



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Surprise Authorship, Credit, and Responsibility

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Year

2000

Description

A scenario dealing with issues of authorship, credit, and responsibility as pertaining to graduate students.

Body

In your first year as a graduate student, you worked on a research team with two more advanced students and the supervising professor. Two years later, after the other students have graduated, you look through the proceedings of an important research symposium in your area and are surprised to come upon a paper coauthored by all four members of your former group, including yourself. One of the advanced students is listed as the first and corresponding author.

The paper is in two parts. The first part represents some of your group work. The second part concerns a loosely related point of theory. There is no issue of fraud or incompetence: the presentation and conclusions in both parts of the paper appear respectable, though you are not familiar enough with the theoretical background of the second part to be confident about vouching for it.

What, if anything, can or should you do?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

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Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Topics

Collaboration
Mentors and Trainees
Publication Ethics

Discipline(s)

Research Ethics

Publisher

National Academy of Engineering