Cheat Sheet

Authorship Conversational Guide
WHY IT MATTERS

NCEAS

Authorship Guidelines are essential in interdisciplinary working groups to ensure fair recognition of diverse contributions, prevent conflicts, and uphold transparency and integrity. They help foster an inclusive, collaborative environment where expectations are clear from the start.

Authorship Criteria

Discuss author qualifications using these guidelines as a starting point:

- Substantial contributions to design, data, or analysis
- Drafting or reviewing the manuscript
- Approval of the final publication
- Accountability for all parts of the work

Authorship Decisions ☑

Decide:
- Will you use an opt-in or opt-out model?
- How will authors indicate they want to be included?

Author Order ① ② ③

- How will you determine the order (e.g., by contribution, alphabetical, rotating leads)?
- Will it differ by product (e.g., papers vs. data releases)?

Disputes ‼

- Determine how your group will resolve disagreements about authorship and order
- Identify a plan or mediator in advance

Review Timelines 🕐

- Set clear expectations for how long co-authors will have to review drafts
- Typical turnaround: 1–2 weeks unless otherwise agreed

Pro Tip: Have this conversation as early as possible!

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Institutional Reviews

- Determine if any group members are required to go through internal review (e.g., agency or NGO sign-off)
- Build that into your product timeline early

Acknowledgements vs. Authorship

- **Authorship** = Intellectual contributions + responsibility
- **Acknowledgment** = Valuable support (e.g., project management, figure creation, advisory roles)

Tips for Lead Authors

- Start the authorship conversation early and revisit it regularly
- Document decisions and communicate transparently
- Foster a culture where all voices — especially early-career participants— are encouraged to speak up

Helpful Resources

ICMJE Authorship Guide

ADC Authorship Template

OHI Authorship Guidelines Example

LTER Authorship Spreadsheet