Authorship dilemmas for Research Higher Degree students

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The research conducted by Research Higher Degree (RHD) students forms a vital part of an institution’s overall research effort. Students are generally encouraged to publish their research results and like their academic counterparts, often find it challenging to determine authorship and author order on their publications. The stakes are high. A successful, internationally recognised research career, particularly in academia, is heavily biased to publication quality, number and the order of authors on those publications. This paper will explore, through the eyes of postgraduate student Chris, some of the authorship dilemmas faced by students who publish their thesis research. Chris’ dilemma is real. The questions and answers reported herein are taken from a short questionnaire that was administered to 13 postgraduate students in the biological sciences.