The **PIRL** Project

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Partnerships for Inclusive Research and Learning

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Policy and Guidelines for Authors

These policies and guidelines are for use in the PIRL Project.

They were developed after consultation, revisions and in-puts from the PIRL Project Steering Committee and the PIRL partners[1]. Please also read the *PIRL Project Intellectual Property Rights* document.

Purpose of the PIRL Policy and Guidelines for Authors

The PIRL Project has developed this policy statement and the related guidelines to reflect best practice and ethical standards in the conduct and reporting of research and other material published from the PIRL Project.

We want to be clear on how authorship is determined, and whose name goes on materials developed from the project.

We also want to help authors, researchers, editors, and others involved in writing and peer review to understand what is expected of authors, especially when writing grant applications, or for peer-reviewed journal articles, conference presentations, and other resources that are developed by members of the PIRL team.

Who is expected to follow the Policy and Guidelines?

This policy applies to all PIRL Project members who are writing about the project in any substantial way and for all types of grants and media – journal articles, conference presentations, blogs, newsletters, magazines and newspapers, videos. The authorship guidelines are especially relevant with respect to grant applications, journal articles and conference presentations.

The policy does not apply to all writing that you might do related to PIRL, and professional judgement should be used in considering when to apply them. For example, it does not apply to short Facebook posts or comments on other people's blogs.

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[1] The policies and guidelines included in this document are based on the Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf, and are an adaptation of the GRID Network Policy Guidelines for Authors (2016).

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In all cases where authorship is noted in a document, authors should use this policy and guidelines from the time they decide to write something about the project.

Why does all this discussion about authorship matter?

"Authorship confers credit and has important academic, social, and financial implications. Authorship also implies responsibility and accountability for published work." (From the ICMJE Guidelines, p. 2)

Papers and grant applications promote new ideas and knowledge, and authors put a lot of time and effort into their writing and creation of works. Therefore, they should be given the credit they deserve for this work.

Being an author on a paper contributes to one's professional career, can help with obtaining grants or other funding, and may be a requirement for maintaining a position in some settings.

Conversely, it is also important to understand that someone who has not done the required work should not receive credit for it. For example, a superior person in an organization will not automatically be listed as an author for someone they supervise; if the higher person has not contributed to the work directly, they can still be formally *acknowledged* for their support.

Who is an Author? PIRL Policy and Guidelines

This section is about being included as an author on publications related to PIRL Project and partnerships.

PIRL Policy: Authors submitting work about the PIRL Project Network should meet all four of the following authorship criteria (established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors).

All authors must:

1. have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data/information for the work;

2. drafted the work or revised it critically for important intellectual content;

3. provided final approval of the version to be published;

AND

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4. agreed 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.

Those who have contributed to the manuscript but who do not meet all of the authorship criteria should not be listed as authors, rather they should be listed in the paper's Acknowledgements section, and the authors should seek their permission to do so. A person should be acknowledged by name without their clear permission.

PIRL Guidelines

1. **Number of authors:** Ideally, there should be an upper limit of six authors per manuscript to keep the work manageable. However, there are times when larger numbers of authors are possible and should be given credit.
2. **Authorship order and inclusion/exclusion**: Decisions on authorship and the order of authorship are the responsibility of the authors and should be resolved prior to manuscript submission, ideally as soon as the writing project begins.
3. **Tracking**: The PIRL Project coordinators need to be informed about these decisions so that the team as a whole can be aware of papers resulting from the project.
4. **Author Contributions:** A short statement outlining each author's contribution is often requested to be submitted with each manuscript. PIRL requests that this be done for all PIRL related documents.The editor of a journal may choose not to include this statement in the publication but it will be kepton file with the PIRL Project.
5. **One corresponding author is named when articles are submitted for peer review**. The Corresponding Author takes sole responsibility for all communications with the editor or contact person of the journal, newspaper, magazine, website, as the case may be. This responsibility includes managing communications between all of the authors, The PIRL Steering Committee, and ensuring the accuracy of all content provided to the journal, newspaper, such as article proofs, journal forms, submitting the authorship statement and each author's bio are correct.
6. **Changes to authors list or author order.** Requests to remove or add authors after manuscript submission or publication must be accompanied by signed agreement from all authors, and notification should be provided to the PIRL Coordinators.

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7. **Style and Tone:** The writing should be well written with no spelling or grammatical errors, and this work should be done by the writing team. It should follow the journal, magazine, or newspaper guidelines. The article should be written in the clearest way possible, using simple and accessible language. Do use disability friendly words. Avoid insulting language. If you are not familiar with best practices in language, please consult with others. In addition, writing should be done in the most professional way possible even if it is a critique of someone else's work. (Please do not expect that the PIRL students or coordinators will be involved without explicit requests; they will be able to assist if time is available).

Who are Non-Author Contributors?

People who do not meet the criteria for authors should not be considered authors. These people can be acknowledged for what they have done. They must give their permission to be acknowledged, because it means that their name will be on the document and they will be associated with the information.

Example 1:

We are very grateful to Suh for his contributions as a research assistant who helped with data collection.

Example 2:

This work has been shaped by the many discussions in the sub group XX including [list of names]. We are extremely grateful for the many suggestions and insights we gained by being part of this group.

Here are some other examples.

Example 1 of Author Contribution statement

All authors read, edited, and approved the final paper. In addition, Mbibeh was responsible for the design of the project; the analysis of data; and the drafting and editing of the manuscript.

Kometa was responsible for collection of data, and the design, drafting and editing of the manuscript.

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Atanga was responsible for collection of data, overseeing the data analysis and reviewing and editing the manuscript.

Cameron was responsible for providing analytical advice and reviewing and editing the manuscript.

Sukhai was responsible for analysis and interpretation of the data, contributing to the design of the manuscript, and the reviewing and editing the manuscript.

Example 2 of Author Contribution Statement

Mbibeh and Berman developed the idea for this article together and both worked together to develop it as a writing project. All five authors contributed to the design of the article; to the collection and analysis of information; and to the drafting, reviewing, and editing of the manuscript.

Examples of conflict about authorship

Consider the situation where someone wants to be an author but didn't do the work to meet the criteria. How could your group handle it?

- Make it clear from the beginning of the writing project what is expected for authors.
- Recognize that some people might not have the time, energy, expertise and so on to be an author on that particular project. If warranted, you can offer them an acknowledgement.
- Talk openly about authorship as the project progresses, especially because individual involvement can change over time from what was initially expected.
- Expect to renegotiate authorship when participation changes. The lead author should take responsibility for these discussions, but anyone on the team can initiate the discussion.
- Ensure that there are general and specific discussions about authorship in your writing group.

Consider the situation when several authors feel they have made equal contributions and it is difficult to decide on author order or where people don't agree on who is the first author.

How would your group handle it?

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- Remember that often the first author has the most responsibility for ensuring that the paper is completed. They have to ensure that it is done correctly.
- Have discussions from the beginning of a writing project about authorship and how this PIRL policy applies. Keep talking until there is agreement.
- If there are two people who feel they should be first author, perhaps two papers can be written with each person being the first author on one.
- Carefully consider who has made the most contribution to the project and to the paper (they may or may not be the same thing.) Write it out and consider getting a neutral opinion (someone who is not part of the writing team).
- Arbitrarily assign author order: Use alphabetical order, reverse alphabetical order, birthday order, or some other way to fairly assign people to the author list.

Consider the case of someone writing about the work of the team without team knowledge i.e. not giving credit where credit is due. How would your group handle it?

This situation is a bit more challenging because we may not even know that it is going on.

- Have discussions from the beginning of a writing project about authorship and how this policy applies. Make sure that members understand the policy.
- Try to create a culture of talking about what projects people are working on.
- Pay attention to what your colleagues are publishing. Set up things like "google alerts" or the Table of Contents from journals that you want to read.

Document adapted For PIRL Project by Louis Mbibeh and Lynn Cockburn

We are grateful for the reviews and feedback from the PIRL Project Steering Committee and team members in July 2019.