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AnNex Publication Ethics Statement

Aim of this document

In our experience so far, one aspect of working collaboratively is that tacit assumptions about academic working practices need to be made explicit. This is particularly the case with interdisciplinary research.

The aim of this document is to formalise our shared working assumptions about the ethics associated with publications arising from the AnNex programme.

Each local institution (and each local School/Department/Faculty) will also have processes with which staff and postgraduate students must comply. However, the aim of this document is to function as a joint statement, which colleagues, collaborators and stakeholders may find useful. In joint discussions, we have agreed the following three principles:

1. Authorship is earned, not assumed

Whilst there are competing definitions of authorship adopted by academic bodies, international groups and journals (see COPE 2014), AnNex agrees to follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) protocol, which states that for authorship, all 4 of the following criteria need to be met:

- 'Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;

- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
- Final approval of the version to be published;
- 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.'

The team also note that adhering to these principles requires significant planning, for example in giving co-authors sufficient time to input. The team agree with the COPE Council (2014) that there is a current trend towards large numbers of authors, with whole research groups being named as the joint author. We recognise that this can present challenges for the above 4 criteria, especially for publications that may involve non-academic stakeholders. However, as with Davies *et al* (2016), mechanisms can be found to be clear about the precise type of contribution provided by each co-author in these cases.

2. Authors are listed in order of contribution

The team recognise that there are different disciplinary norms regarding the order of authors. According to COPE (2014), 'In biomedicine, the first author might be expected to be the one who did most of the work; the last author would most likely be the senior investigator. In the social sciences, there are generally very few authors, and these are generally listed alphabetically. If listed alphabetically, equal contributorship is presumed for all of the authors. If not listed alphabetically, it is usually assumed that the order of authorship indicates the level of contribution of each author'.

For the Annex project, we will adhere to the social scientific norms as described above. However, given the likelihood of publication with those from other disciplines, we also commit to being as transparent as possible on this issue. In short, we agree to spell out our assumptions to each other, and to co-authors from outside the team, during the publication process.

3. Acknowledgements will specify precise contribution

The AnNex team note that, as with authorship, there are different disciplinary norms regarding acknowledgement. For example, in the humanities, those who have generated ideas, or commented on a draft may be acknowledged. In other disciplines, this input may be regarded as authorship (COPE 2014).

We agree to abide by best practice which requires specifying precisely what contribution those listed in the acknowledgements have made. We will, of course, also acknowledge the funder our research (see Wellcome, undated). In some cases, it may be appropriate to acknowledge multiple funders, for example if an output is based on previous research but has benefited from conversations with the AnNex team, or from activities funded under the Annex programme.

Further discussion, resources and references

This document was finalised in December 2018. The AnNex team would actively welcome more discussion on this topic, including views from colleagues, and wider stakeholders. Please contact: Pru.Hobson-West@nottingham.ac.uk or AnimalResearchNexus@exeter.ac.uk

COPE (2003) *How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers.*
https://publicationethics.org/files/2003pdf12_0.pdf

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<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0158791>

UK Research and Innovation <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/research-integrity/>

Universities UK <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/Pages/research-integrity.aspx>

Wellcome Trust (undated) *How to acknowledge Wellcome's support in your research publications* <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/research-publication-acknowledgement-practice-guidance-authors>