

UC Santa Cruz

Publishing Tips Series Season 2

Title

Season 2, Week 3 - What does being a corresponding author involve?

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Publishing Tips Series – Season 2, Week 3

November 6, 2025

This is the third week of the Publishing Tips Series, Season 2, and this second season runs from October 23 to December 4, 2025. This week's installment covers "**What does being a corresponding author involve?**" Here are this week's takeaways:

- The corresponding author has responsibilities throughout the publishing process – and afterwards.
- In addition to who the corresponding author is, co-authors can also have a conversation about author order.

Spotify link to listen

[Season 2, Week 3 podcast episode](#) (same content as the following text-based version, only in audio format)

Being a corresponding author

Authorship – who is an author and in what order authors are listed – can be a significant question as a researcher. On the publishing survey from the Library, one graduate student wrote the question, "What do [you do] when faculty publish your research and words without listing you as a co-author?"

When students and faculty contribute to the research and writing, they typically (or ought to!) gain a place as an author of an article. Papers may also have acknowledgement sections for contributions that do not rise to the level of authorship. This issue of authorship is nonexistent when you are the sole author but crucial when there are multiple people vying for authorship. The upside is that multiple people can of course be authors of a single article. If you have contributed and believe that you should get credit as an author but are not listed, talk with the other researchers about being included – sometimes people inadvertently overlook something. If you don't feel comfortable doing so or the other researchers are not receptive, talk with a

person who can help mediate the conflict, such as an advisor, a member of your committee, or a counselor.

This week, we will delve into the role of the corresponding author. A corresponding author (one per article) has the responsibility of submitting the article, managing requests and communication from the journal, and communicating with readers. A corresponding author may or may not be the first author. Let's look more closely at what being the corresponding author involves at the different stages of the publishing process:

Journal selection and Open Access

(The next two paragraphs didn't make it into the podcast episode, my apologies!)

While other installments of the Publishing Tips Series have talked about journal selection and open access (see weeks/episodes 2 and 5 of [Season 1](#)), it is good to know that UC's open access publishing agreements are publisher-specific. Under these agreements, who the publisher is determines whether there is open access funding from the UC Libraries for articles in a specific journal.

The way this relates to this week's topic is that the UC author needs to be the corresponding author in order to be eligible for UC's OA funding, and it is best to be the corresponding author from the start because journals or publishers may not agree to change it later on in the process. The way to find out the coverage and terms is by searching the journal title in UC's [Journal Open Access Lookup Tool \(JOLT\)](#).

Submission

Submitting a manuscript to a journal usually requires creating an account with the journal. This account takes you to the author portal where you can share your contact information, add details about your article, identify any competing interests, upload your manuscript, and very importantly, click submit. The author portal is also where you may check the status of your submission in the publishing process.

At this point, authors have to know the author order, including who the corresponding author and first author are, whether those are the same or different people. The corresponding author does the work of submitting, and the author order needs to be established for entering it into the journal's system. Ideally authors determine author order early in the writing and publishing process. Sometimes it is a mutual decision, as we saw with Maya in last week's installment, and other times, it takes more negotiation about a variety of factors. This conversation differs team to team or discipline to discipline, but I cannot emphasize enough how having a conversation early on about contributions and author order is important!

It is also worth noting that some fields do not treat author order as significant or they view the last author as the most important one, so this varies by discipline. Generally, graduate students

are in a unique position of preparing to enter the job market in your field with your degree for the first time. In fields where it matters, who is listed as an author and in what order can make a positive addition to your C.V., though being corresponding author usually does not carry significant weight.

For example, in my research study, my co-researchers and I have had multiple outputs, including presentations and articles. Each of us has acted as first author on one or more of our mutual outputs. For our articles, the first author has also served as the corresponding author, but this is not always the case for all authors. Decisions around author order have been relatively easy for us, but sometimes these conversations are not so easy or do not happen, which can lead to misunderstandings or hurt feelings, so again it is best to discuss authorship up front.

Peer review

The editor will let the corresponding author know the outcome of peer review (i.e., whether the article is accepted, requires revisions, or is rejected – see [week/episode 3 of Season 1](#) for more on these possible decisions). The editor will also share the review feedback with the corresponding author. If revisions are required, the corresponding author coordinates with co-authors on how to respond to the feedback and what revisions to make. If you do not have co-authors, it can help to talk with your advisor or peers about the reviewers' feedback and your edits to help you consider how to respond. It is possible that the article will go through peer review again after revisions.

Proofreading during production

If an article is accepted for publication, the journal moves the article to production, which includes copyediting and typesetting for the manuscript. The corresponding author will receive a proofreading request from the journal when there is a new version to check, and the author(s) may request edits if there are issues.

Correspondence from readers

After an article has been published, the article will indicate who the corresponding author is and include their contact information – typically an email address and affiliation – so that readers may reach out with questions or comments.

Overall

Being a corresponding author means shepherding the article through the *whole* publishing process, including communicating with the journal editor and completing tasks like revision and proofreading, as well as post-publication communication. At the same time, the corresponding author always knows the status of the article in the publishing process.

Putting it into practice

Each week we will have a few things to read or try. For this week:

1. The journal where you submit may have criteria for authorship, such as [that of JLSC](#) which is the journal I previously managed. If you have a journal in mind or have published with a journal previously, look to see what it says about authorship.
2. Read over the [14 author roles listed in the Contributor Role Taxonomy \(CRediT\)](#), a structure to help researchers determine authorship, and read the overview of [how to implement CRediT](#). Even if you do not identify these roles of authors directly on the manuscript, it helps authors think through who is an author – and who to list in acknowledgements, too.

More questions? Contact the Library at research@library.ucsc.edu or [sign up](#) for a one-on-one Zoom meeting about publishing.

See you next week to consider a pressing question on authors' minds: whether to use AI in articles.

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