

User Guide: Authorship and CRediT

**Aim of this guide**: this guide was created by the [Research Governance and Integrity Team](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/ris/researchintegrity/about/contacts/) in Research Services to raise awareness of the university’s current guidelines around authorship and CRediT, and to provide advice on adopting these requirements. We acknowledge that there are differences in approaches by publishers and institutions and we provide some pointers on this too. This is still a developing area, and we will be updating this document as new guidance emerges.

**Version and format**

* Draft v1.3
* Please select ‘View’ and ‘Navigation’ for quick access to all sections.

**Useful links**

* [UofG Code of Good Practice in Research website](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/codeofgoodpracticeinresearch/)
* [CRediT contributor roles](https://credit.niso.org/)
* [Tenzing app for tracking CRediT roles](https://rollercoaster.shinyapps.io/tenzing/)

# **UofG Authorship and CRediT guidelines**

The following points are from the current version of the university’s [Code of Good Practice in Research](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/codeofgoodpracticeinresearch/) on authorship and CRediT (section 8):

* **Everyone that made a substantial contribution to the work should be listed on the paper with their agreement**
* **The university expects that authors on publications will meet the following criteria:** 
  + Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
  + Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
  + Final approval of the version to be published; AND
  + 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
* **Non-authors should be formally acknowledged on the paper**
* **The university requires a CRediT contribution statement in publications where possible.**

As a general rule, everyone who made a significant contribution to the research should have the chance to be an author on a paper; and any contributors who don't meet the authorship criteria should be listed in the acknowledgements, with their permission.

It is vital that those who carried out the work get recognition for their contribution on publications. This includes technical and other core staff - the [University of Southampton has a useful guide](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~assets/doc/technicians/UoS_Techs_Pubs_Fair_Attribution_Guidance.pdf?) that makes a clear distinction between technical staff contributions for authorship /acknowledgements, along with specific examples. The [University of Nottingham](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/technicians/fair-attribution.aspx) applies this definition to cover a range of roles: 'Technical roles that contribute to research may include, but not limited to, data scientists, data engineers, archivists, informaticians, statisticians, software developers, audio-visual technologists, technical professional staff and individuals staffing core facilities, across all disciplines’.

# **What is CRediT?**

CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) is a universal standard for allocating contributor roles that has been adopted by [many academic publishers](https://credit.niso.org/adopters/) so far. There are [14 roles that cover contributions to research](https://credit.niso.org/) - authors will typically have multiple roles while others may have one CRediT role attributed, depending on the work involved.

It is important to distinguish the ‘authors’ on a paper from the ‘contributors’ (= everyone who made a significant contribution to the research; authors can be drawn from this group and evidenced). A ‘CRediT statement’ is a list of contributors and their roles, and how this is displayed on an article can vary depending on the publisher as shown below.

**Examples of contributor statements in journal articles:**

* [A Civil Engineering article](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2023.102261) - the CRediT authorship contribution statement is at the end
* [An example from History](https://doi.org/10.3390/h11050109) - Author Contributions noted at the end
* [Wellcome Open Research platform](https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/articles/7-134/v2) - Roles are listed on the Authors tab

# **Benefits of using CRediT**

* Encourages fairness in attribution through transparency of contributions
* Aligns with good research practice already taking place and meets UofG Code of Good Practice guidelines
* Helps in decision-making e.g. around authorship decisions
* Can help to avoid authorship disputes
* Potential use in a future REF? The UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI) recommends that a contributor statement is mandatory in a future REF ([UK CORI annual statement, 2023](https://ukcori.org/our-work/annual-statement-2023/))

# **How does this work in practice?**

We recommend that research groups:

* Have discussions early in the project about contributor roles
* Record CRediT roles for everyone involved and review during the project – the [Tenzing contributor list generator](https://rollercoaster.shinyapps.io/tenzing/) can help
* Keep a record of who carried out the work
* Get agreement from all and document decisions. This is especially important where journal or authorship criteria might not align with the UofG guidelines in the Code of Good Practice in Research.
* The contributor statement is added during submission. Publishers can vary; if no option in the journal, you can add own contributor statement to the publication or [the Enlighten repository can record CRediT statements](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/openresearch/openaccess/beforesubmission/) if there is no other suitable place provided by the publisher.
* Keep contact details for anyone moving on before publication: if a member of the research group leaves UofG, keep the channels of communication open about any papers in progress to ensure individuals have the opportunity to contribute. Everyone who has made a substantial contribution to the work should be given the opportunity to draft and review a paper.

# **Challenges and discussion points**

**Using CRediT statements in publications:** the [CRediT website](https://credit.niso.org/) states that “All contributions should be listed, whether from those listed as authors or individuals named in acknowledgements”. In terms of producing best practice guidelines to support this, the [CRediT Steering Group in a preprint from 2023](https://osf.io/preprints/metaarxiv/n6249/) recognises that “there is a pressing need to develop guidance on how to use CRediT" as “...currently there is no comprehensive and authoritative set of user instructions for CRediT”. We hope to contribute to this discussion, with members of the Research Governance & Integrity Team at UofG signed up to the **CRediT community working group**.

This challenge is in part due to the differences in how publishers are adopting CRediT. Some publishers refer to the ‘author’ contribution statement in the journal submission process e.g. [Elsevier,](https://www.elsevier.com/authors/policies-and-guidelines/credit-author-statement) while [The BMJ](https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/article-submission/authorship-contributorship) approach is to include non-authors: "we publish a list of authors' names at the beginning of the paper and, secondly, we list contributors (some of whom may not be included as authors) at the end of the paper, giving details of who did what in planning, conducting, and reporting the work.”

Where the publisher only allows the authors to be added to an author contribution statement, the [University of Oxford](https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/publication) guidance could come in useful: “Any individual who contributed to the research, but whose input was not sufficient for them to be listed as an author should be recognised in the acknowledgements of the publication, where they can be credited as a contributor rather than an author.” This approach would allow the contributor roles and format to be retained for non-authors.

**CRediT and subject areas:** Are the CRediT roles more suitable for science disciplines? [This Scholarly Kitchen article](https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2022/05/24/next-steps-for-credit-an-interview-with-the-co-chairs/) discusses the subject scope of the taxonomy and ongoing work with the CRediT Co-Chairs.

**Large scale collaborations**: authorship can be especially complex in big team science where hyper authorship exists. We’d love to hear from researchers who are involved in these collaborations, to learn about examples of good (and bad!) practice at [research-integrity@gla.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@gla.ac.uk).

# **Help and support**

Please get in touch with us at [research-integrity@gla.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@gla.ac.uk) with any questions or comments about the above information – we appreciate that this is a big topic, and there can be discipline differences as well as variations in publisher practice and in guidance from institutions! This is a living document and we encourage researchers to let us know about examples of good practice in authorship/ contributorship.

Author disputes are unfortunately common, and a reminder that guest authorship, gift authorship and denial of authorship are all forms of research misconduct (see the [UofG Research Misconduct Policy, section 4](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/researchmisconductpolicy/#2.definitionofmisconductinresearch,4.whatisresearchmisconduct)). If you are experiencing authorship issues, confidential support is available via contacts within Schools or from the central team:

* School Research Integrity Advisers   
  <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/ris/researchintegrity/advisers/>
* Research Integrity Central Team  
  [research-integrity@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@glasgow.ac.uk)

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