



Authorship Guidelines October 2011

Maintaining scientific credibility depends on complete and correct authorship, as well as accuracy in reporting the research results. In order to support a culture of integrity and trust, investigators should not take credit for the published or unpublished works of others or refer to such work without attribution and/or permission.

The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's (MSKCC) Authorship Guidelines provide minimum requirements for Authorship and Acknowledgements. Many of these suggested guidelines have been developed based on those established by the **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**. Their policy entitled "**Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals**" can be found in its entirety at: <http://www.icmje.org/>. MSKCC recognizes that many journals may have additional requirements. An author must comply with any additional authorship requirements of the journal to which a manuscript has been submitted.

Criteria for Authorship:

The criteria for authorship are that an author must have made a significant or substantial intellectual or technical contribution to the research and must have made an effort to understand and critique the contributions of all the other authors. All authors are responsible for recognizing and disclosing to the other authors any financial or other conflicts of interest that might bias their work.

At a minimum, each author must have:

- Made a substantial contribution to the conception, execution, or interpretation of the research.
- Agreed to take responsibility for the content of the manuscript.
- Read and agreed to the manuscript before publication.
- Agreed to be named as an author.

Two critical safeguards in the publication of accurate scientific reports are the active participation of each author in the research and his/her verification of that part which is his/her individual contribution. However, all authors must assume responsibility for the validity of all the evidence presented in the research paper and will be held accountable by the scientific community and the public.

Ghost and Honorary Authorship:

"Ghost-writing" is a practice whereby a commercial entity writes an article or manuscript and a researcher, clinician or otherwise recognized expert in a particular field of study is named as an author. MSKCC staff members may not participate in publications or presentations that are controlled by industry or that contain substantial portions written by someone who is not identified as an author or who is not properly acknowledged (i.e., that are ghost-written). This includes papers or presentations featuring data that were simply presented to the named author (without the opportunity for that person to analyze directly, perform calculations, review and/or question the data). Making minor revisions to an article, manuscript or presentation that is ghost-written does not justify authorship.

Honorary or courtesy authorships, where the named author did not make a contribution consistent with the criteria for authorship listed above, are contrary to the principles of this guidance and, as such, are also prohibited.

Considerations for Order of Authors:

- The sequence of author listing should be determined by the relative contributions to the work. In the instance that equal credit is due, this should be footnoted and authors should be listed alphabetically.
- Ideally, decisions about authors and the order in which their names appear should be discussed as early as possible, even before any work begins, and should be part of an ongoing dialogue that is revisited throughout the length of the project under the guidance of the Principal Investigator.

Acknowledgments vs. Authorship: Many elements essential for a publication should be credited, but do not warrant authorship. People who provide facilities or resources, for instance, may be credited in the Acknowledgments section. Authors have the ethical responsibility to acknowledge all of those who made the research and manuscript possible. Because agreement with the contents of a manuscript might be inferred, it is good practice, to obtain the permission of anyone who is acknowledged in the manuscript.

Questions Concerning Authorship:

If disputes or questions concerning authorship have not been successfully resolved among the members of a collaboration, concerned individuals may seek help in resolving the issues from the following administrative officials, in this order: a) the department chair, division head, service chief, program chair or similar first line of academic management, b) the Director of Sloan-Kettering Institute for those with primary SKI appointments or the Physician-in-Chief for those with Memorial Hospital primary appointments. However, if these matters involve allegations or evidence of research misconduct, they must immediately be brought to the attention of the Research Integrity Officer per the [Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#).