Authorship Guidelines
for AAMC Group on Faculty Affairs
Committee Publications

I. Background

One of the purposes of the GFA is to encourage and support research by its members, including those serving on its committees. The Research Subcommittee established guidelines for research projects and publications originating from within AAMC GFA committees (Steering, Research, Nominating, and Program Committees). These guidelines are intended to acknowledge those primarily responsible for authoring a document as well as to acknowledge the entire GFA Steering Committee and Subcommittee(s) as appropriate.

Issues to be considered by the policy include:

1. General principles of authorship and group authorship
2. The process for authorship of individuals (both from and outside the GFA committees)
3. The process by which individuals are selected to participate in research projects initiated by the GFA

This policy is based on published criteria as described below (Section III). Further, since publications resulting from GFA committee projects are likely to be submitted to “Academic Medicine,” this journal’s Policy for Authors is given primary importance (http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Pages/InstructionsforAuthors.aspx).

II. GFA Policy for Authorship

a. Group Authorship: The group (in this case the initiating committee) should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the working on the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship defined by the ICMJE (see section III.b. below) and should complete journal-specific author and conflict of interest disclosure forms.

When a GFA initiated study is proposed, the role of all individuals will be discussed at initiation of the study. Authors and order of authorship should be a joint decision of the coauthors and should be explicitly stated. If the list of potential authors appears too long and cumbersome, the participants should discuss who should participate as an individual in any given project, and attempt to distribute potential projects in a fair and equitable manner. When consensus cannot be reached the matter will be brought to the
attention of the Steering Committee. Inclusion as an individual author in the proposed project should take into consideration criteria such as expertise on the topic, specific skills that make the project possible, etc. If a GFA committee member brings his/her own idea or a project to the committee, he/she will be presumed to be the lead author on the publication that results from the project, unless agreed otherwise.

When submitting a group-author manuscript, the corresponding author should clearly indicate the preferred citation and should clearly identify all individual authors as well as the group name.

All GFA publications will acknowledge the GFA Steering Committee, the relevant Subcommittee and the AAMC as its parent organization with a standard acknowledgement that recognizes the contributions of the committee as a whole. For example, the list of authors will be followed by: “for the Group on Faculty Affairs Steering Committee.”

When other (non-GFA) groups or individuals are involved in the study, the principles of authorship should be respected. The role of all groups and individuals should be discussed prior to starting the study. Authors and order of authorship should be established prior to proceeding with the collaborative effort.

b. Contributors listed in acknowledgements: All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an “acknowledgements” section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include individuals who allowed their experience (cases) to be included and a person who provided purely technical help, writing experience.

III. Published Information Used To Develop This Policy

a. Authorship in Academic Medicine


- Authorship is based on (1) substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content, and (3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors must meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.
- When a large, multi-center group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship/contributorship defined above. When submitting group author manuscript, the corresponding author should clearly indicate the preferred citation and should clearly identify all individual authors as well as the group name.
- Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, alone, does not justify authorship.
• All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.
• Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.
• All contributors who do not meet these criteria for authorship should be listed in the acknowledgements section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help or writing assistance, or a department chair that provided only general support.

b. Authorship statements in peer-reviewed journals – summary
Several major peer-reviewed medical journals have published statements to regulate appropriate authorship, and assure that all authors on a paper have in fact contributed to its preparation. Most journals now require a statement of checklist stating the role of each author.

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) encourages editors to develop and implement policies that clearly define authorship based on the individual contributions. The ICMJE defines authorship as:

1. Substantial contribution to the conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
2. Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
3. Final approval of the version to be published.

Authors should meet all 3 conditions. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. Title of academic role alone (ex: Chair of the Department) does not justify authorship, if the above criteria are not met.

The ICMJE further recommends that all others who contributed to the work be named in the Acknowledgement with a description of what they did. Editors consider it an ethical violation to list authors who have not made a significant contribution and some journals have penalties if discovered.

A compilation of criteria from the published literature shows that contributions that meet the ICMJE criteria may be coded into 11 categories:
1. Conception and design of the study
2. Analysis and interpretation of data,
3. Collection or assembly of data,
4. Statistical expertise
5. Provision of study material or patients
6. Drafting of the article or part of the article
7. Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content
8. Obtaining funding;
9. Administrative, technical, or logistic support;
10. Guarantor of the study; and
11. Study supervision or coordination.
Honorary author was defined as a person named in the article as an author whose published contributions did not meet both the first and second ICMJE criteria for authorship.

c. Group Authorship
JAMA (JAMA Instructions for Authors JAMA. 2005; 294(1):119-127) specifically addresses this issue: “If authorship is attributed to a group (either solely or in addition to 1 or more individual authors), all members of the group must meet the full criteria and requirements for authorship as described above. A group must designate 1 or more individuals as authors or members of a writing group who meet full authorship criteria and requirements. Other group members who are not authors may be listed in an Acknowledgement.”

The group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship defined above and should complete journal specific author and conflict of interest disclosure forms. When submitting a group-author manuscript, the corresponding author should clearly indicate the preferred citation and should clearly identify all individual authors as well as the group name.

IV. References:

1. Academic Medicine Policy for Authors (http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Pages/InstructionsforAuthors.aspx).
10. Ana M. Carcia: Sixth version of the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals"; lots of ethics, some new recommendations for manuscript preparation. J Epidemiol Community Health 2004;58:731 – 733.


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