

New Affiliation Types for 3.0 API and UI

Public proposal

Feedback period ends November 20th 2017

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Background

ORCID currently supports education and employment affiliation types and encourages authoritative sources to populate them. However, a number of our members have relationships with researchers that fall outside of these two categories and are therefore unable to make affiliation assertions. This document outlines new affiliation types that cater for these emerging use cases.

There has been extensive internal discussion around which affiliation types we should include within the Registry and how they should be represented. The purpose of this document is to gather feedback on a proposed affiliation types data model.

What is an affiliation?

An affiliation is a formal relationship between a person and an organisation. For our purposes, it should be a relationship that could be asserted by an organisation in coordination with the researcher.

New types under consideration

This proposal adds two new affiliation types to the ORCID data model and modifies an existing one, making a total of four types. The existing affiliation types remain largely unchanged and the new types are designed to capture broad rather than fine-grained categories of relationships. These decisions reflect a considered compromise between complexity and usability. We are hoping for a more widely applicable vocabulary, but not one that leaves end users overwhelmed with options.

Employment: This type is unmodified. It represents formal employment relationships, such as staff, researcher, faculty or contractor.

Education and Qualifications: Education has been expanded beyond ongoing or completed academic study. It now includes other forms of training, professional qualifications, and certifications.

Honorary Positions and Awards: This category captures distinctions bestowed upon the record owner, such as prizes, honorary degrees, or fellowships.

Membership and Service: This category contains work performed by a record owner that lies outside of formal employment, such as editorial service, serving on a committee, or election to a Board. It also encompasses the concept of society or professional association membership.

All of these types other than employment must be one of two subtypes, which are used to define finer grained relationships. The subtypes are mandatory and will work in the same way as our existing funding activities, which can be marked as “grant”, “award”, “salary award” or “contact”.

By limiting ourselves to two new types we prevent a proliferation of types within the ORCID API, XML schema and user interface. This reduces the disruption caused to existing clients when upgrading and also presents users with a manageable number of clearly delimited and understandable categories.

The lack of complex categorisation means the new model does include some ambiguity that needs to be addressed. In addition, some affiliations could potentially fit in more than one type as practice varies between institutions and across borders. To combat these problems, finer grained subtype information should be implied through descriptive text in the title field.

Current working model

We are soliciting comment on the following model for types and subtypes within the API and UI. We are interested in feedback on which subtypes should be made available, example affiliations, the use cases for them and their international applicability. Feedback on the overall approach, the top level categories and the use of a fixed list of subtypes is also welcome. When giving feedback, please consider the following:

- Do the categories make sense?
- Are the subtypes useful?
- What is missing from the list?
- What shouldn't be here?
- Where would your affiliations fit in the model?
- What distinctions are made in your locale?

- What issues does this model present?

Type	Subtypes	Examples and notes
Employment		Formal employment including faculty, postgraduate researchers, internships, other staff and contractors.
Education and Qualifications	Education	Undergraduate, AA, Masters, MFA, PhD, ScD, JD, etc.
	Qualification	Accreditation or certification, e.g. professional qualifications, CME, CEE, lab safety, prince2 practitioner, data enclave certification.
Honorary Positions and Awards	Honorary Position	Honorary research fellow, emeritus professor, visiting lecturer.
	Award	Honorary degrees, cash prizes, trophies, other distinctions.
Membership and Service	Membership	Member of an association or society.
	Service	Significant donations time, money or other resources, such as: working on a project, standards body, expert panel, editorial board, study group or committee. Also includes society officer positions, agricultural extension work, volunteer work.

Outstanding issues

There are many nuances in affiliations, not the least of which are words with different definitions and positions with different meanings depending on context and location. These issues may not be entirely resolvable beyond giving clear directions as to the preferred place in the record.

Visiting scholar/professor: Sometimes unsalaried, sometimes paid by home institution, sometimes by host institution. In the UK, sometimes the scholar pays the host institution for use of shared facilities. We suggest this affiliation be coded as “honorary position”.

Voluntary work / internship: The boundary between employment and service is open to interpretation. We suggest this affiliation be coded as “employment” for formal (such as internship) and “service” for informal (such as donating time to start a new initiative).

Society officer: This could fit in membership, service, employment AND honorary positions. We suggest this affiliation be coded as “service”.

Summary of public feedback

We should consider a category for editorial work and conference organisation, possibly combined (although this may not be an affiliation)

These are now considered part of the Service category, and the examples have been updated to reflect that.

There is a lot of confusion between Award and funding. This may not be solvable by simply giving guidelines. This appears to be because 'Award' has a different meaning in a funding context.

We have renamed the Award category “Distinctions” and clarified it is for prizes (e.g. for accomplishments in the past not future work)

We should provide definitions that are distinct from examples. This may be possible by mapping to other schemas (for example wikidata)

This is a very good point. We are working on definitions separate from examples and will look for other schemas to map to.

Informal employment is not well modeled. (e.g. guest researchers formally employed at other institutes, doctors from the university hospital and visiting lecturers) A general purpose "Associated with" or "Affiliated to" mentioned as a potential solution.

To help model this better we have changed the “Honorary Position” category to “Invited position”. This broader category now encompasses informal positions as well as honorary posts. The examples and definitions will be updated. We would rather avoid general purpose categories.

Clarity is required when something potentially fits in two categories (e.g. funded postdoc work can be considered as employment, education *and* funding, depending on the host institution). There are nuances around things such as fellowships and honorary position that differ depending on locality

We have taken this on board and realise it is an issue. Institutions are free to add affiliation data to whichever category suits their normal business practice. We are working on best practice guidelines to assist those looking to populate the record with ‘tricky’ affiliations. This will include a

matrix which maps from affiliation name to affiliation category, clearly showing options where available and the preferred category to use if possible.

Next steps

ORCID will create a new document with an updated affiliation schema. This will include the changes made due to public feedback, category definitions, extended examples and an affiliation-category matrix. We hope to have this available in January 2018.