

Statement on authorship policies in the Vosshall Laboratory

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The purpose of this document is to explain my policies on authorship of papers produced by the Vosshall laboratory. I aim to maintain consistent standards for authoring papers, setting a high bar, and avoiding “honorary authorship” or authorship for purely technical contributions.

Subtraction test: Authorship on Vosshall Lab papers indicates a significant contribution to a study as outlined below. The subtraction test will ask if the paper would be substantially weakened if an individual’s contribution were subtracted. If the contribution is purely technical, could the experiments be carried out by any other individual in the laboratory?

The following are examples of what would qualify you for authorship:

1. Design of experiments and significant effort in carrying out experiments; interpretation, statistical analysis, and production of figures, writing and editing manuscript text.
2. Carrying out specialized experiments critical to the manuscript
3. Contributing a previously unpublished behavioral assay, reagent, technique, or other component that required expending significant effort in development, optimization, and implementation and that would be published for the first time in this paper.

The following are examples of what would NOT qualify you for authorship:

1. Purely technical contributions with no contribution to study design, interpretation, statistical analysis, or any other intellectual engagement in the work
2. Training in or sharing of standard techniques or assays
3. Collegial discussions about the project, the experiments, or the manuscript/figures
4. Early mentoring on a rotation project that was the starting point for the paper
5. Providing funding
6. Providing access to equipment
7. Administrative, secretarial, or laboratory support assistance

Process: As head of the laboratory, I make the final decision on who qualifies for authorship. Students and postdocs should NOT make promises of authorship to lab members or external collaborators at any time. If you are approached with questions about authorship, please direct the person to come speak to me immediately. Authorship decisions are made by me in consultation with the first author(s) of the study at the time that the paper is being prepared for submission. Together we will review the contributions of everyone who contributed at all levels to the study. I may consult directly with those involved to clarify their contributions. The subtraction test will be performed and the relative contributions of secondary authors will be decided. Secondary authors will be listed in their order of contribution. In cases where there are two primary authors, they may be listed as co-first authors with shared contribution. In other cases, one author may be listed first, the other last, with me listed as second to last with corresponding author status. In cases where there are more than two primary authors, they may be listed alphabetically with shared contribution. Ultimately, each manuscript presents unique challenges in fairly assigning authorship.

The guidelines above are merely provided as examples. I strive to be fair and transparent in explaining my decisions in assigning authorship.