### The Ethics and Etiquette of Research Collaboration

Collaboration among scholars benefits the scale of studies, broadens the scope of the health professions education (HPE) field, and further develops the skills of each scholar. Individuals working together for a common purpose increase the rigor and reach of scholarship. While there are numerous perks to collaboration, most researchers have also had to learn how to navigate the challenges of working in teams. The dilemmas HPE scholars face often stem from negotiating the ethics and etiquette of collaborative research. We explore ethical and etiquette considerations in two collaborative situations that HPE researchers commonly encounter.

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<th>Research Dilemmas</th>
<th>Ethical Considerations</th>
<th>Etiquette Considerations</th>
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<td>I am currently collaborating on a research team, and I have a spin-off idea. What are my obligations to include the original study team in my spin-off work?</td>
<td>Research data are considered an asset of the principal investigator’s institution.(^1) Withholding evidence and/or findings from the team that germinate during the research process is akin to interference and could be considered misconduct.(^1)</td>
<td>Consider using a written collaboration agreement between authors to clarify access to original data and expectations around future use and publication. For each collaborator, ask: <strong>Would I have had this new idea without this team member?</strong> If not, consider inviting him/her to collaborate on the spin-off study.</td>
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<td>When should I add or remove a collaborator from the research team?</td>
<td>Authorship guidelines require participation: 1. In conception and design OR data collection and analysis, AND 2. In drafting or revising the publication critically, AND 3. Via approval of final publication, AND 4. Via following up on all integrity and accuracy inquiries.</td>
<td>Adding an author: Determine if the individual will make significant contributions by moving the research forward without compromising other team members’ responsibilities.(^2) Always confer with the team and, if one is available, refer to the written agreement first. Removing an author: Document why expectations have not been met, and offer the opportunity to meet authorship requirements. If expectations cannot be met, determine if a mention in the acknowledgment section is appropriate.</td>
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### Recommended Practices: Early in the collaboration, explicitly discuss with the team:
1. Author requirements
2. How extensions of the study will be handled
3. A written collaboration agreement for authors

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For a list of institutional Web sites or publications relating to ethical conduct, please see Supplemental Digital Appendix 1 at http://links.lww.com/ACADMED/A395.

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References:

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