

## Authorship, Publishing and Peer Review Guidelines

ECU promotes a culture of world class, quality research whereby researchers are encouraged to disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately, and broadly. Researchers have a responsibility to their colleagues and the wider community to disseminate a full account of their research and to acknowledge those who have contributed to it.

All principles outlined in this guideline should be applied in the context of acceptable practice within the relevant discipline(s).

### Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Author	An individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and who has agreed to be listed as an author.
Authorship	The specification of the names of the individual or team members responsible for the outputs or products of research or creative activity, especially in the context of publication of that work.
Corresponding author	The author who is, as agreed by all co-authors, responsible for communication between the publishers, managing communication between the co-authors and maintaining records of the authorship agreement.
Duplicate publication	The practice of submitting the same study to two journals/outlets or publishing more or less the same study in two different journals/outlets.
Ghost authorship	A ghost author is a person who has made a substantial contribution to the research or writing of a manuscript but is not named as an author.
Gift authorship	In this practice, an author is added to a paper when they have not actually made a contribution to the work, perhaps to reward a collaborator, return a favour, or for some other gain.
Guest authorship	A practice in which senior researchers are listed as co-authors—despite having had little to do with the work involved in publishing original research reports—on research reports that are the works of others, e.g., undergraduates and postdoctoral fellows working in their lab.
Honorary authorship	Also known as guest authorship, occurs when a person is listed as an author who has not provided any significant assistance to the study.
Peer review	The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
Publication	Traditional and non-traditional forms of research dissemination, including but not limited to, published academic books and book chapters, journal articles, conference papers and publicly released, performed or broadcast showings of creative art works.

Redundant publication	(also described as ‘salami publishing or slicing’): The situation that one study is split into several parts or the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross-referencing, permission or justification. “Self-plagiarism” is considered a form of redundant publication. It concerns recycling or borrowing content from previous work without citation.
Research	creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis, collation, evaluation and analysis of previous Research to the extent that it is new and creative and/or that it informs policy and professional practice.
Research output	A research output communicates or makes available the findings of research that may be in hardcopy, electronic or other form. Examples of research outputs include journal articles, book chapters, books, conference papers, reports, datasets, patents and patent applications, performances, videos and exhibitions.
Questionable publisher	Is a general term for a publisher who does not demonstrate reasonable standards in terms of content, services, transparency and business behaviour. Also known as vanity or predatory publishers. An exploitative academic publishing business model involves charging publication fees to authors without checking articles for quality and legitimacy, and without providing editorial and publishing services that legitimate academic journals provide, whether open access or not.  ECU recommends using <a href="#">Think Check Submit</a> if unsure or contacting Library – Research Services at <a href="mailto:researchonline@ecu.edu.au">researchonline@ecu.edu.au</a> .

## 1. **Authorship**

### 1.1 **Ensure appropriate and fair attribution**

- 1.1.1 Only those who have participated in a substantial way, in at least part of the relevant research, should be included as an author of a publication derived from that research.
- 1.1.2 The requirements for authorship depend to some extent on the discipline, however a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution is one requirement and should include a combination of two or more of the following:
- a) conception and design of the project or output
  - b) acquisition of research data where the acquisition has required significant intellectual judgement, planning, design, or input
  - c) contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Indigenous knowledge
  - d) analysis and interpretation of research data
  - e) drafting or revising significant parts of the research output or critically revising it so as to contribute to its interpretation.
- 1.1.3 When a student has produced the majority of the research outputs presented in a manuscript, and has made substantial contributions to authorship of that manuscript, they will normally be the first-named author or, if appropriate to the discipline and agreed by other authors, be placed elsewhere in the authorship list consistent with a major contribution to authorship.

1.1.4 Honorary, Gift, Ghost and/or Guest authorship, i.e. inclusion based on status, seniority or credentials, is an unacceptable practice and is considered a breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (“the Code”).

## **1.2 Formalise authorship arrangements**

1.2.1 Collaborators should discuss authorship at all stages of the research and establish an agreement on authorship. ECU recommends the implementation of a formal [authorship agreement](#). Authorship agreements should be periodically reviewed especially when there are changes in participation and/or content of the output.

1.2.2 The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. Different disciplines and journals have different conventions regarding the placement of the principal author; authors may wish to explain the order of authorship in a footnote.

1.2.3 When there is more than one author of a publication, one co-author (by agreement amongst the authors) should be nominated as corresponding author for the whole research output. Corresponding authors must offer authorship to all people, including research trainees, who meet the criteria for authorship. Those declining authorship must do so in writing.

## **1.3 Authorship Accountability and Approval of Outputs**

1.3.1 Authors are accountable for the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of all other co-authors. Authors must be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work and should resolve any concerns about the accuracy and integrity of the research before submission or publication. All authors must approve the research output prior to submission for publication.

1.3.2 Other persons who contributed to the work, who are not authors, should be named in ‘Acknowledgements’ (where the publisher provides for this). An author must ensure that the work of contributors, such as research assistants and technical officers, is recognised in a publication derived from research to which they have made a contribution. Individuals and organisations providing facilities (ie: funding bodies and/or sponsors) should also be acknowledged.

## **1.4 Resolution of Disputes**

1.4.1 Any advice and/or disputes about authorship should be referred to the relevant Associate Dean Research, who will decide on a course of action. If a potential conflict of interest exists, the dispute will be referred to an alternate on the recommendation of the Executive Dean.

## **2 Publishing and Dissemination of Research Findings**

### **2.1 Disseminate research findings responsibly and broadly**

2.1.1 Researchers should seek to communicate their research findings to a range of audiences which may include sponsors, professional organisations, peer researchers, policy makers and the community. Decisions about how and where research will be published or disseminated should not be influenced by the research outcome or direction of the results.

2.1.2 The University acknowledges that in some sponsored research the sponsor may seek to delay or restrict the release of research results. Where a sponsor wishes to delay the public dissemination of results, prior agreement should be reached between the

University and the sponsor of the time restriction which is to be applied, and the reasons why it is justifiable.

- 2.1.3 ECU researchers must consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities when research affects or is of particular significance to this population and ensure the outcomes of the research are presented in a culturally appropriate and acceptable format.
- 2.1.4 ECU promotes a culture of world class, quality research whereby researchers must take all reasonable steps not to intentionally publish with a questionable publisher. ECU researchers are urged not to accept an editorial role with a questionable publisher and to act promptly if they discover they have been listed as an editor of a questionable publisher. ECU researchers should refer to the ECU Library Publication resources for careful evaluation of the credibility of a publisher and/or journal prior to submission.
- 2.1.5 Should an ECU researcher find that their identity or intellectual property has been used by a questionable publisher, without their consent, they should contact [research.integrity@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.integrity@ecu.edu.au) for support and advice.
- 2.1.6 Where a candidate for a higher degree is involved in a commercially sponsored project, the student's right to submit and have their thesis examined must not be compromised by any agreement to delay or restrict the release of the research results. At the request of the sponsor and the concurrence of the student and the University, the thesis may be submitted to the examiners in confidence.
- 2.1.7 A research manuscript may be posted publicly as a preprint to allow research outputs to be available and useable prior to peer review. However, in doing so, researchers must ensure that research findings are disseminated responsibly and accurately.

## **2.2 Ensure accuracy**

- 2.2.1 All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous. If researchers become aware of any errors or misleading information in their published research outputs, they should take action to correct the record in a timely manner, in accordance with institutional advice.
- 2.2.2 If research findings are reported in the public arena before they have undergone peer review, the status of the findings must be disclosed at the time. Where there is private reporting of research that has not been peer reviewed, especially when it is reported to prospective financial sponsors, researchers have an obligation to explain fully the status of the work.
- 2.2.3 Deliberate inclusion of inaccurate or misleading information relating to research activity in curriculum vitae, grant applications, job applications or public statements or the failure to provide relevant information, is a form of research misconduct.

## 2.3 Accurately disclose research support and relevant interests

- 2.3.1 Duplicate publication - Researchers must not include the same research findings in different publications, except in clearly explained circumstances such as review articles, anthologies, collections, translation into another language or where the relevance of the findings has changed as a result of subsequent research. This becomes acceptable where there is full cross-referencing within the papers (for example, in a series of closely related work, or where a complete work grew out of a preliminary publication and this is fully acknowledged). For creative research outputs, the situation is generally reversed with the same output gaining prestige by progressing through development phases, e.g. touring to a number of venues or on-selling to further distribution outlets.
- 2.3.2 Author(s) who submit the same or substantially similar work to more than one publisher should disclose that fact to the publishers at the time of submission.
- 2.3.3 Redundant publication or salami slicing – Researchers must not break or segment one meaningful paper into several different publications. As a general rule, as long as the ‘slices’ of a segmented study share the same hypotheses, population, and methods, this is not acceptable practice. The same ‘slice’ should never be published more than once.
- 2.3.4 Researchers must disclose relevant interests and manage conflicts of interests consistent with the Code prior to the submission of publications.
- 2.3.5 ECU researchers should adopt referencing methods as required by specific journals and/or publishers or set out in the [ECU Library Referencing Guide](#) to ensure that information and ideas (published or unpublished) from other people are acknowledged appropriately and accurately.

## 2.4 Obtain permission for republishing

- 2.4.1 Researchers must obtain permission from the original publisher or copyright owner prior to republishing their own or others’ research findings.

## 2.5 Foster transparency in research publications

- 2.5.1 Publications should include the institutional affiliation(s) of each author and should include information on the sources of financial support for the research.
- 2.5.2 Where appropriate, access to research data should be made available at the conclusion of the project through the ECU Institutional Repository or made available in a subject related, open access repository.

## 2.6 Protect confidential and sensitive information

- 2.6.1 Researchers must consider the consequences and outcomes of research prior to its communication. Where research or its outputs could cause harm to human, animal or plant health or the environment, could harm national security, or are otherwise confidential or sensitive, researchers should seek advice from their Associate Dean Research before the dissemination of research or technical data.

### **3 Peer Review**

#### **3.1 Participating in peer review**

- 3.1.1 ECU researchers must participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.
- 3.1.2 Researchers are responsible for ensuring that any research findings which have the potential to influence community behaviour or professional conduct are peer reviewed prior to reporting. Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not seek to influence the decision-making process.

#### **3.2 Conducting peer review**

- 3.2.1 Peer reviewers must:
  - a. maintain confidentiality;
  - b. inform themselves about the criteria to be applied in the peer review process;
  - c. conduct the review according to the guidelines of the publisher, funder or institution requesting the review;
  - d. review research objectively, impartially and in accordance with the review criteria;
  - e. apply standards equally to all research under review;
  - f. give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research;
  - g. only accept an invitation to conduct peer review if the article or proposal matches your area of expertise and you have time to undertake a high-quality review;
  - h. maintain professionalism in the tone of their comments, ensuring that peer reviews are as constructive as possible; and
  - i. disclose and manage potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- 3.2.2 Peer reviewers must not:
  - j. contact the author/s or other reviewers unless authorised to do so;
  - k. seek to unduly influence the review process;
  - l. delegate their responsibilities or ask others to assist with a review, unless authorised to do so;
  - m. take into account factors that are not relevant to the review criteria;
  - n. permit personal prejudice to influence the process (peer reviewers should be aware of how their own biases (conscious or unconscious) could affect the peer review process, including in relation to gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional employer and research discipline);
  - o. take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, or use information from research projects under review, without permission; and
  - p. intentionally delay the review process.

## 4 Breaches of the Code

- 4.1 Researchers should familiarise themselves with the University's processes involved in reporting potential breaches of the Code identified during the peer review process.
- 4.2 Formal complaints of a breach to the Code can be lodged through ECU's research concerns or complaints reporting process. Further information about ECU's position on managing breaches of the Code can be found here (<https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-staff/research-integrity/professional-conduct/managing-and-reporting-breaches-of-the-code>) or by contacting [research.integrity@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.integrity@ecu.edu.au).

## 5 Related Documents

This guideline is supported by the following documents:

- ECU Conducting Research with Integrity Policy (link when available)
- ECU Research Misconduct Guideline (link when available)
- [Copyright Act \(1968\)](#)
- [Authorship A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Peer Review A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Publication and dissemination of research A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Guide to managing and investigating potential breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#)
- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018.](#)
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#)
- [COPE Council, Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers, September 2017](#)
- [Think.Check.Submit](#)

## 6 Contact Information

For queries relating to this document please contact [research.integrity@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.integrity@ecu.edu.au).