

Supervision and Co-authorship

This is a proposal about supervisor co-authorship contributions in the case of PhD by Published Work and is guided by the requirements of the UoB R1 (PW) form. Practice varies across academic disciplines; adding supervisors as co-authors to student work is a practice almost unheard of in the Humanities but common in the Sciences, Medicine (where supervisors' names may go first) and Engineering. It has particular relevance for PhD PW because of the requirements for the candidate to prove ownership of the work and ideas contained within especially in the case of co-authored works. Recognition of the possibility of co-authorship in PhD PW is provided by UoB's R1 form for PhD PW:

... please provide an indication of whether the applicant is or is intended to be the sole, joint, senior or junior author next to each publication. If it is more convenient, the applicant may state their own (intended) depth of contribution with an indication of the percentage of work which is (or will be) theirs within each publication. [...]The abstract of the thesis shall also retain statements (as standard) pertaining to shared and sole ownership of the work.

Co-author contribution can range from lead or significant provision of ideas and writing to copy-editing and checking and this is reflected in some models of current PhD PW supervision at UoB. For example, early paper drafts of some new-to-research PhD PW candidates may require significant contributions in the form of ideas and re-writing to get them publishable, and co-authorship reflects this, but later papers should require less input and ideally mere copy-editing. The signalling of co-authorship on the published paper has benefits for the School's research profile and future REF submission, particularly where there has been a considerable contribution, and has individual benefits to the supervisor.

However, the consensus in global university policies on research student publications seems to be that the mere fact of being a supervisor and/or copy-editing does not lead to co-authorship. Many such policies¹ are based upon and cite the *Vancouver Group Guidelines* drawn up by a committee of journal editors.² The main points are:

- Authorship credit should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.
- Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone does not constitute authorship.
- All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.
- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.
- All other contributors (including supervisors) should be listed in acknowledgements.

Accordingly, the University will adopt these guidelines with effect from 2011.

¹ For example, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/research/hbook/pubs1.htm>,
http://www.columbia.edu/ccnmtl/projects/rcr/rcr_authorship/foundation/index.html,
<http://www.biol.canterbury.ac.nz/ferg/pdfs/Guidelines%20on%20authorship.pdf>,
http://www.med.upenn.edu/bgs/docs/BGS_author.pdf.

² http://www.icmje.org/ethical_1author.html