

CELLNETWORKS CORE TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM CORE FACILITIES

PUBLICATION POLICY

In biomedical research, many state-of-the-art instruments are prohibitively expensive to purchase and upkeep, require dedicated trained staff for effective use, or too sizable for a single laboratory. To address this, Heidelberg University has established a series of scientific service platforms known as Core Facilities (CF) within its scientific research institutes, which are united under the umbrella of the CellNetworks Core Technology Platform (CCTP).

The CFs offer rapid, easy, and cost-effective access to advanced technologies, services, and know-how, along with personnel proficient in maximizing their usage. Jointly with the scientific institutes, the CCTP is committed to sustain essential service platforms, aligning with its strategic goals, and continuously invests in their further development. While user fees are partially subsidized to help covering some operational costs of the CF, they do not fully cover the expenses. Utilizing these services requires appropriate recognition of the CF services and staff in scientific publications and grant applications.

This policy aims to establish standard guidelines for all CCTP CFs regarding the correct form of citation, whether as an acknowledgment or co-authorship. This is intended to foster scientific communication and prevent miscommunications between users and core facility scientists.

PROPER WAY AND APPROPRIATE TYPE OF CITATION

Proper recognition of CFs enables Heidelberg University to showcase the utilization of CF's services in the diverse biomedical research areas of Heidelberg's Life Science campus. Including CF involvement in the acknowledgments section can serve as a measure of CF performance, in addition to metrics like occupancy and cost recovery. This assists in assessing the CFs' value, making informed decisions about funding allocations, future equipment purchases, and drawing external interest.

Furthermore, if CF staff make substantial contributions to a publication beyond providing standard services, they may merit co-authorship in accordance with general publication policy and the principles of good scientific practice. Determining what constitutes a significant contribution should be done on an individual basis, depending on the specific field of study. For guidance, please see the ICMJE authorship criteria:

<https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

The principal investigator is responsible for deciding whether co-authorship and/or acknowledgment is appropriate.

The intellectual input of CF scientists should be regarded on par with that of any other researcher involved in a study and irrespective of the fact that the research performed involves user fees. Recognizing their contributions is crucial for motivating and advancing the careers of CF staff, and aids the organization in attracting and retaining highly qualified core service personnel.

Acknowledgement of any CCTP CF used in a research project is mandatory.

Below are activities that are covered by an acknowledgement:

- CF provided standard service or training.
- Instrumentation of the CF was used in self-service mode.
- CF collected data that demand technical skill, but did not involve significant contribution to the experimental design, major adaptations of protocols, or interpretation of data.
- CF performed routine data quality control to ensure the data correspond to technical standard.
- CF staff reviewed a manuscript or grant proposal for technical accuracy or provide advice on revisions, without contributing substantially to the content.

While these contributions are valuable, they are considered part of the routine support provided by CF staff and do not typically meet the threshold for co-authorship (see below). When one or more of the previously mentioned criteria are fulfilled, it is necessary to mention the CF in the acknowledgments as outlined below. It is a good practice to specifically name the CF staff members who were directly involved in the published data.

Please use the following statement for acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the technical support of Core Facility XX (Insert name) of Heidelberg University. We thank Dr / Mrs / Mr (insert correct names) for support with (insert specific support provided - if appropriate). Core Facility XX is partially funded by the CellNetworks Core Technology Platform (CCTP) of Heidelberg University. The CCTP is funded in part by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Ministry of Science Baden-Württemberg within the framework of the Excellence Strategy of the Federal and State Governments of Germany.

Co-authorship

Co-authorship is justified when CF staff made a substantial scientific contribution to a project that goes beyond the criteria outlined for acknowledgment, such as:

- Made a substantial contribution to the design of experimental strategies.
- Provided project-specific, non-routine training integral to the project's success.
- Introduced and implemented novel, cutting-edge technologies and played a significant role in designing and conducting initial projects leading to the publication.
- Developed new methods or significantly optimized existing protocols for new sample types.
- Constructed new or significantly modified existing equipment to offer a new type of service.
- Had a major role in data analysis and interpretation, beyond simple data cleaning or basic quality control.
- Wrote substantial parts of the manuscript, extending beyond mere sections of materials and methods.
- Created publication-ready figures.

These contributions are indicative of a deeper involvement and intellectual investment in the project, warranting co-authorship. Co-authors should adhere to Heidelberg University's affiliation [guideline](#) with Core Facility staff mentioning their Core Facility name in addition.

The leadership of a CF is not automatically entitled to co-authorship unless they have made a significant contribution to the work. Users of CCTP CF's are expected to comply with this publication policy. In the event of a disagreement, users and CF staff should consult the CCTP administration, who will assist in resolving the issue amicably.

It is required that publications referring to the use of a CF, whether for acknowledgment or co-authorship, be shared with the relevant core facility as PDF copy, DOI, or URL link.

If there are more comprehensive publication guidelines outlined in a legal document, such as a collaboration agreement or commercial contract, specifically pertaining to work involving a CF, these regulations take precedence over the guidelines in this Publication Policy.