Authorship Guidelines for Faculty Publications and Presentations
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Authorship Guidelines for Faculty Publications and Presentations

The following guidelines and recommendations were created to help faculty and staff 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@mail.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. Research conducted at a doctorate-granting institution brings some additional considerations, as well.

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; see Section 1.13 of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association [APA Publication Manual], sixth edition). Work that is done on contract does not typically rise to the level of author status, however, and should be noted in the acknowledgments when appropriate (see Section 2.05). Examples include transcription services, translation services, a consultant that provides instruction on a proposed analysis or software to be used for analysis, or in an academic environment, the work done by a students’ doctoral capstone supervisory committee (discussed below in more detail).

Generally, the collegial feedback that one scholar might provide to another, especially after a manuscript is nearing completion, likely does not rise to the level of being considered authorship either (e.g., an editor, peer reviewer, or knowledgeable colleague). Contributions to an earlier publication or presentation should not be considered a guarantee of co-authorship on subsequent efforts, although some research projects have multiple phases and people involved in them. In the end, authorship should be earned in each instance and not something obligatory.

Coauthorship and Author Order

One area of potential problems is scholarly efforts that involve more than one author. Although it is generally best to determine author order before a project even commences, sometimes that strategy is not possible. No single solution exists for assigning order, and some disciplines have specific traditions, but here are a few general questions to consider when making these decisions.
1. **Who initiated the project and/or owns the original intellectual property?**
   In instances where one author originated the research (designed and implemented) and
   involved other researchers subsequently (e.g., in writing the manuscript for submission or
   executing a grant), a logical choice would be to list that principal investigator (PI) first and
   then the remaining coauthor(s). This common scenario also applies to publications and
   presentations that are based on students’ doctoral capstone research, where a former
   committee member actively contributes to writing that first manuscript.

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 by
   author order 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 and disseminating the research.

4. **Who will serve as corresponding author?**
   Most journals require that one author be designated as the corresponding author who
   provides contact information and follows up on inquiries about the article. That person
   could be listed first.

5. **Who is the most senior researcher?**
   In some 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. In some disciplines, the tradition may be to include the senior researcher last.
   Additional considerations to this guideline may apply for research involving doctoral
   students and graduates however, as discussed in the next section.

6. **Let the Fates decide?**
   When all things are equal, some coauthors resort to simple strategies such as alphabetical
   order or allowing the matter to be settled by the flip of a coin.

**Research Collaborations and Coauthorship With Students**

Because Walden University is a doctorate-granting institution, both formal and informal
opportunities arise for students to be involved in faculty and staff research. 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 as it relates to the research process (graduates are discussed next).
These general guidelines are based on the nature of that relationship, as described in the following
scenarios.

**Student as Research Colleague**

You and a student have pursued a research topic of mutual interest (not premised upon the student’s doctoral capstone
research), which does not fit in the next two scenarios. You are true collaborators, although you may play a more senior
role in light of your research experience. In this instance, the student should appear as co-PI appropriate to the level of

active and creative contribution that was made. Co-PIs share the responsibility for the design, implementation, and dissemination of the research.

**Student as Research Assistant or Doctoral Fellow**

You have a grant that supports hiring a research assistant, have been assigned to work with a doctoral fellow, or have found a student volunteer to work on your project. Research assistants are hired to complete specific tasks for the research project as assigned by the PI. Doctoral fellows and student volunteers are involved in faculty research as part of their academic experience. Regardless, these students are not responsible for the creative design or overall implementation of the research study; thus, whether or not the student is listed as a coauthor on any published or presented research should be negotiated before the student’s service begins. The abovementioned coauthorship guidelines should be applied.

**Student in the Three-Manuscript Dissertation Alternative**

You have been assigned to the supervisory committee of a student selected for the three-manuscript dissertation alternative. These students are expected to produce submission-ready manuscripts, one or more of which may be submitted for peer review at the time of the final oral conference. This scenario is different from either scenario mentioned above, as the student is completely responsible for designing, implementing, and developing a plan to disseminate the research. Because the work and contribution of the supervisory committee to these efforts are so varied, as well as the expectations of various disciplines, it is difficult to offer one strategy in this document. Generally, however, the educational guidance and editorial support provided by a supervisory committee does not rise to the level of authorship, otherwise the doctoral capstone would not be a student work product that meets the requirements for a terminal degree.

**Research Collaborations and Coauthorship With Graduates**

After a student graduates, the considerations may be somewhat different, as people who were once students are now colleagues. Two primary scenarios that arise include the following:

**Graduate as Former Research Assistant or Fellow**

The research relationship that you built with a student research assistant or doctoral fellow extends into a long-term partnership. In this case, a thoughtful, post-graduation conversation may be necessary to make sure the previous arrangements have not changed. Often, a graduate is in a position to take more responsibility for a research project, thus providing more rationale for coauthor status.

**Graduate as Former Capstone Research Supervisee**

You served as a member of the student’s capstone research 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 coauthor status is appropriate on any of the student’s subsequent dissemination efforts. We recognize that there are disciplinary differences, but generally, if the student develops a derivative work (e.g., a conference presentation or a manuscript to submit for publication) on his or her own, we would recommend that he or she be a single author. If a member of the supervisory committee is heavily involved in producing the derivative work, however, coauthor status may be appropriate. Otherwise, it is usually best to have your service on the committee included in the graduate’s author acknowledgments, depending on the policy of the publication venue.

*Note.* Except in rare cases (which are even rarer at Walden), it is important to keep in mind that the graduate is the sole owner of the copyright of the capstone document and of the intellectual property therein (see our related FAQ, Intellectual Property and Copyright for Doctoral Researchers). Therefore, the choice to include any committee members on subsequent derivative works from the
doctoral capstone is best viewed as being at the graduate’s discretion. They are not obligated to do so. Faculty members who choose to work with a graduate should negotiate authorship based on the contribution being made after completion of the capstone.

Guidelines Specific to the Walden University Research Dissemination Support Program

The following guidelines were created to address some of the common questions about authorship that arise regarding the Research Dissemination Support (RDS) program, which is available to Walden faculty and staff.

Formatting

All citations submitted for recognition by the university community should follow APA Publication Manual, sixth edition, standards for formatting and determining authorship. All submissions also require documentation of the publication or presentation (e.g., a PDF or link) in which the Walden University affiliation is clear.

Coauthorship

If multiple authors are seeking an RDS grant, there is no need to change the author order in the official citation so that the RDS applicant is listed first. Authorship order is not considered in the award of an RDS. Additionally, all authors are eligible for the same amount of grant funding, regardless of authorship order. The citation should reflect the appropriate APA citation for the presentation or the manuscript as it appeared in publication.

RDS Grants and Publications from Three-Manuscript Dissertations

To minimize the concerns around the dual-roles of supervisory committee member and coauthorship, subsequent publications from a three-manuscript dissertation will be exempt from consideration for an RDS award.

External Collaborators

In some instances, individuals may collaborate with other researchers who are not recognized members of the Walden University academic community. While these types of collaborations are encouraged, non-Walden researchers are not able to apply 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, as such, would be eligible for a publication RDS.
The university hosts two annual research events in conjunction with National Faculty Meetings where selected faculty members share their scholarship; the Research Symposium (poster session) and the Research Colloquium (moderated panel). Since these events occur during the faculty meeting, faculty presenters (poster, roundtable, or panel) will have their travel and expenses covered by the university. Therefore, presentations given at the Walden Research Symposium and Walden Research Colloquium are not eligible for the RDS program.

Please note that faculty presenters at Walden research symposia are eligible to submit an expense request of no more than $100 toward the poster preparation, with appropriate documentation. Information about this expense request is included in the program application guidelines for the Walden Research Symposium.

Occasionally, graduate presenters want to invite members of the supervisory committee to be a co-author/presenter on their poster at the Research Symposium. While we respect the need to honor the hard work of the doctoral supervisory committee, for the Research Symposium, we expect graduates to present their doctoral research as a single author, although committee members already in attendance at the Research Symposium and National Faculty Meeting are welcome to be present to offer moral support.

Questions

No single overview can capture every scenario related to authorship and research. If you have specific questions, please feel free to send them to CRO@mail.waldenu.edu.

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