AIET Lab Good Practice Guidelines in Collaborative Research

Introduction

These guidelines respond to the emergence of new forms of knowledge production, which privilege large, externally funded projects.

Section I

Key principles of research integrity

In the context of collaborative research projects and publications, every project participant should be considered as the guardian and guarantor of the integrity of the research material they produce and of its interpretation.

This has a number of implications:

- Every member of a research team must retain access to, and the right to publish as a single author from, the research materials they have co-produced (subject to collaborative arrangements they have established with their interlocutors), and they should continue to do so after the end of any given collaborative project.
- Members of a research team – including Principal Investigators (PIs) – cannot claim ownership of the research materials co-produced by others.
- Similarly, no member of a research team can use research materials without prior consent of, and consultation with, the research team members who produced them. This applies to qualitative, quantitative, experimental and visual data as well as interviews. Field - notes in particular should always remain under the guardianship of their authors and the sharing of field notes within a project should not be assumed.

Authorship/Co-authorship

Given the principles outlined above, researchers should have an automatic claim to the authorship of any publication that utilizes their research materials.

This principle has a number of implications:

- Every member of a AIET research Lab has to publish two (2) articles per year.

- Every member of a research team has the right to appear as the author of publications that draw on the research materials they have co-produced.

- This right to authorship is based not just on their contribution to the writing itself, but to the process of co-production and interpretation of the research materials.

- Such contribution gives the right of single authorship, whenever a member of the research team is entirely responsible for the writing of the piece, and to first-authorship when they are involved in co-writing it (when multiple project participants contribute their research materials and are involved in the writing, they should all appear as equal co-authors).

- When publishing as single authors, members of a research team must acknowledge the contributions of other team members to the research design and implementation, besides acknowledging the research grant that made the research possible.

- Giving assistance during research design and implementation or providing feedback on draft publications do not grant members of the research team, including the PIs, automatic right to appear as co-authors.

- For members of the research team to use and write up unpublished materials and analyses that emerge from fieldwork other than their own, they must work closely (in the conceptualization and writing of the piece) with the member of the research team whose materials and analysis they are drawing upon. As stated above, the latter has the right to authorship.

- Co-authored publications should only be based on genuine collaboration (e.g., collaboration that is mutual, ideally all the way from design to fieldwork and from analysis to writing. This means that all authors should make a substantial contribution (e.g., bring comparative research material, and/or core methodological and conceptual insights to the publication).

- The order of authors in publications must fairly represent the contribution to the production of the research materials (i.e. actual involvement in fieldwork) and their interpretation.

- Research materials should be published whenever possible in ways that fall under the aims of the project, but no members of the research team (including the PIs) have the right to control the interpretative work of others. This is crucial to guarantee the intellectual freedom of all researchers.

As noted, these guidelines are intended to apply to the current dominant publishing culture in the AIET Lab, which prizes single-authored publications.

Section II

While the preceding section has covered issues specific to collaborative projects in the AIET Lab, the next one covers issues also applicable to researchers in other disciplines/departments.

Career Development

- PIs should ensure that all members of the research team are given enough time and resources to pursue their career development. This is particularly crucial to early-career researchers who are typically in precarious employment.

- PIs and other senior members of the research team should prioritise giving support to early career researchers in producing publications, attending conferences, and engaging in other career-development activities, such as grant writing, that are appropriate to their career needs (this could mean single- or co-authored publications, depending on the discipline).

- Although PIs should provide early career researchers with ongoing mentorship, an external source of advice and recourse should also be available to them. Researchers should thus have a designated person/mentor within a relevant academic unit but independent of the project, who will act as an impartial source of career development review and advice.

Acknowledgements

References

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3. Harvard University Research Integrity Office of the Vice Provost for Research Webpage (https://vpr.harvard.edu/

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