

Checklist for researchers collaborating with a biostatistician

Early in the project

All Researchers

- I have visited the Biostatistics Centre website <https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/research/biostatistics.html>.
- I have looked at the Biostatistics Centre's workshop web page <https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/research/biostatistics/biostatistics-skills.html> to see if other courses would also be useful to me.
- I am not seeking software-specific help. Google is often very useful in answering such questions, especially those about command or function syntax.
- The biostatistical involvement that I am looking for is not data management, bioinformatics, health economics, or graphic design and necessary specialists in these areas are already part of or are being sought by the project team.
- I understand that biostatisticians will not provide the code used for any analyses they perform but will provide the results from the code in a suitable format (normally some combination of printouts from statistical software, tables, figures, written summaries of results, and interpretations of these).
- I understand that academic biostatisticians cannot provide one-on-one teaching of biostatistical methods.
- This is not a last minute request or, if it is, I have spoken to the Director of the Biostatistics Centre and she has approved it.
- I have entered my project into the database (<https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/research/biostatistics.html>), providing sufficient information for a non-specialist to understand the goals of my research and clearly indicated any deadlines.

Students

- I have attended both days of the "Introductory Biostatistics for Health Researchers - 2 Day Course" or completed HASC415
- I understand that academics in the Biostatistics Centre cannot perform any analyses for me, including sample size calculations.
- I have spoken to my supervisor(s) about contacting the Biostatistics Centre about my research.
- The questions can be addressed in two hours or less (in total per year) OR we are looking for a biostatistician to be a co-supervisor.

Before the first meeting

- I have provided a non-technical summary to the Centre's administrator or this was included in my project request above.

I have a clear idea of what I want to accomplish at the first meeting.

After the first meeting (and ongoing)

All Researchers

The biostatistician's role is clear to me and we have discussed what they would and what they would not be doing during the project. This includes how the data will be provided to the biostatistician and who will perform data cleaning, descriptive analyses, simple inferential analyses, and more complex analyses (with the last of these extremely likely to be the responsibility of the biostatistician—it should not be assumed that the biostatistician will necessarily perform the other tasks).

We have discussed whether the biostatistician will be included on grant applications in the future and/or whether existing funding is available, including their FTE.

We have discussed authorship and, if the biostatistician will be a co-author, as should be the case for collaborations, we talked about their possible authorship position. Note that the Biostatistics Centre adheres to the ICMJE criteria for authorship.

Students

We have discussed whether it would be best for the biostatistician to offer brief advice (up to two hours per year) or to be a supervisor. If the latter, we have talked about an appropriate supervision percentage and EFTs split. Note that 33% supervision is equivalent to less than one hour per week (40 hours per year).

Throughout the project (ongoing collaborations only)

The biostatistician is being invited to all meetings, even if I suspect they might not want to attend a particular meeting. They are being sent agendas and minutes of meetings if these exist, and they are included in all key email conversations.

Any and all changes to the key dates, funding, and publications have been discussed with the biostatistician and they have indicated that they are happy with the changes.

If this was agreed, the biostatistician has been given the opportunity to write the first draft of any manuscripts for the sections they were responsible for, which will normally include the statistical methods and at least some of the results.

All draft publications are given to the biostatistician with a reasonable amount of time available for them to provide feedback and suggest revisions. The biostatistician has approved the final version of all manuscripts (as per ICMJE criteria).

The biostatistician is kept informed of editor decisions, reviewer comments, and resubmissions if relevant.

If any concerns have arisen, for example about progress towards deadlines, I have discussed them with the biostatistician as soon as they arose. If these have not been resolved by that discussion, I have contacted the Director of the Biostatistics Centre for guidance.