

University of Puerto Rico Comprehensive Cancer Center (UPR-CCC) Authorship Policy

A. PURPOSE

Determining authorship is an essential component of upholding the integrity of the research at the UPR – CCC and serves as a straightforward way of assigning responsibility and giving credit for intellectual work. Authorship credit should be given to those who contribute substantively to scholarly and scientific work and should honestly and accurately reflect actual contributions. Fair and equitable determination of authorship is essential to the reputation, academic promotion, and funding support of the individuals involved and the institution's strength and stature. Many institutions and peer-review journals have established standards for authorship that have consistent vital principles. These standards are similar on fundamental issues but are changing over time, mainly considering the growing proportion of research done by teams whose members have highly specialized roles. Experience with best practices demonstrates that being transparent and communicating these critical principles at the beginning of projects helps to promote constructive, conflict-free collaborations.

B. LEGAL BASIS

The UPR-CCC was enabled by Act, Act No. 230 of August 26, 2004. This act states that the institution is the government entity principally responsible for implementing public policy regarding the prevention, orientation, research, and provision of clinical services and treatment related to cancer. Institutional Research often results in a series of intellectual work that might be subject to authorship. The criteria used under this policy to determine who qualifies for authorship are based on the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals,” developed by ICMJE¹ and last updated in December 2021. As the ICMJE updates the “Uniform Requirements,” these criteria will be evaluated and updated appropriately for UPR-CCC needs.

C. SCOPE

This policy intends to include all scientific manuscripts, presentations, books, and other intellectual products, developed at the UPR-CCC, whether published or prepared for internal use or broad dissemination.

D. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all faculty, students, postdoctoral researchers, and staff of the UPR-CCC. In addition, these principles apply to all intellectual products, whether published or prepared for internal use or broad dissemination.

¹ International Committee of Medical Journal Editor (ICMJE) - <https://www.icmje.org>.

E. DEFINITIONS

Authorship - is a straightforward way of assigning responsibility and giving credit for intellectual work.

Acknowledgment – It is to thank all the people who helped with the research but did not qualify for authorship.

Co-author – any person who has made a significant contribution to the research. They also share responsibility and accountability for the results.

Corresponding Author – This person should have made a substantial contribution to the publication. It will handle all correspondence about the publication and sign the publishing agreement on behalf of all the authors.

F. Responsibilities

- I. Corresponding Author – According to the ICMJE and adopted by this policy, the corresponding author has the following responsibilities:
 1. Is the one individual who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal, publishing, editorial, conference, or other related during the manuscript submission, peer-review, and publication process.
 2. Ensures that all the administrative requirements, such as authorship details, ethics committee approval, clinical trial registration documentation, and disclosures of relationships and activities, are appropriately completed and reported. However, these duties may be delegated to one or more co-authors.
 3. Should be available throughout the submission and peer-review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely way, and should be available after publication to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information should questions about the paper arise after publication.
- II. Co-Authors – The co-authors will share the following responsibilities under this policy.
 1. Have made a significant contribution to the manuscript. That could be in the conception, study, design, execution, acquisition of data, analysis, and interpretation, or in all these areas.
 2. Have drafted or written, substantially revised, or critically reviewed the manuscript.
 3. Have agreed on the journal or publishing editorial, conference, or other related to which the manuscript will be submitted.
 4. Reviewed and agreed on all versions of the manuscript before submission, during revision, the final version accepted for publication, and any significant changes introduced at the proofing stage.
 5. Agree to take responsibility and be accountable for the contents of the manuscript.
 6. Share the responsibility to resolve any questions raised about the accuracy or integrity of the published work.

G. Policy

I. Criteria to be considered an author:

To be considered an author of any intellectual property covered by this policy resulting from any research conducted at UPR-CCC or in collaboration with others, all of the following criteria should be met:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

II. Criteria to be acknowledged:

Individuals who do not meet the requirements for authorship but who have provided a valuable contribution to the work should be acknowledged for their contributing role as appropriate to the publication. For example, provision of routine technical services or a useful reagent, referral of patients or participants for a study, assistance with data collection and management, or review of a completed manuscript for suggestions are activities unlikely to meet the criteria for authorship. Although not qualifying as co-authors, individuals who assist with the research effort in these ways may warrant appropriate acknowledgment in the completed paper or presentation.

A more specific heading may be used for those purposes, such as “members of the response team” or “participating investigators,” and the functions or contributions described—for example, “collected data” or “provided and cared for study patients.” All persons acknowledged must give written permission to the corresponding author because a reader may infer their endorsement of the data and conclusions. Financial and material support should be acknowledged according to the Financial Conflict of Interest Policy of the UPR-CCC.

H. PROCEDURES

I. Identifying the order of the authors:

There are many ways of determining the order of authorship across disciplines, research groups, and countries. Examples of authorship policies include descending order of contribution, placing the person who took the lead in writing the manuscript or doing the research first and the most experienced contributor last, in alphabetical or random order. While the significance of a particular order may be understood in a given setting, the order of authorship has no generally agreed-upon meaning. As a result, it is not possible to interpret from the order of authorship the respective contributions of individual authors.

The UPR-CCC has adopted the following procedures to identify authorship.

1. The authors should decide the order of authorship together.
2. Authors should specify in their manuscript a description of the contributions of each author and how they have assigned the order in which they are listed so that readers can interpret their roles correctly.
3. The corresponding author should prepare a concise, written description of how the order of authorship was decided.

II. Resolving Conflicts:

Disagreements sometimes arise regarding who should be named as an author of or contributor to intellectual work and the order in which individuals should be listed. Some of these disputes are a result of failed communication and expectation setting. These Guidelines are meant to serve as standards to resolve a conflict over who should be considered an author. The UPR-CCC recommends adherence to the following procedures when a dispute arises unless disagreements result from alleged fabrication or data falsification, or plagiarism. Therefore, it will be subject to the institution's Policy for the Management of Research Misconduct.

1. Resolution of disputes among collaborators through open and collegial discourse and mutual agreement is strongly encouraged. Any prior decisions or discussions among authors, including verbal or written agreements between co-authors, should be reviewed and considered to facilitate this process. As appropriate, these Guidelines and any documented customary practices in the relevant discipline should be applied. Extending an invitation to a mutually agreed-upon party outside the group familiar with publication norms in the field to informally serve as a neutral facilitator may ensure that all viewpoints are weighed, considered, and objectively applied. It is expected that most disputes will be resolved collegially among collaborators.
2. If the disagreement cannot be resolved among collaborators, the input should be sought from a neutral third party, such as the Directors of the division of the Principals Investigators at the UPR- CCC.
 - a. Division-level resolution. The collaborators should engage the Director of the Division or their designee to facilitate a resolution of the dispute acceptable to all parties. This assumes that the Director is not a direct party to the dispute and does not otherwise have a conflict of interest. If multiple divisions are involved in the dispute or the Directors division has a conflict, the parties may opt to engage the Director of Research and Educational Support of the UPR-CCC.
 - b. If the dispute involves doctoral research by a student, the student should refer the matter to the chair of their dissertation committee. If the dissertation committee chair has a conflict (i.e., is a co-author of the work a referral should be made to the Director of Research and Educational Support of the UPR-CCC to facilitate resolution.

3. Resolution at the Executives Directors level. If the steps outlined above are not able to yield a timely resolution, the UPR-CCC Executive Director may work to negotiate a resolution of the dispute acceptable to the parties. This resolution should be final and agreed upon by all the involved parties.

This policy is recommended by the Division of Research and Education Support on:

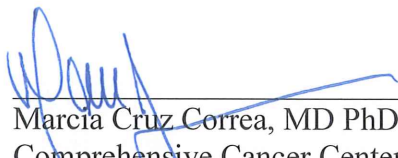


Elba V. Caraballo Rivera, PhD MS
Division of Research & Education Support
Director

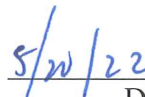


Date

This policy is approved by the Institution's Executive Director on:



Marcia Cruz Correa, MD PhD AGAF FASGE
Comprehensive Cancer Center
Executive Director



Date