

## Authorship of Research Outputs Policy process

**Objective:** To clarify the criteria and process for acknowledging and documenting authorship, affiliation, and other contributions to research outputs that will be followed at RMIT.

**Exclusions:** Nil

**Definitions:** [Will be put on a separate tab.]

**Author:** Author includes equivalent terms such as but not limited to creator, writer, designer, artist, as long as the person fulfils the authorship criteria in Section 1.

**The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code):** Sets out good research principles and practices. It was developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia.

**Corresponding Author:** A specified co-author of a publication who acts as point of contact for all correspondence regarding the publication, and maintains authorship agreements and related records. The corresponding author is sometimes referred to as the 'executive author'.

**Creative works:** Original work which may include one or more of the following: a multimedia or digital work, a film, an exhibition, a performance, a musical composition, a novel, a play, a series of poems, creative art work or other works considered acceptable by the relevant school.

**Publication/Research Output:** The formal dissemination of research findings in a public forum whether in hardcopy, electronic, web-based or other tangible forms. It includes refereed and non-refereed books, book chapters and journal articles, conference proceedings, creative works, technical papers, performances, other scholarly works, and web-based publications including personal or professional blogs. It does not include a student thesis.

**Research data:** Research data are the material, data, records, files, and other evidence upon which a research project's observations, findings, or outcomes are based. This includes all content and forms (e.g. print, digital, physical or other forms), and both primary material and analysed data.

For example, laboratory notebooks, survey forms, specimens, computer code and any other records needed to reconstruct or evaluate reported results of research, and the events and methods leading to those results.

**Researcher:** Anyone who carries out research at RMIT University. This includes staff, students, visiting researchers, research collaborators, and honorary and adjunct appointees.

**Supervisor:** A staff member who advises and assists research candidates in meeting the requirements for successfully completing their candidature milestone reviews and submitting their research for examination.

**Written consent:** Includes original hand-written signatures, forms, emails, faxes, scanned documents or electronic identification as appropriate.

### Process steps:

[use the following numbering format(can use format painter to copy); sections will be collapsed and only headings will immediately visible on the webpage]

#### 1. Authorship criteria

- 1.1. In order to qualify for authorship, a person must make a substantial scholarly contribution to the intellectual shaping of a research output in:
  - Participating in the conception and design of the project; and/or
  - Analysing and interpreting research data; and/or
  - Drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation.
- 1.2. All people who meet at least one of the criteria in Section 1.1 will be offered authorship. The right to authorship does not depend on whether the contribution was paid for or voluntary. To be named as an author, they will also take responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of at least their contribution to the output.
- 1.3. People offered authorship will accept or decline in writing, for example in an email. A person who qualifies as an author will not be included or excluded as an author without their written permission. For more information see Section 2 Agreeing authorship.
- 1.4. Research teams, and particularly supervisors and students, will discuss authorship in the initial stages of planning a publication, and regularly during the course of research to ensure that contributions from members of the research team are appropriately acknowledged. Authors will agree to the final authorship list at an early stage in the research project (by submission of the manuscript or the step prior to publication of the research output). Proposed authors will make a contribution to the publication that meets at least one of the authorship criteria.
- 1.5. Supervisors will ensure that research students receive appropriate credit for their work and are offered authorship if they meet the authorship criteria. Research students will offer authorship to their supervisor(s) if they meet the authorship criteria. This applies to research outputs other than student theses.
- 1.6. Authorship issues that vary across research disciplines, such as order of authors, will follow good practice in the discipline area and the instructions to authors in their target journal. The first author is usually the person who does the majority of writing the paper. Schools or discipline areas will provide researchers with discipline specific advice.
- 1.7. As detailed in Section 1.1, authorship requires a substantial scholarly contribution. The following contributions on their own do not fulfil this criteria:
  - Providing materials or data from third parties or that have already been made publicly available;
  - Providing routine technical support;
  - Collecting data where the collection of the data has not required significant scholarly or intellectual contribution or expertise;
  - Supervising or being part of the wider team conducting the research; or,
  - Holding a position of authority such as Dean/Head of School.In these cases, the authors can invite these persons to make a contribution that would warrant their inclusion as an author (Section 1.1), and/or acknowledge them in line with Section 5 Acknowledgement.
- 1.8. People will ensure their authorship is listed accurately, for example on CVs, funding applications and websites.

## 2. Agreeing authorship

- 2.1. Each author will provide the corresponding author with information of their contribution to the research output. Each author will also keep their own record of this information.
- 2.2. Authors will discuss the order in which the authors will be listed at an early stage in the research project. Authors should review authorship agreements periodically as the order of authors and who qualifies as an author may change as the research output changes.

- 2.3. When agreeing authorship, each author will declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest (for example, funding sources, memberships, consultancies) in line with RMIT's Integrity and Ethics Policy (unresolved). If a conflict of interest arises following the agreement of authorship, the author will declare their conflict to the other authors and any other relevant parties such as funding bodies and publishers.
- 2.4. The corresponding author will document authorship agreements, for example in an email or other written form, and any updates, and retain this documentation for the minimum retention period of the research output (usually five years, see RMIT's Research Data and Record Retention Factsheet).
- 2.5. Authors will respond to communications about the research output in a timely manner. If an author is on leave or has left their role every reasonable effort will be made to contact them. If they cannot be contacted the Dean/Head of School or another appropriate person determined by the Dean/Head of School may respond on their behalf.
- 2.6. If an author is deceased or cannot be contacted, the research output may proceed with this person named as an author provided there are no reasonable grounds to believe this person would have objected to being included as an author. In this instance the Dean/Head of School or another appropriate person determined by the Dean/Head of School may sign the relevant documentation.
- 2.7. Dissemination may not proceed until all valid authors agree on authorship. Dissemination may not proceed if any of the valid authors dispute the theory, or the data or its interpretation, underpinning the work. Where researchers cannot agree on authorship they will use the university process outlined in Section 6.1.
- 2.8. Staff leaving RMIT University should submit copies of their authorship agreements to their school. Schools will maintain a record of these authorship agreements.

### 3. Corresponding authors

- 3.1. Collaborating researchers will appoint a corresponding author. The corresponding author does not have to be the first author.
- 3.2. Follow the policy of the corresponding author's institution. If the corresponding author is not an RMIT University author and their institution does not have a policy, then follow RMIT policy.
- 3.3. Corresponding authors may delegate their duties to co-authors. If the corresponding author will be out of contact for an extended period of time they will provide another point of contact.
- 3.4. Corresponding authors are responsible for communication to the journal and manuscript preparation, submission, peer review and publication processes, documenting authorship agreement, and reporting research outputs as outlined in the Disseminating research outputs process.
- 3.5. Research outputs with multiple authors can have a group name. If so, the corresponding author will specify the group name, and clearly document the group members who can take credit and responsibility for the work as authors.

### 4. Affiliation

- 4.1. RMIT staff and students will name RMIT University as their affiliation, where a part of the research was conducted at RMIT or with RMIT support. This applies to RMIT staff, students, visiting researchers, research collaborators, and honorary and adjunct appointees undertaking research activities at all RMIT University campuses and external research locations. This applies in cases where an author has since left RMIT but some or all of the work was conducted while they were at RMIT.

- 4.2. Attribute RMIT affiliation in the author's by-line, in the author's profile, or in a footnote or statement that the research leading to the output was undertaken in the author's capacity as a staff member or student of RMIT University. Correct attribution of affiliation is required so that RMIT University's achievements and investment in research can be appropriately acknowledged and reported.
- 4.3. Multiple affiliations are acceptable in some cases, including but not limited to research collaborations with other institutions or dual badged programs with offshore universities. List RMIT University first when possible.

## 5. Acknowledgment

- 5.1. Authors will fully acknowledge all people who have contributed to the research who are not authors. This includes but is not limited to research assistance, technical writing and technical support, editing, translation, and transcription. Where authors plan to name an individual, they will record the individual's written consent. These contributors should not have played a significant role in the intellectual shaping of the research output (in these circumstances authorship may be more appropriate).
- 5.2. Research outputs will appropriately acknowledge all sources of financial and in-kind support for the research, and acknowledge funding bodies in line with their requirements.
- 5.3. Authors will fully acknowledge people and organisations who have contributed facilities, data or materials to the research. Authors will gain, record and store permission for the use of these facilities, data or materials, and comply with any conditions of use. See RMIT's Intellectual Property Policy (unresolved) for information about appropriate use of other people's intellectual property, for example third party copyright materials.

## 6. Disputes

- 6.1. If disagreements arise over authorship, researchers will try to resolve them at the local level using mediation and seeking advice from a Research Integrity Advisor, Dean/Head of School, Higher Degrees by Research Coordinator, or other senior researchers. If a dispute cannot be resolved at local level or if it may be research misconduct, then it will be handled in line with RMIT's Research misconduct process.
- 6.2. Work that is the subject of an authorship dispute will not be disseminated until the dispute has been resolved.

**Related policy:** Research Policy

**Supporting documents:**

- [Authorship of research outputs at RMIT](#)

**Cross-referenced to:**

- [Disseminating research outputs process](#)
- [Research misconduct process](#)

**Feedback link:** [Policy@rmit.edu.au](mailto:Policy@rmit.edu.au)

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title		email	mit.edu.au
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