Policy on Authorship of Research Outputs

CU-RIO-POL-7.0 – V8

Discussions on authorship should take place at the very beginning of the writing process. Authors must properly recognise the context or the programme of the work in which the paper has arisen. The following information provides guidance for authors and co-authors.

Authorship

1. Cranfield University's policy is that all persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship through making a substantial contribution to the output, as detailed in point 4 below, and by participating sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content.
2. Where a student is an author, it is expected that both their supervisors will normally make a substantial contribution to the publication process (see Point 4), and therefore included as authors.
3. Where the research has required intellectual contributions from one or more technical staff, these staff should be included in discussions during drafting and publication and designated as authors where they meet the criteria for substantial contribution outlined in Point 4.
4. All three conditions (A, B and C) must be met to constitute a substantial contribution to an output:
    A. Conception of overarching research goals and aims; AND/OR development or design of the research methodology; AND/OR performing the experiments/collection of data/evidence; AND/OR analysis and interpretation of data
    B. Drafted/written, OR substantially revised OR critically reviewed the publication for intellectual content;
    C. Agreed the version to be submitted and published.
5. Authorship credit should be based on the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT).
6. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding without being involved in conception and design or the collection of data does not justify authorship, although an understanding of this context is important for an author, and consultation with such parties is good practice and recommended.
7. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusions must be the responsibility of at least one author.
8. Where the research has involved industry or other third-party collaboration, due consideration of their authorship rights should be made in line with CRediT and the substantial contribution guidance in Point 4.
9. Editors may ask authors to describe what each contributed and this information may be published.

10. Increasingly, multi-centre research programmes are attributed to a corporate author. All members of the group who are named as authors, either in the authorship position below the title or in a footnote, should fully meet the above criteria for authorship. Group members who do not meet these criteria should be listed, with their permission, in the Acknowledgments or in an appendix (see Acknowledgments).
11. The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. Because the order is assigned in different ways, its meaning cannot be inferred accurately unless it is stated by the authors. In deciding on the order, authors should be aware that many journals limit the number of authors listed in the table of contents.
12. Disputes on Authorship should be referred to the School's Director of Research who has authority to approve the authorship. If the School's Director of Research is unable to resolve the dispute the matter will be escalated to the PVC Research and Innovation.

Corresponding Author

13. The corresponding author (or designate) is the individual who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal and co-authors during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication process, including the contractual process, and typically ensures that all the journal's administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, co-authors rights, ethics committee approval and gathering conflict of interest forms and statements, are properly completed, although these duties may be delegated to one or more co-authors. The corresponding author should be available throughout the submission and peer review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely way, and should be available after publication to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information should questions about the paper arise after publication. If a student is the first author, then the primary supervisor should normally be the corresponding author.
14. The corresponding author should keep all co-authors informed of progress, requests for changes etc. in relation to the paper. This includes making all reasonable efforts to contact co-authors on periods of extended leave (including parental leave) either directly (if pre-arranged) or via the co-author's line manager or P&C/HR representatives.
15. The corresponding author should check any rights retention in relation to funder requirements as necessary as well as the University's Open Research Policy (link).
16. Note that most journals have their own definition of corresponding author in the "guide for authors" and this would normally take precedence over Cranfield's policy, if there is a discrepancy.

Co-author responsibilities

17. If you are named as a co-author, this means you have made a significant contribution to the work reported as outlined in Point 4 (including having drafted or written, substantially revised or critically reviewed the publication).
18. You have mutually agreed on the journal to which the publication is being submitted.
19. You have reviewed and agreed on all versions of the publication i.e. before submission, during revision, the final version accepted for publication and any significant changes introduced at the proofing stage.
20. You agree to take responsibility and be accountable for the content of the publication and share the responsibility of resolving any questions raised regarding the accuracy or integrity of the published work.

Datasets

21. All papers should include a Data Availability Statement.
22. When uploading a file to the institutional data repository (CORD), the PI/supervisor's details must be included as they have full knowledge of the project and associated ethical and contractual issues, as well as oversight of who should be consulted before any data is made public. The inclusion of this information prompts the uploader that they need to get the PI/supervisor's approval for publication of the record. This also allows the curator to send an email to the PI/supervisor informing them that the publication of files relating to projects for which they have responsibility has been requested and asking for any objections to be raised.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

23. Researchers using AI tools should document their use. Authors should be aware of the University guidance published on ChatGPT and other generative AI tools.
24. Authors are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to publishers' guidance and any journal specific rules regarding the use of AI-based tools and technologies when submitting their output for publication.

Research Integrity and Ethics

25. All research undertaken by staff and students at Cranfield University must comply with the Research Integrity Policy and have ethical approval prior to the collection and/or analysis of data, including secondary data. Ethical approval for your research is obtained using the University's Research Ethics System (CURES). Publishers will usually request evidence of ethical approval as part of your publication submission.
26. The author(s) responsible for data collection should provide evidence of the relevant ethical approvals, in line with their institutional policy, to the corresponding author.
27. Cranfield co-authors must satisfy themselves that all relevant ethical approvals for the research have taken place, prior to agreeing to submission of the output for publication (in accordance with Points 26 and 27).

Trusted Research

28. All research collaborations with partners from outside of the UK should have been reviewed through the 'secure research collaboration' process prior to publication. Please note it is your responsibility to ensure compliance with the UK Strategic Export Control provisions before sharing any data outside of the UK, including within published outputs.

Predatory publishing

29. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) describe predatory publishing as 'the systematic for-profit publication of purportedly scholarly content (in journals and articles, monographs, books, or conference proceedings) in a deceptive or fraudulent way, and without any regard for quality assurance.' Predatory publishers will charge authors fees for publishing their outputs but without adhering to the normal and expected peer-review processes, publication ethics and editorial standards of legitimate publishers.

30. Predatory publishers typically directly contact potential authors to offer their services and encourage publication, but may also mislead academics into serving as editorial board members.
31. Predatory publishing can bring harm not only to the individual and the University, but also to the integrity of the scientific record and the reputation of scholarly publishing. Therefore all members of the University looking to publish their research should be aware of how to spot possible predatory journal/publisher approaches and avoid further engagement using the Predatory publishing guidance.

Acknowledgments

32. At an appropriate place in the article (the title-page footnote or an appendix to the text; see the journal's requirements), one or more statements should specify 1) contributions that need acknowledging but do not justify authorship, such as general support by a departmental chair; 2) acknowledgments of technical help; 3) acknowledgments of financial and material support, which should specify the nature of the support; and 4) acknowledgements meeting specific requirements of funders such as (but not limited to) UKRI (link), Government departments and charities 5) relationships that may pose a conflict of interest.
33. Persons who have contributed intellectually to the paper but whose contributions do not justify authorship may be named and their function or contribution described-for example, "scientific adviser," "critical review of study proposal," or "data collection". Such persons must have given their permission to be named. Authors are responsible for obtaining written permission from persons acknowledged by name, because readers may infer their endorsement of the data and conclusions.
34. Technical support should be acknowledged in a paragraph separate from that acknowledging other contributions (provided this is permitted by the journal style guidance).
35. The paper should acknowledge the use of particular specialist facilities used during the research e.g. DARTeC, AIRC etc.

Authorship Affiliation

36. Author affiliation must be based on where the research was done, irrelevant of the current institution of the individual who undertook the research.
37. Correct affiliation will ensure corresponding authors benefit from Open Access publishing agreements between publishers and the University.
38. Cranfield also recommends that researchers include their Open Research and Contributor ID (ORCID) to support the visibility and portability of their research outputs.
39. All research funders and sponsors should be acknowledged within any funded research publication. If provided, the acknowledgement should use the funder's specified wording.
40. If an author changes institution, the new institution could be included in the Acknowledgements or a footnote.
41. The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring all addresses, emails and contact information is correct for all named co-authors. The affiliations of all named co-authors should be the affiliation where the research was conducted.
42. If you become aware of your name and Cranfield as an affiliation appearing on a publication where the research has not been conducted at Cranfield, you should contact the Research and Innovation Office in the first instance: researchoffice@cranfield.ac.uk

Useful links

Cranfield University advice and guidance on predatory publishing

Provisional position on Chat GPT and other educational AI tools

Open Research Policy

Research Ethics Policy

Research Integrity Policy

Document control

Document title	Policy on Corresponding Authors
Document number	CU-RIO-POL-7.0
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Title	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation

Document Review

Version	Amendment	By	Date
V2	Title changed from “Policy on Corresponding Authors” to “Policy on Authorship of Research Outputs”	RIO	October 2017
V3	Information on authorship of datasets added Point 4. New to include industry/ third party collaboration. Point 13. Reference to clinical trials removed.	RIO	December 2018
V4	Document control updated with new PVC R&I details	RIO	January 2022
V5	New sentence under Authorship to include technical staff	RIO	October 2022

	Point 2. updated to include requirement for substantial contribution Point 9. Updated to include possible responsibility for contractual processes Point 14. Reference to CRediT added Acknowledgement section updated to include external funder requirements. Item 11 added – corresponding author is responsible for keeping all co-authors updated on progress		
V6	Guidance on predatory journals added. Information on artificial intelligence added Useful links section added	Research Committee	July 2023
V7	Updates throughout the full policy. Additional guidance added on: Co-author responsibilities Use of Artificial intelligence Research Integrity and Ethics Trusted Research Authorship affiliations	Research Committee	September 2023
V8	Item 14. Added – corresponding authors should make all reasonable efforts to contact staff on extended periods of leave. Items 29, 30 and 31 – Updated with new guidance added in relation to predatory publishing.	RIO	July 2024