Policy on Authorship and Acknowledging Contributions

This policy sets out the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute's expectations for consistent, fair and honest acknowledgement of all contributions to research in our publications and aligns with the CRUK Scotland Institute's Publishing Policy[1]. Authorship is an important part of publishing, and acknowledging all contributions is key to a responsible and positive research culture. Authorship on a publication provides credit for a researcher's contributions to it, but also carries responsibility and accountability for the integrity of the data. It is also important to acknowledge other forms of contribution from individuals, facilities, institutions and organisations that have aided the research and its publication but that do not merit authorship.

1. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all research outputs, including manuscripts being posted on preprint servers or submitted for publication, as well as abstracts being submitted for meetings and for presentations.

2. Designation of Authorship

2.1 Responsibility for the designation of authorship, including both the identity of authors and their order, rests with the CRUK Scotland Institute's Group Leaders, whose decision is final.

2.2 Authors should have made substantial intellectual contributions to a paper, in accordance with the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)[2], such that authorship is conditional on participation in all four of the following:

1) conception of the project and experimental design or
   data acquisition or
   data analysis or
   data interpretation or
   code development or
   software development or
   provision of unpublished datasets and/or reagents that are essential to the study

2) contribution of critically important intellectual content to manuscript drafts and revisions, including writing, drafting or reviewing

3) approval of the final version of the manuscript

4) accountability for the integrity of their contribution

2.3 Any of the following performed in isolation, without other substantial intellectual contribution, do not justify authorship:
acquisition of funding, collection of data, provision of a published dataset or reagent, provision of a service, provision of equipment, writing assistance, or general supervision of the research group.

2.4 Gift/honorary authorship (inclusion of authors who do not meet the ICMJE authorship criteria or who did not contribute to the research) is not acceptable.

2.5. Ghost authorship (omitting authors who contributed substantially to the research) is not acceptable.

2.6 Orphan authorship (inclusion of material, such as text, figures or data, without authorship or misattributing material) is potentially plagiarism and as such would be classed as research misconduct.

2.7 Forged authorship (inclusion of authors who had no part in the work, without their knowledge) is not acceptable.

2.8 All contributions that do not meet the ICMJE authorship criteria should be listed in the Acknowledgements section of the paper.

3. Authorship considerations

Attributing authorship can be complex, nuanced and change during the research project and publication process[3]. Therefore, in addition to following the ICMJE's recommendations (section 2), it is recommended that:

3.1. Authorship criteria are considered[3] and discussed openly during the preparation of a manuscript.

3.2 Authorship decisions are agreed and documented[4].

3.3. Contributions are documented during the preparation of a manuscript and the publication process.

3.4 Authorship decisions are revisited during the publication process to reflect changes in contribution to the paper during the revision process.

3.5 Authorship agreements[4] are used for collaborative research projects.

3.6 Authorship disagreements are discussed when they arise.

3.7 Authorship queries, disagreements and disputes are discussed with the Head of the Research Integrity Service.

4. Authors' responsibilities

All authors should

- agree to being named as an author
- be able to identify their own contribution
- be accountable for their own contribution
- be able to identify co-authors' contributions
- have confidence and trust in the integrity of their co-authors' contributions
- disclose conflicts of interest
- use an ORCiD[5] persistent digital identifier, when permitted by publishers
- read the manuscript prior to submission
- have the opportunity to critically review the manuscript prior to publication
- approve the final version of a manuscript
- be able to defend a paper, either as a whole or a part, where they are responsible for a specialised part of the research

5. Corresponding author's responsibilities

In the majority of publications Group Leaders are the corresponding authors. They are responsible for consistently, fairly and honestly

- assigning authorship
- using correctly spelled and preferred names
- assigning author order
- resolving authorship disputes
- acknowledging all other contributions that do not merit authorship
- complying with the CRUK Scotland Institute's Publishing Policy[1]:
    - using CRediT[6] to write the author contribution statement[7]
    - using correct affiliations[8] for all authors
    - writing the conflicts of interest statement[9]
    - writing the data and code availability statement[10]
    - acknowledging funding[11]
    - approving the content of the paper
- assigning co-corresponding authorship (and delegation of responsibilities)
- communicating with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer-review, and publication process
- complying with the CRUK Scotland Institute's Policy on Open Access Publishing[12]
- ensuring the integrity of the data and code in a paper
- sharing data and code
- responding to post-publication queries about the paper

6. Authorship disputes

Authorship disputes can arise due to misplaced expectations, or poorly defined or communicated requirements or decisions on authorship, author order or senior authorship between PIs. In the first instance researchers should discuss any authorship concerns with the corresponding author[13]. The Head of the Research Integrity Service can advise and mediate on authorship concerns and disputes[13].

7. Acknowledging contributions

7.1 Contributions that do not meet authorship criteria should be listed in the Acknowledgements section of a paper[14].

7.2 The Acknowledgements statement should be specific and detail contributions, as well as individuals' affiliations. The CRediT[6] system can be used to define contributions.

7.3 Acknowledgements should be revisited during the publication process to reflect changes in contribution to the paper during the revision process.

APPENDIX

1. CRUK Scotland Institute's Publishing Policy

2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors

3. Examples of authorship considerations

Examples of complex or nuanced authorship considerations are but not limited to:

- First author position

The order of authors is decided based on level of contribution, with the first author having contributed the most to a paper or leading the research. However, in collaborative projects joint first authorship might be required to reflect lead contributions by authors. This is also useful if contribution levels change during the publication process, for example when major revisions are undertaken by another researcher. This could also lead to a change in author position, with the original first author no longer being the first author.

- Joint authorship

Joint authorship in other positions of the author list can be used to show equal contributions by authors other than the first author(s).

- Group / Consortia authors

Inclusion of a consortium values the importance of collaboration rather than the contribution of an individual. A consortium may be included in an author list to acknowledge the provision of infrastructure and/or crucial samples, and/or that the work could not have been carried out without the consortium. Individual authors/members of a consortium, whose contribution is deemed to fulfil the ICMJE authorship criteria, can be included in the main author list of a paper as well as being listed as a member of the contributing consortium. A researcher, who is a member of a consortium but who is not listed as an author on a paper, can include the paper on their CV.

Collaborative agreements should be checked by the corresponding author to determine what decisions were made about authorship at the onset of the collaboration.

- Non-responsive author

Reasonable effort should be made to contact a non-responsive author, including involving the Head of the Research Integrity Service and HR to make contact on the corresponding author's behalf. If contact cannot be made then the matter should be discussed with the editor of the journal and the journal's process followed. This might mean removal as an author and their contribution acknowledged in the Acknowledgements section of the paper.

- Author omission

Someone having left the CRUK Scotland Institute, a personal falling out, a professional dispute or a researcher dying does not disqualify that individual from being included as an author. Journal editors, the Head of the Research Integrity Service, and HR should be consulted in these instances.

- Technical contribution

Technical staff who have contributed substantially to the experimental design / technical optimisation / development of project-specific protocols / extensive generation of data / analysis or interpretation of experimental data or provided substantial technical support or training (i.e. more than their standard role).

Researchers who provided essential and ongoing technical training during the study or researchers who developed new research tools or methodology.

- Resource / reagent contribution
Researchers who have provided reagents or materials, without which the research could not have been performed (e.g. the provision of mouse tissue from mouse models).

- Project licence contribution
PPL holders should be authors where they have made an intellectual contribution to the project, as well as enabling mouse work to be conducted under their licence. If no intellectual contribution has been made then the PPL holder should be acknowledged. Whether the PPL holder is an author or not, their licence number must be included, they must be made aware of the manuscript and they must review the methodology reported under their project licence.

- Intellectual contribution
Researchers who directly proposed novel ideas on which the research described is substantially based.

- Contribution not included in the final publication
Authorship might be considered for a researcher whose contribution to the research project was not included in the final version of the paper but facilitated the publication of the work.

All authors should also be given the opportunity to adhere to the other 3 ICMJE authorship criteria and comply with authorship responsibilities (section 4).

- Removal of authors
A researcher's request to be removed as an author should be respected. The request should be documented and their contribution acknowledged in the Acknowledgements section of the paper, with their consent.

4. Authorship agreement documentation
As part of its Authorship Integrity Toolkit, the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) has produced an Authorship Strategy Agreement Template that can be adapted to define and document how credit for research outputs will be allocated, so that expectations can be managed and authorship disputes avoided.

5. ORCiD

6. CRediT taxonomy
Use the CRediT taxonomy to standardise author contribution statements and to capture all other contributions that should be included in the Acknowledgements section[12].

7. Author contribution statement
As well as using the CRediT taxonomy to assign roles to authors, it is best practice to state specific contributions authors have made to figures, data, code or analyses, so that author responsibility can be determined.

8. Affiliations
Institutional affiliations should only represent where the author was employed or where the research was actively conducted and supported.

All researchers employed by or based at the CRUK Scotland Institute should use the full Institute address:
Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute, Garscube Estate, Switchback Road, Glasgow, G61 1BD, UK

All Group Leaders on hybrid contracts should also use the University of Glasgow affiliation:
School of Cancer Sciences, University of Glasgow, Garscube Estate, Switchback Road, Glasgow, G61 1QH, UK

All researchers employed by the University of Glasgow, PhD students registered at the University of Glasgow and any staff that have an @glasgow.ac.uk email address should also use the University of Glasgow affiliation:
School of Cancer Sciences, University of Glasgow, Garscube Estate, Switchback Road, Glasgow, G61 1QH, UK

If researchers are no longer at the CRUK Scotland Institute, then their new affiliations can be included. However, it must be made clear that these are current affiliations, and not where the data were generated.

If CRUK Scotland Institute researchers are authors on publications from previous places of work, then they can use the CRUK Scotland Institute to demonstrate their current affiliation, rather than where the data were generated.

All authors should consider using the Cancer Research UK Scotland Centre affiliation, if appropriate.

If an author's current affiliation is at a commercial entity that has was not involved with the research do not include their current address in the author affiliation section but list this in the acknowledgements or the disclosure statements of the manuscript.

Honorary or affiliate affiliations should only be used by authors when they have actively contributed, collaborated, or utilised that organisation's resources for the paper.

9. Conflicts of interest
Conflicts of interest may arise for researchers or their immediate family (e.g. a spouse, parent, sibling, dependent child, or other dependent).

Potential conflicts of interest include relationships with any company or commercial entity that might have an interest in research data:
- Financial
(stocks or shares, patent, research grant, employment, consultancy, board membership, receipts of gifts or honoraria)
- Professional
(collaboration, board membership, advocacy, employment or consultancy)
- Personal
(personal relationship, personal beliefs)

10. Data and code availability statement
The statement should include what data, code and software underlying the findings reported in the paper are available for sharing, where they can be assessed by other users, under what conditions they can be accessed and should provide persistent DOIs so that datasets can be cited. For data and code with restricted/controlled access the statement should include the reason for controlled access, conditions of access, contact details for access requests, timeframe for response to requests, and restrictions imposed on data use via data use agreements.

It is recommended that a data availability statement is used even where there are no data to share, the data are inaccessible or no new data were generated.

Instruction to contact the author directly for access to the data is not considered acceptable by most research funders.

CRUK is a signatory on the Concordat on Open Research Data and as such all CRUK funded research should be made available to the academic community for academic non-commercial research purposes, ensuring compliance with any applicable ethical requirements and safeguarding the privacy of research participants.

Exemplar data availability statements:
"The [insert data type] data that support the findings reported in this paper are openly available in [insert repository name] at [insert URL], with [insert DOI/accession number/reference number]."

"The [insert data type] data that support the findings reported in this paper will be available in [insert repository name] at [insert URL], with [insert DOI/accession number/reference number], following a [insert number of months] month embargo."

"All data supporting the findings reported in this paper are provided in full in the Results section of the paper."

"All data supporting the findings reported in this paper are provided in full within the article and or supplementary material."

"This paper contains a re-analysis of existing [insert data type] data, which are available in [insert repository name] at [insert URL], with [insert DOI/accession number/reference number]."

"Due to [insert reason for not sharing data – ethical concerns, legal constraints, commercial constraints, IP] the data supporting the findings reported in this paper cannot be made openly available."

"Due to [insert reason for not sharing data – ethical concerns, legal restrictions, commercial restrictions, IP] the data supporting the findings reported in this paper cannot be made openly available. Further information about the data and conditions for access are available from [insert repository name/by contacting X] repository at [insert DOI]."

Use similar statements for code and software.

If journals do not ask for a data availability statement, then add the statement to the acknowledgements section of the paper.

11. Funding and branding
Cancer Research UK must be acknowledged on all publications arising from Cancer Research UK funded work or by Cancer Research UK funded researchers using the following exemplar formats.

Exemplar statements
"This work was supported by Cancer Research UK core funding awarded to the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute (grant number A31287)".

“We would like to thank the Core Services and Advanced Technologies at the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute (grant number A31287), with particular thanks to [delete as appropriate: BAIR - Beatson Advanced Imaging Resource / Biological Services Unit /Histology / Molecular Technologies].” (Research Resource Identification Portal IDs can be used e.g. RRID:SCR_023875 for BAIR). “

“This work was supported by Cancer Research UK core funding awarded to the Cancer Research UK Scotland Centre (grant number CTRQQR-2021\100006).”

“This work was supported by Cancer Research UK core programme funding awarded to (insert GL name or initials) (grant number X).”

“(insert name or initials) was supported by Cancer Research UK core programme funding awarded to (insert GL name or initials) (grant number XX).”

Financial support from all other funding bodies for the research must also be acknowledged.

Sources of financial support must be provided for every author of a manuscript, with the respective funding bodies and grant numbers indicated alongside each author’s initials.

Grant numbers can be obtained from Researchfish, grant portals, or the CRUK Scotland Institute’s Head of Research Integrity and Funding Co-ordinator.

12. CRUK Scotland Institute’s Policy on Open Access Publishing

13. Authorship disputes

As a first step researchers should discuss any concerns over authorship with the corresponding author. The Head of Research Integrity can advise researchers, or the UKRIO Authorship Dispute Procedure can be consulted to facilitate this conversation.

If an authorship query is not resolved by informal discussion with the corresponding author and develops into a dispute, then the Head of Research Integrity will mediate to resolve the dispute or assess whether inappropriate practice has occurred.

14. Acknowledging contributions

The Acknowledgement section of a paper enables credit and thanks for all contributions to the research project and the paper. The CRediT taxonomy[6] can be used to define contribution types. Examples of contributorship that do not warrant authorship include, but are not limited to

- Individual
Intellectual support, guidance, discussion, feedback or advice
Technical support
Project specific troubleshooting
Statistical advisers
General supervision of a research group
Collaborators
Students who have undertaken some sessional work
Study participants

Patients
Patient advocates
Writing, editing and/or proof-reading the manuscript, without substantial intellectual contribution
Critical review of the research and/or the manuscript
Data stewards
Provision of a service
Provision of equipment
Provision of published samples, reagents and datasets
PPL licence holder

- Organisation
CRUK SI Advanced Technologies
CRUK SI Services
CRUK SI Facilities

- Tools
Generative AI

The ICMJE[2] recommends obtaining written permission from all individuals that are acknowledged, as it might imply endorsement.

Exemplar statements
"The authors [*gratefully acknowledge / thank*] the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute's [*insert Advanced Technology / Facility /Service name*] for [*their support and assistance / describe their contribution*] in this work."

"The authors [*gratefully acknowledge / thank*] [*insert person's name*] for [*their support and assistance / describe their contribution*] in this work."

"The manuscript was critically reviewed by Catherine Winchester (CRUK Scotland Institute)."

"The authors thank the Core Services and Advanced Technologies at the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute (grant number A31287), with particular thanks to [*insert Advanced Technology / Facility /Service name*] for [*their support and assistance / describe their contribution*] in this work."

RRIDs (persistent and unique identifiers) can also be used to reference the Institute, a core facility, service or technology (Table 1).

Name	**RRID**
Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute	RRID:SCR_027384 and ROR 03pv69j64
Beatson Advanced Imaging Resource (BAIR)	RRID:SCR_023875
Biological Services Unit	
Computational Biology	
Deep Phenotyping	RRID:SCR_027366
Flow Cytometry	RRID:SCR_028243
Histology	
IT	

Laboratory Support & Services	
Mass Spectrometry	RRID: SCR_027652
Molecular Technology	RRID:SCR_027368
Research Integrity	RRID:SCR_028431
Scientific Computing	
Transgenic Technology	
Transgenic Models	
Translational Molecular Imaging	

Table 1: CRUK Scotland Institute's Advanced Technologies and Core Services RRIDs

Document Control Box	
Policy title:	CRUK Scotland Institute Policy on Authorship and Acknowledging Contributions
Approving Body:	CRUK SI SMT (January 2026)
Version	V1
Supersedes:	N/A
Date of next review	August 2028
Policy Owner:	Research Integrity Service
Lead Contact:	Head of the Research Integrity Service