Authorship Guidelines for Publications and Presentations

The following guidelines and recommendations were created to help members of the Walden University community to understand the notion of authorship and how it relates to various institutional programs and opportunities that support research and scholarship. Although this document serves our diverse academic community, all scholars should be mindful that differences in approach to authorship expectations do sometimes exist both between and within disciplines. Hence, specific guidance about authorship beyond these university guidelines should be sought from leaders and senior faculty in an author’s academic area. Questions related to specific university programs should be directed to the Center for Research Quality (CRQ@waldenu.edu).

What is Authorship?

A person can be involved in conducting and disseminating research on a number of different levels. For projects conducted by a single researcher, assigning authorship is pretty simple. Many research projects often involve multiple people, however, who have multiple roles and varying responsibilities across the entire span of the project.

What distinguishes an “author” is the active and creative contribution that someone makes to the project (e.g., project development, data collection, data analysis, etc.), and/or the responsibility for disseminating the research (e.g., writing a manuscript or giving a presentation). Work that is done on contract does not typically rise to the level of author status, however and should be noted in Acknowledgements, when appropriate (see section 2.05 APA Manual 6th edition, for example). Examples include transcription services, translation services, or a consultant that provides instruction on a proposed analysis or software to be used for analysis.

Co-Authorship and Author Order

One area of potential problems is any scholarly effort that involves more than one author. Although generally best to establish author order before the project even commences, sometimes that strategy is not always possible. No single solution exists for assigning order, and some disciplines have some specific traditions, but here are a few general questions to consider when making these decisions.

1. **Who initiated the project and/or owns the idea?** In instances where one author has originated the research and involved other researchers subsequently, a logical choice would be to list that author first, and remaining authors as they joined the project.

2. **Who contributed most to writing the manuscript?** Sometimes the process of disseminating the research can be as labor intensive as the work involved in actually conducting it. In these instances, collaborators could be recognized for the level of contribution to that manuscript or presentation.
3. **Whose turn is it to be first author?** Many research collaborations often result in multiple manuscripts and presentations. Some research teams decide to take turns on being first author, especially if they feel they were equal partners in conducting the research.

4. **Who is the most senior researcher?** In other instances, the name recognition from a senior colleague may support increased credibility of the research, especially in situations where the dissemination venue is not peer-reviewed. Some additional consideration to this guideline may apply for doctoral capstone research (see below).

5. **Let the Fates Decide?** When all things are equal, some co-authors resort to simple strategies such as alphabetical order or allowing the matter to be settled by the flip of a coin.

**Collaborations and Co-Authorship with Students**

Collaborations can often produce some of the strongest contributions to knowledge, and Walden University encourages and supports this type of research. What can become confusing is the dual-role that faculty members may have with a current student or a graduate as it relates to the research process. These general guidelines are based on the nature of that relationship, as described in the following scenarios.

**Student/Graduate as Research Colleague**

You and a student/graduate have pursued a research topic of mutual interest, which does not fit in the next two categories. You are true collaborators, although you may play a more senior role. In this instance, the student/graduate should appear as co-author appropriate to the contribution that was made, as discussed above.

**Student/Graduate as Research Assistant**

You have a grant that supports hiring a graduate research assistant or have found a student volunteer to work on your project. Whether or not the student is listed as a co-author on any published or presented research should be negotiated before his/her service begins. The authorship guidelines noted above should be applied.

**Student/Graduate as Research Supervisee**

You served as a member of the student's supervisory committee, and as such, were compensated for this work. In this instance, Walden encourages you to have a thoughtful conversation with the graduate to decide if co-author status is appropriate on any subsequent dissemination efforts. We recognize that there are disciplinary differences, but generally, if the student develops a manuscript for publication on his/her own, we would recommend that he/she be a single author. If a member of the supervisory committee is heavily involved in writing the published manuscript, however, second author status may be more appropriate. Otherwise, the committee may be included in the acknowledgements, depending on the policy of the publication venue.
Important To Note: Except in rare cases (which are even rarer at Walden), the graduate is the sole owner of the copyright of the capstone document. Therefore, the choice to include any committee members on subsequent documents resulting from the capstone is best viewed as being at the graduate's discretion. Faculty members who choose to work with a graduate, should negotiate authorship based on the contribution being made post-completion of the capstone.

Guidelines Specific to Walden University Research Grant Programs

Walden University sponsors a number of research grant opportunities for faculty and students, including our Research Dissemination Support (RDS) program for faculty, alumni, and students. The following guidelines were created to address some of the common questions that arise.

Formatting

All citations submitted for recognition by the university community should use APA 6 formatting. All submissions also require documentation of the publication or presentation (e.g., a PDF or link) where the Walden University affiliation is clear.

Co-authorship and Research Dissemination Support (RDS) Grants

If multiple authors are seeking a RDS grant, there is no need to change the author order in the official citation so that the RDS applicant is listed first. The citation should reflect the appropriate APA citation for the presentation or the manuscript as it appeared in publication.

Funding Sources

Any publication or presentation that was supported by a research grant, whether internal or external, should include an author's note acknowledging this fact (see APA 2.05 for more discussion).

External Collaborators

In some instances, individuals may collaborate with other researchers who are not recognized members of the Walden University academic community. Although these types of collaborations are encouraged, non-Walden researchers are not able to apply for internal research grants as the principal investigator and are not eligible for our RDS program.

Publications in Walden University’s Research Journals

We encourage members of the university community to seek the publication and presentation venues that best suit the nature of their scholarship. If that outlet happens to be one of the peer-reviewed journals hosted by the university, a manuscript that appears in publication is considered to be no different than any other article in a peer-reviewed journal, and such, would be eligible for a publication RDS.
The Research Symposium and Research Colloquium

The university hosts two research events, a symposium in summer and a colloquium in the winter, where selected faculty scholars share their scholarship. Because these events occur during the university faculty meeting, faculty presenters (poster, roundtable, or panel) will have their travel and expenses covered by the university. Therefore we do not accept applications for presentation RDS from the symposium or colloquia.

Occasionally, graduate presenters want to invite members of the supervisory committee to be a co-presenter on their poster at the research symposium. While we respect the need to honor the hard work of the chair and member, this researcher role is different than the typical collaborative relationship between researchers. For the research symposium, we expect graduates to present their doctoral research as a single author, although committee members already in attendance are welcomed to support the graduate during the event.

Beginning in 2015, faculty members will be able to submit an expense request of no more than $75 toward the poster preparation, with appropriate documentation. More information on this topic is available in the Call for Proposals and the Research Symposium site.

Questions

These guidelines were designed to be general, and as such, may not specifically address issues that arise with authorship at Walden University. For those questions, please use one of the following email accounts.

- researchsymposium@waldenu.edu for questions relating to the symposium
- grants@waldenu.edu for questions relating to the funding and grant programs
- CRQ@waldenu.edu for any other questions related to authorship at the university.

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