

Message from the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School



Preparing graduate students for career success demands that we provide opportunities for them to present academic papers in a trustworthy environment that fosters integrity. Students need to be encouraged to publish their work in professional journals, and to present those findings at national conferences.

Sharing authorship

More importantly, our faculty must be willing to share authorship with doctoral students in order to allow them to develop professionally. Good mentorship includes showing graduate students how to publish articles and submit abstracts for conference presentations. If students leave school with stellar academic credentials but lack the skills to prepare and present their work and research findings, then they are not truly prepared.

Defining authorship

Michigan State University defines authorship as

- Substantial participation in conception and design of the study, or in analysis and interpretation of data;
- Substantial participation in the drafting of the manuscript or in the substantive editing of the manuscript;
- Final approval of the version of the manuscript to be published;
- Ability to explain and defend the study in public or scholarly settings.

Communicate beforehand

Discussion about authorship should occur before research begins in a lab. If you are unclear about who will author the research you are performing, ask. If you have further questions about authorship guidelines, seek the assistance of your faculty advisor or Principle Investigator.

Communication is key. We can't assume that students will know the rules and protocols without thoughtful and open discussion. The budding scientists of today who cross many boundaries in their quest to ethically conduct and publish research are the mentors of tomorrow. The sooner these researchers learn the rules, the better prepared they will be.

Howard Grimes
Vice President for Research
Dean of the Graduate School

Overview: Assigning Authorship and Its Issues

One aspect of a graduate student's training includes how to disseminate research findings and scholarly work to the broader intellectual community. Determining the authorship of articles, reports, conference papers and other intellectual work is an important first step in the dissemination process; however, assigning authors can be tricky.

Collaboration across disciplines

With an increase in cross-disciplinary and international collaborations in the sciences, authorship decisions may be based not only on professional guidelines, but also on a principal investigator's situation and perceptions. Because of this potential ambiguity, graduate students should work to understand the rules of authorship under which they will be working.

Defining authorship

According to Harvard Medical School's guidelines authorship is "an explicit way of assigning responsibility and giving credit for intellectual work." It is "important to the reputation, academic promotion, and grant support of the individuals involved as well as to the strength and reputation of their institution." Thus, practices surrounding authorship, dissemination, and publications need to be honest, and need to reflect the efforts and contributions of all those involved.

Communicate beforehand

In all situations, the best approach is to discuss and agree on the rules and order of authorship as early as possible. It can be a leveling experience for a graduate student to discover another author listed on his or her journal article when that individual made little intellectual contributions to the work. On the other hand, a student may expect to find his or her name listed first on an article and be disappointed to find the name listed second or last.

Bottom line: when dealing with authorship always keep the lines of communication open.

Pat Sturko, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Let's Talk About Authorship Disputes

Article Review by Martha Slaybaugh

In the competitive academic job market where first author publications are a necessary prerequisite for careers and faculty positions, few things could be more frustrating than when a graduate student discovers his or her own research published in a journal without acknowledgment.

Misunderstanding and/or misconduct

Whether through simple misunderstanding or outright misconduct, graduate students could potentially confront this dilemma before completing their degrees. A recent story in the Chronicle of Higher Education details this.

WSU Policy

At WSU, the Graduate Student Code serves as written guidance focusing on graduate student rights and responsibilities, and on avenues for adjudication of these rights. And while this code outlines the complaint process for students, we also encourage you to contact the Graduate School associate deans for guidance and advice on conflicts that may arise at any point during your course of study.

Communicate beforehand

In general, maintaining open and honest communication should be the guiding principal at the most immediate point of access. In other words, graduate students should collaborate with their major professor or advisor.

The next step would be to contact the department chair or school director. In some cases that may be difficult, so graduate and professional students should make an appointment with one of the associate deans at the Graduate School for further advice.

The Graduate School staff can serve as an impartial arbitrator in these matters and provide advice to students and faculty that will hopefully result in the student continuing on in good standing.

Reference:

Woolston, Chris. "When a Mentor Becomes a Thief." The Chronicle of Higher Education: Chronicle Careers. 2002. The Chronicle of Higher Education. 28 Jan. 2009. <<http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2002/04/2002040101c.htm>>.

Ideas: Can you own them?

Intellectual property

The WSU Plagiarism Information Site offers a comprehensive resource tool for students and faculty and includes information about the origins of intellectual property.

General guidelines

Although authorship guidelines vary across disciplines, general formatting guidelines for medical journals were established in 1979 by a small group of editors known as the Vancouver Group. They met in Vancouver, British Columbia, and expanded into the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), a group that meets annually.

Requirements

The requirements for manuscripts and formats for bibliographic references were eventually expanded to include ethical principles as well as authorship guidelines.

The latest revision, Uniform Requirements for Manuscript Submitted to Biomedical Journals, was prepared in 2005. The manuscript is used by authors and editors to create accurate reports of biomedical studies.

Q & A with Professor Michael Delahoyde and Grad Student Jacob Hughes

by Martha Slaybaugh

Graduate student Jacob Hughes collaborates with WSU professor of English Michael Delahoyde in the field of Shakespeare scholarship. Delahoyde and Hughes break the mold with their work on the "Shakespeare authorship question," which challenges how Chaucer's influence on Shakespeare's plays and poetry might indicate that the real Bard was not the Stratford grain merchant but the Earl of Oxford.

Q: Is there expertise that one of you brings to the project that the other might not have?

A: Hughes: It is easy to misread Shakespeare reading Chaucer, and some critics argue that Shakespeare misreads Chaucer. Still others say if you misread Chaucer you can actually misread Shakespeare. So he [Delahoyde] does fill in all my Chaucer gaps and also the Oxfordian Theory* of Shakespeare authorship, which isn't commonly taught in high school or undergraduate environments.

Delahoyde: My specialty in school and through my dissertation was Chaucer, so although I rarely get a chance to teach Chaucer classes, that is a kind of latent expertise. I'm forced, in my position, not to specialize, and I have to cover a lot of topics for classes. So I have the luxury of shuttling back and forth between Chaucer and Shakespeare. While we have a more prominent Chaucerian and Shakespearian in the department, the authorship issue is me. That's what I can bring to Jacob's research.

Q: Prior publication is a necessary requirement for graduate students to get jobs.

Does sponsorship play a role in your decision to collaborate?

A: Delahoyde: Yes. I graduated at an unfortunate time because there wasn't much in the way of professional development. I was never urged to attend conferences or publish. My mentors didn't know what to say about getting cv in good shape. Now we are in an age when all of that is absolutely crucial. So I'm glad to be able to help Jacob get on board early on and get an advantage in the field.

Hughes: When I moved into the English Department (initially I was in history and anthropology), these conversations about research and publication became more persistent. Our collaborative work came about through these informal conversations. I hesitate to say it just sort of happened, but it did. Projects came up and we jumped on them.

Q: How do you allocate work in your relationship?

A: Hughes: I typically read much of our subject matter fairly closely. Part of my role is that I'm an additional perspective and sometimes I'll catch strange things, or things worded differently. But in regards to administrative miscellanea, it really is that sort of "Well, could you do this," and "Yeah, sure," and it goes back and forth like that. There really isn't a set standard.

When you get a chance to combine perspectives, you're doing yourself a favor because you get to keep your madness in check. Sometimes, like many other researches, we get really focused on one particular point. For instance, when I read Chaucer I almost always have my Shakespeare radar on, and it doesn't turn off. When you have one sensor so focused, you tend to lose out on other perspectives.

Delahoyde: There's a limited range of our collaboration, but there is a spectrum of things we do or have done including posters for the academic showcase. We finished one and we're doing another now, and it's an absolute collaboration, hard to figure out who did what. One of us took a digital camera image, and one of us gathered some other images, and we borrowed a chunk of a poster I had previously done edited the content and placed it in there. So it was a blur of who was responsible for what.

We are doing separate projects, but the overlap of Chaucer's importance ends up being the same. Certainly those will end up being joint or juxtaposed projects at the conference and probably end up in publication. Some of those collaborations are blurry, so either one of us could have top billing. I think that's the way things typically happen. Ultimately one of us is more or less responsible.



Shakespeare, often thought of as the greatest writer of the English language, is credited with writing 38 plays, 154 sonnets, and two long narrative poems. His work has been translated into every major language in the world and his plays are performed more than any other playwright.

Anderson, Melissa S., Eric G. Campbell, Janet M. Holdsworth, and Karen Seashore Louis. "Everyday Ethics in Research: Translating Authorship Guidelines into Practice in Bench Sciences." *The Journal of Higher Education*. 79.1 (2008): 88-111.

Article Review: Everyday Ethics in Research: Translating Authorship Guidelines into Practice in Bench Sciences

Scientific research has become more complex in recent decades. In order to use every available resource for scientific inquiry, there may be numerous people involved with a research project. Researchers may be located in different laboratories, different universities, or even different countries.

Authors of "Everyday Ethics in Research: Translating Authorship Guidelines into Practice in the Bench Sciences," published in *The Journal of Higher Education*, examine "how scientists employ a combination of professional guidelines and situation-specific interpretations to address dilemmas that they face in assigning credit on publications" (89).

Their inquiry, based on interviews with researchers in the bench sciences, revealed three unofficial guidelines on which authorship guidelines are based:

Fairness: Rule of Thumb

Interviews reveal that there is considerable variation when senior scientists apply the "rule of thumb" to order authors, and the rule is based surprisingly less on level of contribution and more on a subjective notion of fairness.

For example, many scientists relegate technicians to the Acknowledgements section of a paper, while others find it fair to include them on the list of authors. The same researcher quoted below also states that his lab manager is his most prolific author.

Notion of Fairness

The notion of fairness is labeled by the authors of this article as the inclusive fairness guideline. They identify the motivation for using this method as an effort to avoid conflict in an environment when research projects often outlast the lab personnel working on these projects.

"It's impossible to gauge... someone who's figuring out how much pipette stuff to put in this tube is making as important decisions as someone saying, 'Do this experiment'" (99).

Reciprocity: Sharing the Wealth

In this context, reciprocity refers to "assigning authorship to scientists in another lab because of intellectual, material, or other contributions they provided" (100). The authors state that over two thirds of scientists interviewed report such activity and describe their method for assigning authorship in such situations. In addition, rules governing authorship tend to be based less on journal guidelines and more on the "lab's perceived dependency on the other lab's material or on the effort that went into creating it" (101).

Sponsorship: Promoting Graduate Student Careers

The authors note that senior scientists "recognize that graduate students need first-authored publications to be competitive for postdoctoral positions and then for their careers as faculty members or other scientists" (103). Many scientists also consider scientific reporting and authorship a necessary component of training. In general, most senior scientists consider it their duty to promote the careers of graduate students or postdoctoral appointees in their lab, and in doing so may attract others to their labs.

First Authorship

There is opportunity for tension, however, when the individual who provided the conceptual framework for the project has moved and is succeeded by another individual who completes the work. One scientist explains: "And so, now I have this project that's [nearly] done but almost isn't useful. So I have to basically convince somebody that it would be in their interest to jump into this project" (104). Who, then, is assigned as the first author?

The authors of this article find that the scientists they interviewed tend to support as first author the trainee who has moved on. The authors suggest "it may be that trainees who leave become established scientists in other institutions and thus have greater potential for reciprocity. It is also likely that senior faculty have greater power over current trainees than past trainees to enforce assent to a middle-position authorship" (107).