

Guidelines for authorship

We propose the following distinction between publication types and guidelines for determining authorship in a collaborative research:

1. Publications resulting from a single PhD project

As a general rule, each PhD project should result in about three publications. Exceptions may be justified depending on the specific structure and context of a project.

The PhD student has the right of first authorship for this type of publication. Co-authors follow the procedure for type 2 publications, but contributions may be pooled over the entire PhD project and reassigned to the specific publications.

2. Publications resulting from the collaboration of two or more projects

The following procedure is modified from guidelines used in the Genetic Ecology division of WSL, originally adapted by Felix Gugerli, WSL, from propositions by Hunt (Nature 3552, 1991, 187) and Werner Suter, WSL.

The maximum score possible (per person) is 100 points. Each potential author is awarded a realistic score in each category; whoever achieves a total of 25 points is offered joint authorship in rank order of total score. In the event of ties, recent near-misses are considered; if none exist, alphabetical order is used. In the repeated case, alphabetical order should be reversed. The last position marks the senior author.

This system is not absolute, but should serve as a check list and base for discussion between the potential authors of each specific publication.

Planning (intellectual input): max. 20 points

Basic idea	5
Occasional short discussions	5
Intensive participation in planning process	10
Continuous participation in planning process, field visits, correspondence	15
Closest possible involvement	20

Data collection (setting-up, field work, laboratory): max. 25 points

Occasional contribution	5
Regular contribution	10
Independent data collection of minor part of data	15
Independent data collection of major part of data	20
Main contribution to data collection	25

Data management (data entry, processing, organizing): max. 10 points

Assistance with data entry, or entering of minor part of data	5
Substantial or prolonged assistance	10

Data analysis (mainly intellectual contribution) max. 15 points

Occasional assistance (e.g. repeated statistical advice)	5
Substantial assistance (e.g., extended statistical advice, participation in analysis)	10
Main contribution to analysis	15

Writing (contribution to first complete draft of manuscript) max. 30 points

Minor editing	5
Major editing with substantial suggestions for improvement	10
Contribution of minor sections	15
Contribution of a substantial section	20
Important, major contribution, mainly to the discussion	25
Most of the manuscript	30

3. Publications that form a synthesis of a collaborative research

As a general rule, all PhD students, postdocs, senior scientists and technicians are co-authors. The order of authorship follows the procedure of a type 2 publication. The “head of the project” will usually be the senior author.