



# Authorship Conflicts: Thesis Publication

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## Introduction

When a thesis is converted into a publication, unique authorship issues arise. Apparently, the guide as well as the principle investigator ought to be the authors. But what if a thesis is submitted without the guide among the authors or vice versa? The purpose of presenting this paper is to evoke discussion in this meeting and to lay down some guidelines beyond the current ones provided for the editors, which are region sensitive.

### Case 1

#### Thesis without the name of the guide

Three original articles from the same institute were received, which was later found to be thesis work of post graduate students. Post publication journal received a letter from the Dean of the Institute stating that those 3 publications should have included the names of the guide and head of the Department.

#### Action taken by Journal

The letter was forwarded to the corresponding author, they vehemently denied adding up the guide's name stating that the guide never helped the student during the research. The mail from the corresponding author was sent to the dean of the institute, who never replied back. And the guide of the thesis is not agreeing with the corresponding author.

Status - unresolved

### Case 2

#### Thesis without the name of the post

Against a published article, a complaint was received from a PG student stating that this was his thesis work. On reviewing the documents against this article, it was found that the first copyright had the name of the PG student but not signed, the guide being the corresponding author. We asked for a signed copyright against which a new copyright was received with 4 authors, excluding the PG's name. We moved ahead with the publication considering the signed contributor form, thus the PG did not receive the authorship.

#### Action taken by Journal

We received a scanned copy of the thesis. Complaint was forwarded to the corresponding author and he agreed to provide authorship to the deserving PG.

Status - correction in the authorship done

### Case 3

#### Guide claims data fabrication

An email from a senior faculty was received commenting vaguely on data of a published article. As we discussed the matter with corresponding author we found that the complainant was the thesis guide. He claimed further that this has been sent to malign author's reputation.

#### Action taken by Journal

the original data was asked for. The author promptly sent the thesis copy. We found that study was true but all values had been doubled. Surprisingly, the author claimed that the same guide had prompted the author that with the current number of cases the article will never be published hence you should double the numbers. Later presumably they had a fall out.

Status - Article retracted

### Case 4

#### Co-guide not among the authors

An email was received, from a professor of an esteemed medical college, against a published article, asking us to provide him authorship.

The original article had the PG's name and guide as authors.

#### Action taken by Journal

On probing it was found that the claimant was the co-guide. The reply sent from us was that such issues should be resolved among the authors and the journal is not an arbitrator. A copy was also sent to the corresponding authors.

Status - unresolved

### Case 5

#### Department faculties not among the authors in thesis

Against a published article we received a mail stating that the thesis was guided by 7 faculties of that particular department. Among them the guide and the co-guide were authors of the article, and the complainant wanted inclusion of the other 5 names in authorship.

#### Action taken by Journal

The dispute was left to the authors to be resolved. The journal however feels that such claims amount to 'authorship gifting' and no clear guidelines exist.

Status - unresolved

## Conclusion

The role of the guide in the research work as well as the manuscript preparation has to be weighed, the same being applicable for the student also. In situations of such authorship conflicts a journal becomes a part, inadvertently. These are real difficulties and couple of times we have received legal threats from the concerned authors.