



Department of Biomedical Engineering

Policy on Authorship of Scientific and Scholarly Publications

Effective date May 15, 2025

The University's publication and authorship policy 7-020 "Determining Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications" (<https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-020.php>) states:

"Each academic department or other academic unit (as described in [Policy 6- 001](#)) whose members regularly participate in research/creative activity shall adopt a written internal policy to govern determinations of authorship for the members of the faculty, non-faculty academic personnel, staff, and students of that academic unit, which must be consistent with this Policy 7-020 and other University Regulations, and should be consistent with the established practices of the academic discipline(s). It is recommended that the principles and criteria for determining authorship follow those of the leading academic societies and journals relevant to the unit's academic discipline(s)."

The Department of Biomedical Engineering therefore institutes this policy:

1) BME Policy Summary

- a) This Policy establishes the Department's minimum requirements for authorship of scientific and scholarly publications by Department personnel. All individuals who are granted authorship on scientific and scholarly publications should meet the criteria of authorship articulated in this Policy; only those individuals who meet such criteria should be granted authorship; and all of those individuals that meet such criteria should be granted authorship. Ghostwriting, honorary or courtesy authorships, and other practices inconsistent with the criteria of authorship articulated in this Policy are unacceptable and a violation of this Policy.

2) BME Policy Purpose

- a) Scientific and scholarly publications provide the primary communication vehicle to disseminate findings, thoughts, and analyses to the scientific, academic, and lay communities. This effort is a professional expectation and responsibility of scholarly endeavor. For the authors of such work, successful publication improves opportunities for academic funding and career advancement while enhancing scientific and scholarly achievement and repute. Additionally, benefits of authorship are accompanied by a number of responsibilities for the proper planning, conducting, analysis, and reporting of research and of other scholarly work. The Department through its faculty, staff and students must help safeguard this fundamental component of the scientific and scholarly process.
- b) The Department's minimum requirements for authorship of scientific and scholarly publications as set forth in this Policy are based in large part on requirements set forth in Section II.A. of the "*Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*" produced by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). The current document (updated October 2008) is obtained at <http://www.icmje.org/>.

3) Applicability of the Policy

- a) This Policy applies to all scientific and scholarly publications by all faculty (paid and unpaid), staff, postdoctoral scholars, fellows, research associates, residents, trainees, staff, students and other personnel affiliated with the Department and all publications reporting on research conducted at or under the auspices of the Department.

4) Definitions

- a) **“Authorship”** or **“Authorship Credit”** means those individuals meeting the authorship or authorship credit criteria set forth in Section V.A. below.
- b) The **“PI/Director”** means a principal investigator or senior researcher in the Department.
- c) The **“Student/Subordinate”** means any student, postdoctoral fellow, technician or other subordinate engaged in research at the Department under the direction or mentorship or in the laboratory of a PI/Director.
- d) **“Publication”** or **“Scientific and Scholarly Publication”** refers to articles, abstracts, and presentations at professional meetings related to research.

5) Policy

- a) **Authorship.** Authorship credit for publications reporting on original research (in any medium), should include only those individuals who:
 - a) make substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; and
 - b) draft the publication or revise it critically to provide important, distinguishing intellectual content; and
 - c) participate sufficiently in the publication to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content; and
 - d) either (a) provide final approval of the version to be published or (b) provide final approval of a substantially similar near-final version and receive the final version to be published with an opportunity to comment prior to the actual publication.
- b) Individuals who make other contributions to research, such as provision of a key or essential reagent or resource, or collection of data, may also be considered for authorship credit as long as conditions (ii), (iii) and (iv) above are met. If such conditions are not met, such individuals should be recognized in the Acknowledgements section of the publication (see Section V.E. below).
- c) For reviews or commentaries not based in original research, authorship credit should be based on conditions (ii), (iii) and (iv) above.
- d) For multi-center trials, where authorship is increasingly attributed to a group, authorship credit should be given only to those members of the group who fully meet the above criteria for authorship.
- e) All those granted authorship should meet the above criteria and all those who meet the above criteria should be granted authorship. In addition, the Department recognizes that many journals may have additional requirements related to authorship. An author must comply with both the authorship requirements of the journal to which a manuscript is submitted and to the requirements of the Department as set forth in above.
- f) **Unacceptable Authorship.** Any authorship practice inconsistent with this Policy is unacceptable and a violation of this Policy, including all of the following:

- a) Ghost-writing, a practice whereby another entity writes an article or manuscript and a scientist is listed as an author, is unacceptable and a violation of this Policy. Making minor revisions to an article or manuscript that is ghost-written does not justify authorship.
 - b) Honorary or courtesy authorships, the practice of granting authorship to individual who do not meet the criteria for an author of a publication out of appreciation or respect, are unacceptable and a violation of this Policy.
 - c) Unless there are contributions or activities meeting the authorship criteria listed in Part A above, acquisition of funding, collection of data (for example, from a fee-for- service core facility), or general supervision of the research group (e.g. by former or current mentors not directly involved in the conception or execution of the publication), alone, does not justify authorship.
- 6) The Senior Author.** In the case of publications with multiple authors, one author should be designated as the senior author. Generally, the senior author is defined as the individual who assumes leadership of the project and makes a major contribution to the research effort. The senior author is responsible for:
- a) Determining Authorship: The senior author must include as co-authors all individuals who meet the authorship criteria set forth in this Policy and only those individuals who meet the authorship criteria set forth in this Policy. The senior author should be prepared to explain the presence and order of all co-authors.
 - b) Consent: The senior author must provide the final draft of the publication to each individual contributing author for review and consent for authorship. The senior author should obtain written documentation of each individual author's approval of the final manuscript, including the order of authorship. A journal may have specific requirements governing author review and consent, which must be followed. Failure to obtain the necessary approvals, signatures, and corresponding documentation will represent a violation of this Policy.
 - c) Integrity: The senior author is responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole, including research conducted at other labs or sites.
- 7) Co-authors.** All co-authors of a publication are responsible for:
- a) Authorship: By providing consent to authorship to the senior author, co-authors acknowledge that they meet the authorship criteria set forth in this Policy.
 - b) Approval: By providing consent to authorship to the senior author, co-authors are acknowledging that they have either (a) provided final approval of the version to be published or (b) provided final approval of a substantially similar near-final version and receive the final version to be published with an opportunity to comment prior to the actual publication.
 - c) Integrity: Each co-author is responsible for the content of all appropriate portions of the publication, including the accuracy, reliability and integrity of any applicable research.
 - d) Any individual who believes that their contribution does not warrant co-authorship of a manuscript under this policy defined above (Section 5A) can withdraw co-authorship by informing the other co-authors in writing.

8) Acknowledgments.

- a) Some individuals may have made substantial contributions to a publication, but do not meet the criteria for authorship. These individuals should be recognized in an acknowledgments section of the publication. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include persons who provide only:
 - i. Technical skills (routine laboratory or data processing efforts)
 - ii. Writing or editorial assistance without significant contributions to expert technical insights or data interpretation.
 - iii. Routine data collection
 - iv. Coordination of data collection
 - v. Provision of reagents or technical methods
 - vi. General support (e.g., Department chair)
- b) In addition, financial and material support for the research should be acknowledged and disclosed. The terms of such acknowledgement may be provided in the grant, contract or agreement with the party providing the financial and/or material support.
- c) Because readers may infer their endorsement of the data and conclusions, all persons should give permission to be acknowledged.

9) Disputes between Co-Authors.

In the event a Co-Author meets the criteria in Section 5A above and is unwilling to consent to a proposed publication by other co-authors as contemplated by Section 5 above, they are expected to provide in writing their objection(s) to the proposed publication, including any conditions or alterations which might be sufficient for the Co-Author to provide consent, or for the Co-Author no longer qualifying for co-authorship and withdrawing their co-authorship.

When a Co-Author is unwilling to consent to the publication by other co-authors and they still wish to proceed with the publication, the senior author and dissenting co-author are encouraged to discuss the issue, the proposed publication and the dissenting co-author's written comments, with senior colleagues outside the co-authors' group, or with the Department Chair or Associate Dean for Research in the College. It is expected that the Co-Authors will not pursue a publication objected to by any other Co-Author in the absence of a final finding of suitability by the College's Associate Dean for Research (or designee).

10) Process for Conducting Responsible Authorship.

Discuss Proactively. In a group effort for publication, early discussions regarding who qualifies for authorship and the possible authorship order are highly encouraged as discussed in Policy 7-020: Determining Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications" (<https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-020.php>).

11) Resolving Disputes – Authorship Order.

Resolution of authorship order disputes that do not represent a violation of this Policy must be resolved at the department level.

- a) For any dispute related to authorship order, the potential authors should first attempt to resolve disputes among themselves. In conjunction with the senior author, co-authors should discuss authorship order at manuscript conception and revise their decisions as needed. All authors should work together to make these informed judgments.

- b) For disagreements regarding authorship order which are not resolved after reasonable efforts to resolve the issue within the author group, it may help to discuss the issue with a senior colleague outside the authorship group. If the matter fails to be resolved in this manner, the co-authors should request mediation with the department chair, then ultimately decided by the College's Associate Dean for Research.
- c) Dispute resolution should follow procedures described in Policy 7-020: Determining Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications" and specifically Section IIIC.1 (<https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-020.php>).

12) Conflicts of Interest.

Authors must fully disclose, in all publications, to journals, and at professional meetings, all relevant financial interests that could be viewed as a potential conflict of interest or as may be required by the Department and/or journal. All such financial interests must be reported internally as required by University Policies on Conflict of Interest.

13) Policy Enforcement

Violations of this Policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or association with the University, in accordance with the University's prevailing disciplinary policies and procedures applicable to the individual in question.

14) Related Policies

- a) Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with University policy on these issues. Harmonization with "Policy 7-020: Determining Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications" (<https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-020.php>) is intended.
- b) Complaints regarding application of authorship criteria, authorship order and acknowledgements do not constitute scientific misconduct under the University of Utah's "Policy 7-001: Policy for Research Misconduct" (<https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-001.php>).