

Recognition of Core Facilities Contributions

Core Facilities provide the wider research community with state-of-the-art instrumentation and specialist expertise, which not only adds to, but also improves research outputs and funding bids. It is important to recognise the contributions of Core Facility staff to the advancement of scientific research, both formally and informally, in all instances of technical assistance. The type of recognition that is most appropriate will vary dependent upon the contribution provided.

Important reasons for acknowledging contributions from Core Facilities in publications, by co-authorship or by formal mention in the acknowledgments section, include:

1. Core Facilities staff are scientists. When they make an intellectual and/or experimental contribution to a publication they deserve to be recognised, acknowledged and involved in the writing process, just as any other co-author would be.
2. The existence and further development of Core Facilities, which is of value to the local research community, depends in part on proper acknowledgment in publications. This is an important metric of value to most Core Facilities, i.e. impact.
 - a. Proper acknowledgment of Core Facilities enables them to obtain financial/other support.
 - b. It aids Core Facilities staff to advance their careers, adding to the overall health of the Core Facilities and research environment.
 - c. Well-resourced and staffed Core Facilities, producing outputs and impact, enhance the research environment and strengthen the University's reputation in specialist areas, which bolsters funding bids and recruitment by research programmes.
3. If Core Facilities staff have co-authorship where deserved, it will avoid the risk of data misinterpretation, and help ensure the data are accurately conveyed and described.

These are highly-skilled and experienced specialist staff who can make complex experiments possible; their services and support should be recognised, and their advancement promoted within a defined career structure. The research community should work towards the mutual goal of research excellence across the institution. Acknowledgement of everyone's efforts in presentations and publications must be an accepted baseline.

Proper acknowledgement provides a visible measure of the impact and success of Core Facilities and helps secure support & funding and recruit & retain highly qualified staff.

The Core Facilities at the University of Aberdeen follow the same internationally established guidelines as departments or schools throughout this University, stipulated by journals and the publication houses themselves. We have, therefore, summarised these practices in this document.

1. All publications resulting from the use of instruments within a Core Facility should, at the very least, acknowledge the Core Facility as a whole, e.g. *'the authors gratefully acknowledge the [Core Facility name] for their support and assistance in this work'*
2. Where users have had help from a member of Core Facility staff, this staff member should be acknowledged by name, alongside the Core Facility itself, if applicable, e.g. *'the authors thank ***** of [insert Core Facility name here] for their support and assistance in this work'*
3. If scientists from a Core Facility contributed more than just simple, routine techniques, they should be co-authors of papers that use the data.

Complex protocols, development or adaptation of protocols to suit samples or materials, (re)designing experiments, extensive data analysis and interpretation are not routine and constitute contributions meriting co-authorship.

We appreciate that authorship decisions are generally made at the preparation stage of a manuscript, rather than at the initiation of the work. However, Core Facility staff are interested in the desired outcome of any new research project, strive to deliver the required outputs to align with this, and appreciate being informed of any potential publications resulting from the work. If you are uncertain about co-authorship or have any questions or concerns about this, please discuss this with the Core Facility Manager.

Please send a reprint of the paper, or an e-mail including the citation details for the publication, to the Core Facility concerned. We also politely request that you remember to acknowledge use of the Core Facilities in your presentations and cite the Core Facilities in grants, as appropriate.

We gratefully acknowledge Natasha Stephen (Plymouth Electron Microscopy Centre) who compiled a publication policy after discussions with the RMS EM-UK community (Dr Stephen acknowledged all contributors, particularly Kim Findlay of the John Innes Centre, whose contribution was used as an early model of her document). Dr Stephen's Publication Policy is provided as a generic policy from the Royal Microbiological Society <https://www.rms.org.uk/study-read/news-listing-page/core-facilities-publication-policy-available.html> and was used as a model for our document.