

Universities in the Knowledge Economy



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AUTHORSHIP PROTOCOL

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UNIKE Authorship Protocol

Aim

This document sets out methods for participants in the UNIKE project to attribute and acknowledge each other's work. By following this protocol for carefully acknowledging each other's ideas and knowledge, including from informal sources like workshop discussions, the aim is to encourage idea-sharing among UNIKE's Partners and Fellows and help protect junior researchers from power differentials in research teams.

Reasons for the protocol

There are three main reasons why it is important for participants to the UNIKE project to follow an authorship protocol.

1. To facilitate collaboration.

The UNIKE project depends on Partners and Fellows engaging in many forms of dialogue and information exchange – supervisions, fellow-led discussion groups, workshops, conferences – and in many forms of publishing and dissemination, some single authored and others collectively written – blogs, wikis, working papers, conference papers, articles, and books. In these discussions and writings, participants will both be drawing on data, ideas and insights that they have accrued from previous research (what the EU calls 'background knowledge'), and venturing ideas emerging from their current research in the UNIKE project ('foreground knowledge'). Some of this 'knowledge' may already have been published, in which case attribution is straightforward. Other 'knowledge' may be ideas people are still mulling. To be able to engage confidently in discussion and the exchange of ideas in workshops and in informal settings, we need to be sure that, if a participant uses or builds on another's ideas, this will be properly acknowledged.

2. To establish an intellectual environment conducive to open discussion.

Using other people's ideas and expressions is part of the fabric of academic research, and, equally, it is generally accepted that failure to acknowledge your intellectual debt to others is dishonest. However, in a project whose success depends to a great extent on the quality of conversations over several years, situations might arise which are not so 'cut and dried', and someone could be using another participant's idea without realising.

3. To negotiate power differentials.

In a group with great differences in formal status, spanning from senior professors to PhD fellows at an early stage in building up their careers, it is sometimes daunting for individuals to open a discussion with a senior academic about publishing conventions. It is therefore important to have a pre-established method for all participants to raise issues of attribution and authorship, should any such issues arise.

Confidentiality

If a participant wishes to contribute to a discussion by using some material that is sensitive or confidential, then he or she should clearly state that the material is confidential, and all participants must respect that and not refer to the material outside of the meeting.

Authorship

In general, the convention will be:

- If several people have contributed equally to a publication, then their names will be listed in alphabetical order.
- If one person has played a more substantial role than the other co-authors, then the major contributor will be named first, and the rest in alphabetical order.
- If one person has coordinated the whole publication and edited the other contributions, that person should be 'editor', and the others 'contributors'.

Attribution

In general, the convention will be:

- A footnote on the first page or an 'Acknowledgement' section at the end, stating that this publication is derived from/has benefitted from/ the author's involvement in the EU PEOPLE Marie Curie ITN project called UNIKE (Universities in the Knowledge Economy).
- The footnote on the first page or the 'Acknowledgement' section at the end of the publication will mention any people within UNIKE who have made a special contribution (e.g. an important influence, a source of particular ideas, or someone who made useful comments on a draft).
- If an author uses an idea that came out of a presentation or a discussion (however informal) with another UNIKE participant e.g. in Fellows' discussion groups or at a workshop, then a footnote at that point in the paper should acknowledge that contribution.

Discussion of publication and authorship

In the second half of the UNIKE project, and especially from the Auckland workshop to the final Copenhagen conference, a publication strategy will be developed. But even before that, there will be many opportunities for Fellows individually, collectively and with Partners to disseminate and publish research.

Questions of authorship and attribution must be discussed any time when ideas about publishing are being formulated. That is, discussions of publication should not just be 'what' but also 'who' in terms of authorship and attribution.

Failsafe

All partners and fellows will circulate a draft of each substantial piece of writing arising from the project to all the other participants, inviting them to comment and allowing them to point out any missing acknowledgements or attributions within two weeks. A substantial piece of writing includes, for example, a book, book chapter, article, working paper or conference paper. This agreement does not refer to more ephemeral writing such as blogs, but in grey areas between 'ephemeral' and 'substantial' authors should exercise this failsafe procedure.

Often participants' comments will be of the usual academic kind, helping peers to sharpen their argument, but this two week period is also an opportunity for anyone to point out that some material or an argument used in the text came from a contribution or comment made at a workshop or other interchange.

While the individual concerned is welcome to raise such a query on their own behalf, others may also do so, as it is a collective responsibility to notice and discuss such issues.

If the author agrees that this was a source of the information or argument, it is expected that they will make an attribution. If an issue is not easily resolved, it can be referred to the management board, or such of them as are not directly involved in the case.

Authorship OR Attribution?

The borderline between authorship and attribution is a perilous grey area, which hopefully we won't encounter. But if a participant feels their written contribution to a text has been so great that they should have the status of author, then the management board, or such of them as are not directly involved in the case, will investigate and advise the people concerned.