Credentials, Where and How to List Them

When and How to List Authors in a Paper or Chapter submitted for Publication

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Introduction

Nurses have many letters behind their names. This is often confusing for them and for the public as well as members of other professions to understand. The purpose of this article is to offer suggestions for how to list credentials when submitting a paper for publication.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) suggests the following guidelines. There are six sets of credentials that may be used after your name. These are: degree, license, state designation, national certification(s), awards or honors, and other certification(s). All that is required is the state licensure. For example: Nancy Smith, CRNP or Nancy Smith, RN. However, in publication, authors often list their entire credential.

The ANCC recommends the following format: academic credentials should be listed first, immediately after the name. If there are degrees from more than one specialty (e.g., MSN, MBA), these should be listed separately in the order they were received, with the most recent listed first. If all degrees are in one specialty (DNP, MSN, BSN), only the highest degree in the specialty should be listed. If the person has a BS in Nursing and a MBA, then each of those degrees should be listed, with the highest degree earned listed first and if there are degrees from two specialties at the same level, the non-nursing degree should be listed first (MBA, MSN).1 Finally, attention should be paid to the degree: MSN versus MS. The actual degree that is conferred depends on the school from which the nurse graduated. For example, a Master of Science (MS) is the degree conferred from the University of Maryland.

Licensure follows the academic credential. If you are a registered nurse, this is fairly straightforward (RN). If you are an advanced practice nurse (APN), the licensure varies from
state to state. For example, in NY APNs are licensed as RN followed by their APN specialty (RN, PNP). In Maryland, the license is CRNP, so listing RN, CRNP would be duplicative.

After the license, the nurse should list the certification. For advanced practice nurses, it becomes a bit complicated, as it depends on what agency certifies your specialty. Most APSNA members have pediatric specialties. Fitzgerald (2007)\(^2\) gives the following examples:

- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC): PNP-BC
- Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PCNB): CPNP-AC or CPNP-PC
- ANCC: FNP-BC
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP): NP-C
- National Certification Corporation (NCC): RNC

Finally, any honors should be listed. These include Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN), Fellow of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (FAANP), or Fellow of the Society of Critical Care Medicine (FCCM).\(^1\)

**Listing of Authors**

The basic rule of thumb about listing authors is that the primary author should be listed first. The most important principle is to discuss the order of the contributions ahead of time. If more than two authors work together, the group should decide ahead of time who does what and why, and ensure that the order reflects the amount of work. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors has published *The Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* which offers guidelines to direct these principles.\(^3\) To be listed as an author, one has to have made a considerable contribution to the work, whether a study or the writing of the work; should be able to identify the contribution of every other author, and be able to vouch
for the integrity of the entire collaboration. Some editorial bodies now ask for each author to list their contribution. The ICJME has recommended the following: authorship should include all three of the following criteria: “1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.”

All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an acknowledgments section. Examples include those who might have provided only technical support, writing assistance, or data collection. Financial support should also be acknowledged.
References

   
   
   accessed 10/12/11


   