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Acknowledgment of Scientific Work in Core Facilities

Core facility personnel are scientists. When they make a substantial intellectual and/or experimental contribution to a publication, they deserve to be acknowledged.

The existence of core facilities depends in part on proper acknowledgment in publications. This is an important metric of the value of most core facilities. Proper acknowledgment of core facilities enables them to obtain financial and other support so that they may continue to provide their essential services in the best ways possible. It also helps core personnel to advance in their careers, adding to the overall health of the core facility.

Core facilities should always be included in the acknowledgment section of publications which include contributions from said core facilities. Such contributions could include:

- Paid technical help
- Writing assistance
- Financial and material support
- Scientific advice

Furthermore, funding sources for Core Facilities, such as the Comprehensive Cancer Center Grant, may require acknowledgement specifically.

Examples of acknowledgments

[Technique/technology] was performed by the [facility name] at University of Chicago, which receives financial support from [sponsor name (grant number)].

We thank The University of Chicago [facility name], especially [staff name], for their assistance with [technique/technology].

Authorship

Contributions from resource scientists that involve novel resource laboratory work and insight, experimental design, or advanced data analysis that make a publication possible or significantly enhance its value require co-authorship as the appropriate acknowledgment. Each author should participate at a level that enables s/he to accept responsibility for the content of the manuscript. Activities for which authorship is recommended:

- Conception or design of project, including critical input and/or original ideas
- Data acquisition, analysis and/or interpretation beyond routine practices
- Critical drafting and/or revision of manuscript for intellectual content purposes

Resources

The Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities (ABRF), Authorship Guidelines. https://abrf.org/authorship-guidelines

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International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), Defining the Role of Authors and Contributors.
http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), Maximizing Shared Research Resources, Oct 2017.
http://www.faseb.org/Portals/2/PDFs/opa/2017/Maximizing%20Shared%20Research%20Resources%20-%20Part%20I.pdf

National Institutes of Health, Guidelines and Policies for the Conduct of Research in the Intramural Research Program at NIH, 5th Edition, May 2016.
https://oir.nih.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/sourcebook/documents/ethical_conduct/guidelines-conduct_research.pdf

Publications

Gould, J, Core facilities: Shared support. Nature 519, 495-96, 26 Mar 2015. doi:10.1038/nj7544-495a

Hockberger, P, et al., Building a Sustainable Portfolio of Core Facilities: a Case Study. J Biomol Tech 29, 79-92, Sep 2018. doi: 10.7171/jbt.13-2402-001

Strange, K., Authorship: why not just toss a coin? Am J Physiol Cell Physiol 25, C567-75, Sep 2008. doi: 10.1152/ajpcell.00208.2008