

Description

Among the [unethical practices](#) that exist in the [academic publishing](#) field, there is a practice that really bothers researchers: gift authorship. Sometimes, senior supervisors or journal editors try to claim the authorship of some research papers, even when researchers believe that they do not meet the authorship criteria.

Even though their decisions can be questioned, senior supervisors or editors can claim authorship if they want to. In case of conflict, you have two main options: refer the case to the head of the your institution or reach an agreement with your supervisor that pleases you both.

When to Complain?

We recommend you to do it only if you have an irrefutable [proof of misconduct](#), such as emails or other written material showing that your supervisor did not collaborate with the research. However, you have to be extremely sure before choosing this approach. After all, you are building your professional reputation and probably don't want to ruin it by refuting your supervisor.

Find a Common Solution

If you cannot (or simply don't want to) contradict your supervisor, the best you can do is find a solution that benefits you as much as possible. You probably want to sign as the main researcher, but think of the advantage of adding your supervisor's signature in the paper. And go even further: is there any way he can help you from now on in your research and career?

- *Offer him a common authorship:* If the level of participation is appropriate, you can suggest your supervisor to appear as a co-author in the [research paper](#). Co-authorship is a common practice and it would not push your name into the background.
- *Take into account the Acknowledgments section:* If you don't consider co-authorship to be appropriate, add your supervisor's name in this section. This way you could provide a detailed explanation of his contribution to the entire research.
- *Ask for further collaboration:* There are many ways your supervisor can return the favor for adding his name in the research paper. He can, for example, participate in further steps such as helping you [respond to reviewers'](#) comments. He can also let you collaborate in his own research.

Final Words

If you see yourself involved in this kind of situation, try to make the most out of it. Remain positive and learn from the experience. How did you deal with it? Does it change the impression you had of your supervisor? A supervisor is a person who would guide you and help you in your professional career, and therefore the two of you being compatible is of huge importance. That is why choosing a supervisor is such a important decision that shouldn't be made by taking into account merely the professional merits.

On the other hand, maybe this situation makes you consider a question all the researchers contemplate sooner or later: are you ready to manage without an academic supervisor and start researching on your own?

Category

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2. PhDs & Postdocs

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