviation from good research practice.

As for the first category, these should as a first step be resolved within the research group in an effort to reach consensus. If efforts to reach consensus fail, the people involved can contact the department head(s). The head of department will then lead a discussion with the people concerned and can, if needed, seek guidance from the University's research ethics advisors. However, it is always the researchers themselves who are ultimately responsible for resolving the dispute.

All doctoral students can also discuss disputes over authorship with the University's doctoral student ombudsman.

If the conflict is of a more serious nature and there are suspicions that a deviation from good research practice with regard to authorship has been made, the parties shall refer to the guidelines and rules of procedures specified in *Guidance in case of suspected deviations from good research practice.[21]*

---

[20] https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/author-responsibilities--conflicts-of-interest.html
[21] https://inslaget.kau.se/sites/default/files/regulations/2023-02/8.%20Guidance%20in%20case%20of%20suspected%20deviations%20from%20good%20research%20practice.pdf