


### Description

# What is the Purpose of the Acknowledgements Section in a Research Paper?

The **acknowledgment section** is an integral part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work. We discuss here, **the relevant guidelines** for acknowledging contributors.

# Defining Who Is Acknowledged

The acknowledgment section helps identify the contributors responsible for specific parts of the project. It can include:

1. Authors
2. Non-authors (colleagues, friends, supervisor, etc.)
3. Funding sources
4. Editing services,
5. Administrative staff

In academic writing, the information presented in the acknowledgment section should be kept brief. It should only mention people directly involved with the project. In other words, one should not consider thanking ones' parents for moral and financial support.

### Authors

Acknowledging contributors is necessary. However, you must know the difference between an author and a contributor. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) defines four criteria to assign authorship.

He or she has to have

- Made substantial conceptual or design contributions or gathered and analyzed important data,



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and

- Either helped draft or critically revise the paper in keeping with important intellectual content, and
- Provided final approval before publishing, and
- Agreed to be accountable for the accuracy of the work

These authors and their affiliations will be listed at the beginning of the paper. The “corresponding author” will also be listed a second time and will directly correspond with the journal to ensure documentation requirements are met.

Many journals now ask that you provide the role of each author in your acknowledgment section. For example, a typical statement of authors’ contributions might be as follows (note that only last names are used unless ambiguous):

> Smith conducted the data analysis and created the tables and figures. Jones provided his technological expertise for GIS tracking. Johnson provided a factual review and helped edit the manuscript.

This type of acknowledgment provides your reader with a good sense of who was responsible for each part of your research and manuscript.



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## Non-Author Contributors

There are many people involved in a research project who are not authors but have provided valuable contributions. For example, one person's responsibility might be to seek project funding; another's might be to supervise laboratory staff. A few others might have provided valuable services such as technical editing and writing or offering help in reviewing and revising the manuscript for grammar and syntax. These people should also be mentioned in the acknowledgment section of your manuscript.

> Acknowledgment should also be provided for **writing assistance, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading**. Therefore, editing companies need to be duly acknowledged in professionally edited manuscripts as per the **ICMJE guidelines.**

It is necessary to acknowledge editing companies in professionally edited manuscripts, even though



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these companies are paid for their work.

## Acknowledgment Format

Unlike the main body of your paper, the format for your acknowledgment section can be more personal. It is permissible to use personal pronouns in this section. For example,

> I thank the following individuals for their expertise and assistance throughout all aspects of our study and for their help in writing the manuscript.

Keep in mind that many guidelines indicate that funding sources be listed separately from the acknowledgment section. In addition, the sources (funding agencies) might have specific guidelines that you must follow. Please be sure to comply with these sources and your author guidelines.

For more information on authors and contributors, read articles on the Enago Academy website.

What types and formats of acknowledgments have you incorporated into your manuscripts? Please share your thoughts in the comments section below. Do you need help with manuscript editing? Make sure you visit enago.com today!

**Category**

1. Manuscripts & Grants
2. Reporting Research

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