

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Authorship of Research and Technical Reports and Publications

Number: 152.2-ARS

Date: May 12, 1997

Originating Office: Office of the Administrator, ARS

This Replaces: ARS 152.2 dated 11/9/90

Distribution: ARS Headquarters, Areas, and Locations

This P&P provides guidelines for authorship of scientific and technical publications.

Table Of Contents

1.	Guidelines on Authorship	3
2.	Acknowledgment of Contributions	3
3.	Approval of Authorship	4
4.	Reference	4
5.	Summary of Responsibilities	4
	Principal Investigators and Coinvestigators	4
	Area Directors (or Delegates)	5

1. Guidelines on Authorship

The question of who should be an author is fundamentally an issue of scientific ethics. Each author must have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content of the article. This participation must include:

- conception or design, or analysis and interpretation of data, or both; and,
- drafting the article or revising it for critically important intellectual content; and,
- final approval of the version to be published.

All elements of an article critical to the main conclusions must be attributable to at least one author. The order of names on a multi-authored article will be decided by the group responsible for the research.

Participation solely in the collection or summarization of data does not justify authorship.

The issue of “credit” for performance evaluation or the Research Position Evaluation System (RPES) relates to actual role rather than order of names, and is a separate issue beyond the scope of this P&P.

All individuals to be listed as authors, regardless of the classification of their positions, or other affiliation, must meet these authorship guidelines.

2. Acknowledgment of Contributions

Persons who have contributed intellectually to the paper and whose contributions do not justify authorship may be named and their contribution described—for example, “advice,” “critical review of study proposal,” “data collection.” Such persons must give their permission to be named.

At an appropriate place in the article one or more statements should specify:

- contributions that need acknowledgment but do not justify authorship;
- acknowledgments of technical help (required in a separate paragraph); and,
- acknowledgments of financial and material support.

3. Approval of Authorship

Authority to approve authorship by employees who do not occupy research or service scientist positions (Categories 1, 2 and 4) resides with the Area Director. The Area Director may delegate this authority to lower management levels (Institute Director, Center Director, Laboratory Director, or Research Leader). **Note:** Hereafter, “Area Director” also includes lower management levels when delegation has occurred.

- The Area Director may require authors to justify the assignment of authorship, by explaining how each individual participated in the activities described by the guidelines for authorship.
- When approval of authorship by the Area Director is required, such approval will be sought as soon as the need for approval becomes evident, but prior to production of the first draft of the manuscript.
- Any person who, in the judgment of the Area Director, meets the guidelines for authorship, and who wishes to be listed as an author, cannot ethically be denied authorship.

4. Reference

Guidelines on Authorship, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (Brit. Med. J. 291:722, 1985)

5. Summary of Responsibilities

Principal Investigators and Coinvestigators

- Determine when an individual has made contributions meeting the authorship guidelines.
- Request Area Director approval of authorship when required by Section 3, and provide justification upon demand.

Area Directors (or Delegates)

- Determine when authorship is warranted, and grant or deny approval as appropriate.

EDWARD B. KNIPLING
Acting Administrator
Agricultural Research Service