

# ARS □ ERS □ NASS □ NIFA

## *Policies and Procedures*

**Title:** Authorship of Research and Technical Reports and Publications

**Number:** 152.2-ARS

**Date:** May 5, 2011

**Originating Office:** Office of the Administrator, ARS

**This Replaces:** 152.2-ARS dated 5/12/1997

**Distribution:** ARS Headquarters, Areas, and Locations

This Policy and Procedure describes the criteria to be used for consideration of authorship of research publications.

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### **1. Purpose**

Publication of research reports is often the end product of many research activities and is the foundation of scientific inquiry. The purpose of the P&P is to provide guidance for who should be considered as an author on publications that involve ARS employees.

## **2. Background**

Authority to approve authorship resides with the Research Leader.

The Research Leader may require authors to justify the assignment of authorship, by explaining how each individual participated in the activities described by the guidelines for authorship.

Any person who, in the judgment of the Research Leader, meets the guidelines for authorship, and who wishes to be listed as an author, cannot ethically be denied authorship.

## **3. Policy**

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:

- execution and conception or design; or analysis and interpretation; 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.

Persons who have contributed 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 (if allowed by the policy of the publication):

- 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.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **Principal Investigators and Coinvestigators**

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

### **Research Leaders**

- Determine when authorship is warranted, and grant or deny approval as appropriate.
- Forward disputes over proposed authorship which cannot be locally resolved to the Area Director for resolution.

### **Area Directors**

- Resolve authorship proposal disputes referred from unit level.

## **5. Authorities**

Not applicable

## **6. Definitions**

none

## **7. Glossary**

Not applicable

## **Exhibits**

none

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EDWARD B. KNIPLING  
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Date