



Applies To: All HSC
 Responsible Department: HSC Office of Research and
 Main Campus Office of Research
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Title: **University of New Mexico Authorship and
 Dispute Resolution Procedure**

Standard Operating Procedures

OVERVIEW

The University of New Mexico (UNM) has instituted authorship guidelines and dispute resolution procedures. This standard operating procedure (SOP) document recognizes the wide variety of authorship practices across disciplines and publications; thus, this document seeks to establish a single set of authorship standards in accordance with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidance.

Because institutions have an interest in and are sometimes engaged in resolving authorship disputes, it is important to establish processes to support good authorship practices and to address potential disputes. This document is part of UNM’s commitment to fostering a culture of transparency, consistency, and research integrity. This procedure is intended to help reinforce healthy, transparent authorship practices that can prevent disputes, and to offer clear processes to resolve them if they occur. It includes productive and historically successful approaches to co-authorship and mediating authorship disputes.

HANDLING OF AUTHORSHIP DISPUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COPE GUIDANCE

COPE suggests that every team should have a written authorship agreement before an article is written. This should reduce the chances of disputes arising at a late stage, when effectively the majority of the work has been performed. We accept, however, that it may be challenging to plan in this way and that it will not always be possible to take this approach.

Authorship disputes often arise from questions of interpretation of contributions, such as whether someone's contribution was 'substantial' enough to require authorship. Authorship disputes generally involve issues of attribution in publications and activity that do not meet the definition of Research Misconduct under Faculty Handbook policy E40, which is limited to plagiarism, falsification, and fabrication in UNM research. Authorship disputes may include: (1) who should be named as an author/contributor; (2) order of authorship; (3) expectations for contributors to a project; and/or (4) intellectual property or confidentiality issues affecting publication.

COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Within an academic environment, some level of expectation regarding authorship or acknowledgement on the part of those contributing to a work often exists and it can vary between disciplines or even between research groups/teams. Consequently, the best practice is to address questions of authorship at the earliest practical stage of a research project. Such communication

can clarify roles and responsibilities for the project, spur motivation, and minimize disappointment among participants. Major questions that should be addressed include the following:

- Who will be named as an author or acknowledged as a contributor if the study is submitted for publication or presentation?
- Who is the lead (or corresponding) author and what will be the order of authorship?
- What are the responsibilities and expectations for each contributor to the study?
- Are there any intellectual property or confidentiality issues involved that may affect publication?
- Who gets to decide where and when a manuscript will be submitted?

It is important to recognize that roles often change during the course of a project and it may not be possible to appropriately evaluate each author's relative contribution to the work until the manuscript (or presentation) is actually written or even finalized for publication. For this reason, all involved parties should re-address authorship whenever significant changes occur and make it clear to all participants from the start that final decisions about authorship can be extended until the time of submission.

Senior investigator(s) associated with a given research project is(are) responsible for anticipating possible disagreements concerning authorship credit and for initiating conversations on the matter before trainees and other collaborators have invested substantial time on the project. All decisions regarding authorship need to be formally documented, updated when changes occur, and communicated to all parties in a timely fashion.

PRINCIPLES OF AUTHORSHIP

As summarized by COPE, "The minimum requirements for authorship, common to all definitions, are 1) substantial contribution to the work and 2) accountability for the work that was done and its presentation in a publication."

The following principles and practices are followed in accordance with COPE guidance to prevent disputes and promote constructive and transparent authorship practices.

UNM AUTHORSHIP PRICIPLES AND PRACTICES

1. It is the responsibility of the Lead Author, Corresponding Author, or Principal Investigator (these may or may not be the same person), as appropriate, to lead conversations among contributors regarding authorship, ensure that contributors are appropriately recognized, and ensure fairness in the authorship process. Ideally these conversations occur at the beginning of projects, throughout the project duration, and at the conclusion of the project.
2. Being named an author indicates that one has made a substantial contribution to the project and is willing to be held accountable for their contribution to the work. "Substantial contribution" may vary by discipline (or subdiscipline), and therefore the Lead Author, Corresponding Author, or Principal Investigator should consult the guidance that applies to

their discipline to make authorship determinations. Note that journals may have their own specific guidelines on what constitutes “substantial” contribution.

3. All individuals who have made a substantial contribution to a project should be named as authors; others who have contributed may be more appropriately recognized in the acknowledgements, footnotes, or other areas of the work as appropriate and subject to the individuals’ consent.
4. All authors on a publication should have a reasonable opportunity to review and approve the final product. Approval for submission/publication shall not be unreasonably withheld.
5. Honorary, guest, gift, or ghost authorship is not acceptable. Honorary, guest, or gift authorship occurs when individuals who have not made a substantial contribution are named as authors. Ghost authorship occurs when someone who has made a substantial contribution is not named, in some cases to conceal their relationship to the product.
6. Authorship ordering conventions vary by discipline (and subdiscipline) as well as publication format. It is not within the scope of this SOP to specify ordering practices. Ordering decisions should, however, be made in the context of healthy authorship conversations throughout a project and should appropriately reflect changes in the scope of work performed by participants.
7. Authorship practices regarding theses or dissertations may vary by discipline. It is generally expected that in publications resulting from a thesis, dissertation, or capstone, the student will be the first author. Faculty members and others on thesis and dissertation committees may be included as authors when they meet typical authorship criteria, but mere membership on these committees may not suffice for authorship.
8. Authors may choose to withdraw from authorship for a range of reasons, such as an author deeming they did not contribute substantially to the work or that the publication does not accurately reflect their understanding of the work.

CONSTRUCTIVE AUTHORSHIP PRACTICES

The following are examples of constructive authorship practices by UNM faculty, staff, and students:

1. As soon as possible in a research collaboration, conversations among the collaborators about authorship should be initiated by the Principal Investigator (PI) or intended Lead/Corresponding Author, as appropriate. This should include a discussion of general expectations for various roles even if the exact authorship order is not yet clear or may change. In cases of theses and dissertations, the Chair of the Committee should facilitate authorship discussions with the student, starting during the proposal stage and continuing, as appropriate, throughout the process.
2. Agreements about authorship order should be transparent, and ideally, a written authorship agreement should be developed and shared with all collaborators. (Creating a project on the Open Science Framework may also provide an opportunity to initiate authorship discussions as collaborators are named and listed in an initial order.) Important elements of such an agreement include proposed authorship order, authorship standards that all collaborators agree to follow, and indications regarding when authorship changes should be discussed. This SOP, including reference to the dispute resolution process below, could also be included as an appendix to the agreement.

3. Because research roles can change throughout the lifecycle of a collaboration, it is important to revisit authorship agreements as circumstances warrant. For example, authors may want to agree that after a specified period of time, a subset of collaborators may proceed with dissemination of results even if one or more collaborators fails to respond to a request for approval as to relevant elements of the dissemination (authorship order, manuscript text, publication selection, etc.). Care should be taken to protect vulnerable members of the collaboration team (e.g., students, postdocs, junior faculty), to ensure that completion of degree elements and/or measures of productivity are not unduly delayed.
4. University departments and research units should include reference to this SOP in their orientation materials for new students and faculty. If such units require particular approaches to authorship, those should also be communicated to new students and faculty, in conjunction with other unit policies and guidance.
5. Collaborations with researchers at institutions other than UNM should follow the recommendations in this SOP. Note that authorship dispute resolution processes may be distinct from those at UNM. For example, on larger collaborations (particularly when they may lead to multiple publications), establishing an authorship dispute committee with members from each institution may be appropriate if disputes arise.

AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

A. Informal Dispute Resolution

If an authorship dispute arises, the collaborators should initially attempt to resolve it informally. Collaborators should consult any written authorship agreement to inform such resolution. If there is no such agreement or if the terms of the agreement do not sufficiently resolve the matter, the collaborators might involve a neutral third party, such as an informal mediator, who may facilitate discussions but whose role is not to render a decision.

If the dispute remains unresolved, the collaborators may also contact a Department Chair, a Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the relevant College, and/or the Dean of the Graduate School (if the dispute involves a Chair, members of multiple departments, or members of multiple colleges) for informal assistance.

B. Formal Dispute Resolution: Authorship Dispute Committee Composition

Initiation of a Formal Dispute Resolution: If an authorship dispute cannot be resolved with the informal steps suggested above, a disputant may initiate a formal dispute resolution process by contacting the appropriate Vice President of Research (VPR), either the VPR at the Health Sciences Center (HSC) or the VPR at Main Campus in writing, with a summary of the dispute and any supporting documents. The appropriate VPR will review the dispute and any supporting documents to determine whether a formal resolution is appropriate. If the VPR determines that formal resolution is appropriate, the VPR will appoint an Authorship Dispute Committee to consider the matter and make a recommendation.

Formation of the Committee shall consist of the following:

- The Committee will be appointed by the VPR at the appropriate campus and consist of five members.
 - One member will be the Senior Associate Dean for Research or the equivalent position from the college of the senior author who will chair the committee.
 - One graduate student, or professional student, or postdoctoral fellow appointed by the HSC Student Council, the Graduate and Professional Student Organization (GPSA), the Associated Students of the University of New Mexico (ASUNM), or the University Postdoctoral Association.
 - Three additional faculty members, at least one of which will be tenured, appointed by the appropriate VPR. Faculty will be chosen within the area of publication and experience in authorship disputes.
- If appropriate, the Committee may call upon the expertise of other members of the UNM research community.
- Authors involved in the dispute will have the opportunity to object to any member of the committee. Such objection should be made in writing and substantiated on grounds of bias, conflict of interest and/or failure to meet the criteria listed in this Section of the SOP. Any member of the Committee involved in attempted resolution of the complaint prior to its consideration by the Authorship Dispute Committee shall recuse themselves.
- The VPR will make the final decision on the Committee members after any objections.
- When a dispute involves parties across campuses, the Committee will be appointed by both Vice President of Research on Main Campus and Vice President of Research at the HSC with mutual agreement.

Authorship Disputes Committee Review Process

- The Committee will meet and have their recommendation within 30 days of initiation of the process.
- The Committee will produce a letter of recommendation to the VPR with their determination.
- The disputant is responsible for presenting the authorship dispute in good faith, for maintaining confidentiality of the parties to the dispute and of all documentation, and for cooperating with the Committee's deliberative process.
- The disputant will have an opportunity to be interviewed by and present documentation to the Committee, and to review the draft report.
- The Committee will notify the respondent(s) of the dispute when the VPR appoints the Committee.
- The respondent(s) is (are) responsible for making their case in good faith, for maintaining the confidentiality of the parties to the dispute and of all documentation, and for cooperating with the Committee's deliberative process.
- The respondent(s) will have the opportunity to be interviewed by and present documentation to the Committee, and to review the draft report.

Resolution of Authorship Disputes:

- The Committee will make a written recommendation to the appropriate VPR summarizing the dispute, documentation considered, and recommended resolution, along with its rationale. The VPR will notify the disputant and respondent(s) of the Committee’s recommendation.
- The Committee’s recommendation is not binding on the parties to the dispute but may be considered as presumptive evidence of the appropriate authorship designation if either the disputant or respondent fails to implement the recommendation.
- The appropriate VPR may notify the non-complying party’s supervisor or other appropriate administrator if the VPR determines that the party’s failure to implement the recommendation warrants consideration of disciplinary or other appropriate action.

CONFIDENTIALITY

UNM will protect the confidentiality of the parties to the dispute, any deliberations, and any related documents to the extent required under law. Retaliation against individuals for raising authorship dispute claims in good faith or for cooperating in good faith in the University's review of any such claims is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable University policies. Any member of the University community who knowingly gives false or materially inaccurate information; knowingly makes a false report of suspected misconduct or a subsequent false report of retaliation; or who knowingly provides false answers or information in response to this authorship dispute resolution process may be subject to administrative action by the University, including disciplinary action.

Nothing in this SOP is intended to conflict with UNM policies memorialized in the Regents Policy Manual, Faculty Handbook, and University Administrative Polices. In the event of such a conflict, the University policies shall govern.


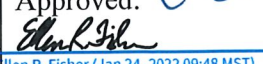
APPLICABILITY: UNM AND UNM HSC

All persons engaged or otherwise involved in UNM research.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All stewards and custodians of electronic administrative, research, student, and patient information.

DOCUMENT REVIEWED AND ACCEPTED:

Approved: 	Richard Larson, MD PhD Vice President for Research, UNM Health Sciences	Date: 1/24/2022
Approved:  <small>Ellen R. Fisher (Jan 24, 2022 09:48 MST)</small>	Ellen Fisher, PhD Vice President for Research, UNM Main Campus	Date: 01/24/2022