

Authorship Agreement Draft

**The following is a practical template for an authorship agreement for implementers looking to publish project results (or other efforts) in a peer-reviewed journal.*

Before starting the writing process, an authorship agreement should be in place. This ensures that roles and responsibilities are clear, credit and level of effort are established from the beginning, and procedures for resolving any conflicts are established.

Project: < Describe the project >

Title: < List the title here >

Lead author: < List the name of the lead author >

**The lead author is the person who coordinates the writing and review process, oversees the submission of the paper, and manages the response to edits.*

Other authors (in order): < List the authors here, in the order they will appear, and describe the roles and responsibilities they will have on the paper >

**All listed authors must contribute in some way to the development of the data discussed in the paper or the design and writing of the paper itself. Please see the authorship guidelines for more information about how to determine authorship order. Authorship order should be decided BEFORE the writing process begins.*

Author responsibilities: < List out each author and describe the individual responsibilities he/she will have >

**Listing author responsibilities in the authorship agreement helps clarify roles and expectations before the writing process begins, which facilitates appropriate communication, decision-making, and follow up. When listing author responsibilities, provide an appropriate level of detail; for instance, do not just say that an author will contribute to writing, but rather, list the sections for which he/she will contribute writing. Other responsibilities include data analysis, conceptualization and outlining the manuscript, editing, journal selection, manuscript submission, and serving as the corresponding author.*

Collaborating institutions: < List collaborating institutions here >

**Collaborating institutions include any institutions involved in the project or the manuscript, such as donors, academic partners, or implementing organizations. It is good practice to list these institutions to determine if any collaborators have policies or procedures in place that must be adhered to (e.g. a donor requires that it must review a manuscript prior to publication).*

Source of Data: < Describe the data being analyzed in the paper >

**Data could include data from original research, secondary analysis, or a literature review. It is critical to ensure that all authors understand which data are to be used and ensure that any requirements can be completed before starting the manuscript (e.g. ensuring that the data to be used has received IRB approval).*

Rationale and objectives: < Describe the purpose underpinning the manuscript >

**This section should detail the high-level rationale and objectives the manuscript is intended to address.*

Understanding the purpose of the publication is critical for determining which journals to target and how to shape the paper, and therefore should be outlined early in the process and agreed upon by all authors.

Journal: < List the journal(s) that paper will be submitted to >

**This section should identify the target journal. Journals have different requirements for manuscript submission, including fees for open-source journals. They also have different word limits and required sections for text. Identifying the target journal in advance will ensure that authors prepare the manuscript according to submission requirements, reducing the editorial and formatting burden during submission. If the authorship team has not selected a target journal, this section can be amended later in the process.*

Timeline: < Include a high-level timeline for manuscript development and submission >

**This helps ensures all authors are aware of their responsibilities*

Additional information: < List any additional information >

Signature: < Users should edit the affirmations below as relevant to their own papers >

By their signatures below, authors hereby attest and affirm that:

1. They have read, understood and agreed to the authorship order, responsibilities, and other information included in this agreement.
2. They understand that serving as an author means that giving final sign off for publication means that they stand behind all analysis, interpretation, and explanation included in the paper and can explain and defend it as necessary.
3. If a disagreement arises that cannot be resolved by the involved authors themselves, the authors should contact [*fill in appropriate authority here] to resolve the dispute.
4. [*List the first author here] has the right to adjust the author list and order according, if deemed necessary based on contributions in practice.

Lead author

Date

2nd author

Date

*Add lines for signatures as appropriate

Approved:

Name, Title

Date

**Determine the appropriate approving authority; for example, authors' supervisors or the department/agency funding the work*

AUTHORSHIP GUIDELINES¹

Determination of Authorship

To be included as an author, a person must make a substantive contribution to the journal article or report under development. A substantive contribution is defined as meeting all of the following conditions:

1. A meaningful role in project design, data acquisition, data analysis, or data interpretation;
2. Contribution to the written product (be it drafting or major revisions); and
3. Approval of the final product to be published

Depending on the project, there may be many people involved in the project design, implementation, data collection, analysis, and drafting process that contribute to the end product, but do not rise to the level of substantive contribution. These individuals should be listed in the acknowledgements. Examples of contributions that do not rise to the level of authorship include undertaking tasks such as data collection or analysis without contributing to the design of these processes, copyediting or creating tables or figures, or providing funding for the project.

Determination of Authorship Order

In determining authorship order, items 1 and 2 in the “Authorship” section above are weighted most heavily. Authorship order can be calculated by assessing the level of effort and contribution of each author to the paper. A larger role in conceptualizing and writing the paper should be used as a tiebreaker as needed. If co-authors agree that their contributions are equal, tiebreakers such as alphabetical order or other factors can be used.

Changes to Authorship Order

If any author can no longer participate in the development of the paper or his/her level of contribution meaningfully changes, this agreement should be amended as appropriate and redistributed to the remaining authors to sign. Author order may be changed or authors removed from the paper at the discretion of the first author in the case that contributions or participation do not match what was described in the original version of this agreement.

If it happens that the first author must decrease his/her involvement or cease to work on the paper as per the agreed upon timelines, the first author must offer the role of lead author to each listed author on the paper in order of authorship. If this occurs, this agreement should be revised to reflect the new author list and order.

Disagreements among Authors

If a disagreement arises between co-authors regarding the authorship order, content of the article, or any other matter related to publication, the disputing parties should make every effort to resolve the disagreement themselves. If a resolution is not reached, the parties should contact [* insert appropriate authority here] with a written description of the dispute. [* insert appropriate authority here] will review the matter and come to a final decision.

¹ [Authorship Guidelines](#), Harvard Medical School, 1999.