

# Research Code of Practice

## Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) This policy applies to all research activity carried out by, at or on behalf of the University of Western Sydney (UWS). The policy therefore applies to all individuals who carry out research at or on behalf of UWS whether as an employee, student or in some other representative or associated capacity.

(2) The University of Western Sydney considers research and the pursuit of knowledge to be vital institutional functions and is committed to pursuing these activities in accordance with the highest standards of professional conduct.

(3) This policy forms a code of practice for the responsible conduct of research. It aims to:

- a. promote the highest possible standards of research practice;
- b. protect all those associated with the research from any harm that may arise from failures to maintain high standards of research conduct;
- c. discourage misconduct and fraud through encouraging the open presentation and discussion of results via peer review mechanisms;
- d. apply clear procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct;
- e. protect the rights of all those associated with the research, human and non-human alike.

(4) This Code of Practice has been formulated in accordance with the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice issued in May 1997, which requires institutions to establish procedures and guidelines on good research practice and on steps to be followed if suspicions or allegations exist regarding research misconduct.

(5) The responsibility of the research community to the public and to itself is acknowledged. This responsibility is particularly important where professional practice or public policy may be defined or modified in light of research findings.

(6) The processes of research protect the reliability that knowledge claims. The following broad principles that guide research have been long established and all contribute to the intrinsically self-correcting nature of research:

- a. Maintenance of ethical standards;
- b. Validity and accuracy in the collection and reporting of data;
- c. Communication between collaborators;
- d. Maintenance and reference to records;
- e. Presentation and discussion of work at scholarly meetings;
- f. Publication of results, including the important element of peer refereeing;
- g. The possibility that investigations will be repeated or extended by other researchers.

(7) It is intended that this Code of Practice be implemented in consideration of these principles and in compliance with accepted ethical research practice, University policy and all prevailing legislation.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(8) For the purpose of this policy and its attendant procedures the following definitions of Misconduct in Research apply. Misconduct in research includes:

- a. the fabrication of data: claiming results where none have been obtained;
- b. the falsification of data, including changing records;
- c. misleading ascription of authorship including the listing of authors without their permission, attributing work to others who have not in fact contributed to the research, and the lack of appropriate acknowledgment of work primarily produced by a research student/trainee or associate. It does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretation or judgements of data;
- d. deliberate inclusion of inaccurate or misleading information relating to research activity and publications in: curriculum vitae, grant applications, job applications or public statements; or the failure to provide relevant information;
- e. other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting or reporting research;
- f. departure from approved protocols in relation to human or animal experimentation or the handling of hazardous materials, where misconduct does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretation or judgements of data;
- g. intentional infringements of this Research Code of Practice.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(9) All persons involved in research that is undertaken by, at or on behalf of the University of Western Sydney (UWS) are expected to act in a manner that serves to promote the good name of the University and augment the confidence of the public in its research credentials.

(10) UWS expects its staff, students and other individuals acting in its name or utilising its facilities to demonstrate integrity and professionalism in the conduct of their research. Integrity means that researchers primarily serve scholarly and public interests and that researchers have an obligation to achieve and maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical practice in the conduct of all aspects of their research.

(11) Integrity also requires researchers to only participate in work that they are competent to perform and which conforms to accepted ethical standards, UWS policies and procedures and all prevailing legislation.

(12) While UWS recognised that competition in research can have a strong and positive influence, enhancing the quality and immediacy of the work produced it also acknowledges that competitive pressures can act to distort sound research practice if they encourage:

- a. too-hasty preparation and submission of papers;
- b. the division of reports or substantial bodies of work into multiple small reports to enhance the 'publication count' of the author(s), and
- c. an undue emphasis on 'logical-next-step' research at the expense of more creative and more innovative lines of study.

(13) Accordingly, due emphasis will be given to quality and originality of research, as well as to quantity of research output.

(14) The University and researchers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all those associated with the

research. For this and other pertinent reasons UWS considers it essential that the design of projects also takes account of any relevant ethical guidelines. Accordingly all persons undertaking research at UWS must comply with established guidelines such as the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans \(1999\)](#), the UWS [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#) and related [Occupational Health and Safety](#) legislation, the [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes \(1997\)](#) and the NSW [Animal Research Act](#).

(15) Good research practice requires researchers to pay attention to obtaining necessary permissions (includes permits, licences), correctly attributing authorship, acknowledging sources, correctly referencing and avoiding plagiarism. Where research procedures are of a kind requiring approval by either one of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee or Animal Care and Ethics Committee or by other safety or validly constituted regulatory committees, research must not proceed without such approval. It is an offence under Part V of the [Animal Research Act](#) to conduct animal research without a valid animal research authority.

(16) Where several parties are involved (researchers, assistants, funding agencies, enterprises, government departments, universities) good practice requires participants to ensure explicit consensus on intellectual property rights and authorship among all parties in advance of research commencing.

(17) In international research or on-line environments, researchers must take due account of national laws, particularly if more stringent requirements with respect to the collection of personal data operate than those in Australia.

(18) This Code of Practice, which is seen as a framework for sound research procedures, is to be applied in respect of all research activity undertaken by, at, or on behalf of UWS. Any individual found to be in breach of this Code in relation to research activity may be subject to disciplinary or other action as set forth in this Code and other related policies and procedures.

(19) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will monitor the observance of the Code of Practice.

## **Part A - Data Storage and Retention**

(20) For the purposes of this document research data is defined as the originally constituted body of evidence, or other materials, on which the findings or interpretation of the research are based.

(21) Research data must be securely stored to ensure that the validity of the data can be demonstrated as required and to ensure that the University meets its obligations relating to privacy under NSW legislative requirements and any other confidentiality agreements entered into in relation to the research.

(22) Research data should be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form. While it is acknowledged that certain forms of data may not be able to be stored or referenced in traditional ways, every effort should be made to record such material in a fashion appropriate to its nature.

(23) Data management must comply with relevant privacy protocols for the collection, storage, retention and disposal of data and records, including: [NSW Privacy and Personal information Protection Act 1998](#), [NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002](#), [NSW State Records Act 1998](#), and the University of Western Sydney [Privacy Policy](#) and [Records Management Policy](#).

(24) Unless the University has entered into a formal agreement to the contrary, data generated in research by members of the University staff, are owned by the University. In the case of students, unless a student has entered into a formal agreement to the contrary, students own the Intellectual Property that they generate (see [Intellectual Property policy](#)).

(25) Note that privacy requirements extend beyond the storage of data and the [Health Privacy](#) legislation has very specific provisions about research that must be adhered to. Secrecy may be necessary for a limited period in the case

of contracted research or of non-contractual research that is under consideration for patent protection. In general, research results and methods should be open to scrutiny by colleagues within the institution and, through appropriate publication, by the profession at large.

## Part B - Authorship

(26) Authorship is defined by the AVCC and [NHMRC](#) as substantial participation, where all the following conditions are met:

- a. conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- b. drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
- c. final approval of the version to be published.

(27) 'Substantial participation' is normally interpreted to mean input beyond that of:

- a. providing instruction or advice;
- b. granting use of laboratory space or equipment;
- c. providing financial support or involvement solely in the acquisition of funding;
- d. the collection of data;
- e. general supervision of the research group or higher degree student.

(28) Any part of an article critical to its main conclusion must be the responsibility of at least one author.

(29) An author's role in a research output must be sufficient for that person to take public responsibility for at least that part of the output in that person's area of expertise.

(30) No person who is an author, consistent with the definition outlined above, should be excluded as an author without his or her permission in writing.

(31) 'Honorary authorship' is unacceptable. 'Honorary authorship' is a practice in some medicine and laboratory sciences that lists a person as an author when they have not substantially participated in the research output consistent with the above.

(32) Authorship of a research output is a matter that must be discussed between researchers at an early stage in a research project, and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation.

(33) Where there is more than one co-author of a research output, one co-author (by agreement among the authors) should be nominated as corresponding author for that research output, and should take responsibility for record-keeping regarding the research output.

(34) Due recognition of all participants is a part of a proper research process. Authors must ensure that the work of research students/trainees, research assistants and technical officers is properly acknowledged. Courtesy demands that funding agencies, individuals and organisations providing facilities should also be acknowledged.

(35) In the case of higher degree students, supervisors must ensure that students are fairly treated. Agreement should be reached between the candidate and members of the supervisory panel concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgment of contributions during and after candidature. Unless there is a formal agreement to the contrary, students own their own intellectual property. (See [Intellectual Property Policy](#))

(36) It will typically be the case that a student will be first author in any multiple authored article that is substantially based on the student's own research project and unique contribution.

(37) There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate's and any supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project. (See [Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#))

## **Part C - Publication**

(38) All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous.

(39) As a general principle research findings should not be reported in the public media before they have been reported to a research audience of experts in the field of research, preferably by publication in a peer-reviewed journal, except where there is a contractual arrangement.

(40) In relation to media reporting, researchers are advised to contact the Media Services Unit of the Office of Public Affairs for assistance in communicating with and through the media. (See [Media Policy](#))

(41) It is acknowledged that where issues of public policy and concern make prior reporting desirable, such advice must be tendered first to the public or professional authorities responsible and the unreported status of the findings must be advised at the same time. Only where responsible authorities fail to act can prior reporting to the media be justified, and again the unpublished status of the findings must be reported at the same time.

(42) Where there is private reporting of research that has not yet been exposed to open peer-review scrutiny, especially when it is reported to prospective financial supporters, researchers have an obligation to explain fully the status of the work and the peer-review mechanisms to which it will be subjected.

(43) Publication of multiple papers based on the same set(s) or sub-set(s) of data is improper unless there is full cross-referencing within the papers (for example, in a series of closely related work, or where a complete work grew out of a preliminary publication and this is fully acknowledged).

(44) Simultaneous submission to more than one journal or publisher of material based on the same set(s) or sub-set(s) of data must be disclosed at the time of submission.

(45) Publications must include information on the sources of financial support for the research. Financial sponsorship that carries an embargo on such naming of a sponsor should be avoided. Researchers should refer to Part E of these guidelines on the requirements for the disclosure of any potential conflict of interest.

(46) Accuracy is essential in describing the state of publication (in preparation, submitted, accepted), research funding (applied for, granted, funding period), and awards conferred, and where any of these relate to more than one research worker.

(47) Researchers must ensure that all reporting of research complies with any contractual obligations associated with project funding or other conditions and with the University's [Intellectual Policy](#).

(48) Researchers should report all eligible publications to DEEWR via Office of Research Services (see DEEWR Publications Collection) and provide verification as specified.

## **Part D - Supervision of Students/Research Trainees**

(49) Supervisors have a responsibility to impart knowledge of best practice research methods to research degree candidates under their supervision, guide them in acquiring research experience that conforms to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism as set out in this Code of Practice, and ensure that the conduct of their research meets relevant ethical, legislative and occupational health and safety standards, including in fieldwork.

## **Part E - Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest**

(50) Researchers have an obligation to disclose at the time of reporting or proposing research (for example, in a grant application), any affiliation with, or financial involvement in, any organisation or entity with a direct interest in the subject matter or materials of the research.

(51) Conflicts of interest include the full range of potential interests, including direct benefits such as sponsorship of the investigation and indirect benefits such as the provision of materials or facilities or the support of individuals such as provision of travel or accommodation expenses to attend conferences.

(52) Researchers must avoid conflict of interest which has the potential to influence research and investigations, publication and media reports, grant applications, or applications for appointment and promotion.

(53) Early disclosure of potential conflict of interest is essential for the responsible conduct of research.

## **Part F - Responsibilities Under the Code**

(54) Each Head of School and Centre Director are responsible for the conduct of research within their areas of responsibilities and for the observance of the Research Code of Practice. Associate Deans may be nominated as the University's Advisers on Integrity in Research. The Advisers will be familiar with these Guidelines and other issues relating to research integrity and misconduct.

(55) Often, what appears to be an issue of research misconduct may in fact be a complex amalgam of other issues including poor communication, misunderstandings, discrimination, and/or bullying and harassment. Researchers may seek advice from:

- a. University Advisers in Research Integrity
- b. Dean of Research Studies
- c. Grievance Advisers
- d. Equity and Diversity Unit
- e. Student Support Services
- f. Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education
- g. PAUWS.

(56) Schools and Centres should periodically review procedures for communication of requirements for the conduct of research within their respective areas. This may involve re-issuing established guidelines; improving procedures for monitoring and documenting research practices; or further training.

(57) For further information contact:

- a. Office of Research Services
- b. Office of the PVC Research

## **Part G - Integrity in Research Committee: Membership and Terms of Reference**

(58) The University of Western Sydney Integrity in Research Committee has the responsibility of advising on high level issues relating to the ethical and professional conduct of research.

(59) The Integrity in Research Committee reports to the Vice-Chancellor.

## **Membership**

(60) Membership of the Committee shall be as follows:

- a. External Chair
- b. Nominee of the University Research Committee
- c. Chair or nominee of UWS Human Research Ethics Committee or Chair or nominee of UWS Animal Care and Ethics Committee
- d. Two Professors or Associate Professors of the University

## **Terms of Reference**

(61) The Committee will:

- a. advise the Vice-Chancellor on issues of integrity in research;
- b. provide confidential advice to both staff and students on ethical issues in research matters, including potential conflict of interest in funding and sponsorship;
- c. receive, in confidence, notification from researchers on any affiliation or financial involvement in, or payments or other assistance in kind from, any organisation with direct interest in the subject matter or materials of their research. A confidential Register of this information will be maintained by the Committee;
- d. communicate with external bodies such as research funding bodies and journal editors in the event of actual or alleged conflict of interest in research.

## **General Information**

(62) The Vice-Chancellor of UWS will appoint all members.

(63) The Committee may consult with experts in specified research areas as required.

(64) The Committee will meet formally on at least an annual basis.

# **Section 4 - Procedures**

## **Part H - Procedures Relating to Data Storage and Retention**

(65) The academic unit or division is responsible for ensuring the retention of research data and records of research data. It is inadvisable for individual researchers to hold the sole copy of the data. Retention exclusively by the individual researcher provides little protection to the researcher or the institution in the event of an allegation of falsification of data.

(66) In special cases the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) may approve alternative arrangements for the storage of data. Such arrangements should be consistent with contractual requirements and relevant legislation.

(67) Each research project should nominate one Chief Investigator who will be responsible for storage and record keeping.

(68) At the time of submitting progress and final research reports to the UWS Office of Research Services, Chief Investigators are required to report on this aspect of the research process for monitoring and quality assurance purposes.

(69) On completion of research projects, or on completion of discrete components of a project, the nominated Chief Investigator is required to make a declaration related to data storage and retention. This declaration should be lodged

with the academic unit or division. (Forms may be downloaded from the Office of Research Services web site) Data storage requirements are potentially subject to audit.

(70) If at all possible, it is in the interests of all researchers to ensure that original data are safely held for periods of at least five years from the date of publication but for specific types of research, such as clinical research, fifteen years may be more appropriate. (Note: this clause is being reviewed by the UWS Records and Archives Management Services Unit who will provide current advice re: legal requirements.)

(71) It is recommended that five years after the publication of research results the data be archived with Records and Archives Management Services Unit. (Note: as above - under review by RAMS.)

(72) Wherever possible, a copy of the original data should be retained in the academic unit or division department or research unit in which the Chief Investigator resides (see also [RAMS Policy](#)).

(73) Data obtained from limited access databases or in a contracted project, may not be able to be retained. In such cases, a written indication of the location of the original data or key information regarding the limited access database from which it was extracted must be kept in the academic unit or division.

(74) Data related to publications and other forms of dissemination must be available for discussion with other researchers.

(75) Where confidentiality provisions apply (for example, where the researchers or institution have given undertakings to third parties, such as the subjects of the research), it is essential for data to be kept in a way that reference to them by third parties can occur without breaching such confidentiality.

(76) Confidentiality agreements to protect intellectual property rights may be agreed between the institution, the researchers and a sponsor of the research. Where such agreements limit free publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly agreed and negotiated through the Office of Research Services.

(77) It is the obligation of the Chief Investigator to enquire whether confidentiality agreements apply and of the Head of Unit to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.

(78) General access to research databases containing confidential information, and any limits on this, are subject to the ethics protocols of the University. This clause should be read in conjunction with the UWS [Code of Conduct](#).

(79) Researchers must be responsible for ensuring appropriate security for any confidential material, including that held in computing systems. Where computing systems are accessible through networks, particular attention to security of confidential data is required.

(80) Security and confidentiality must be assured in a way that copes with multiple researchers and the departure of individual researchers.

(81) In the event that Chief Investigator leaves the University, the academic unit or division should ensure that the outgoing Investigator transfers storage protocols to another member of the University staff. It is imperative that the University continues to maintain the data and observe storage requirements.

## **Part I - Procedures Relating to Authorship**

(82) A signed statement of authorship may be required by publishers at the time of submission of any research paper, including electronic dissemination of research findings. If not required by the publisher, researchers are advised to create one. (Exemplar statement is available from the Office of Research Services.)

(83) If there are multiple authors, all co-authors of a publication or research output must:



- a. acknowledge in writing their involvement as authors as indicated above;
- b. specify that the signatories are the only authors according to this definition;
- c. state that the signatories have read the version of the paper submitted for publication.

(84) The written acknowledgment of authorship must be placed on file in the academic unit or division of the corresponding author, at the time of submission of the research output for publication, and must remain in safe keeping and be available when required. If, for any reason, one or more co-authors are unable to sign the statement, the head of the academic unit or division may sign on their behalf, noting the reason for their unavailability. This statement should accompany the work to the publishers.

(85) At the time of submitting progress and final research reports to the funding agency and/or Office of Research Services, Chief Investigators will be required to report on this aspect of the research process for quality assurance purposes.

(86) Conflicts arising through disputes about authorship shall be referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) who in the first instance will seek a negotiated resolution. If a dispute results in a formal complaint, the procedures for handling research misconduct will be implemented. (See Part L - Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research)

## **Part J - Procedures Relating to the Supervision of Students/Research Trainees**

(87) Supervisors of higher degree research students must have current registration on the UWS Register of Research Supervisors, which ensures that each research student/trainee (including honours, masters and doctoral students, and junior postdoctoral staff) is assigned to at least one specific, responsible and appropriately qualified senior research worker.

(88) Each research student/trainee should be provided with written material of applicable government and institutional guidelines for the conduct of research, including those covering ethical requirement for studies on human or animal subjects, requirements for confidentiality, and occupational health and safety matters.

(89) The supervisor must ensure as far as possible, the validity of research data obtained by a student under his/her supervision.

## **Part K - Procedures Relating to the Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest**

(90) The Integrity in Research Committee (see Terms of Reference, Part G) will receive, in confidence, notification from researchers of any affiliation or financial involvement in, or payments or other assistance in kind, from any organisation with direct interest in the subject matter or materials of their research.

(91) The Integrity in Research Committee will communicate with funding bodies and editors of publications where potential or alleged conflict of interest in research make this necessary.

## **Part L - Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research**

### **Procedures Relating to Allegations of Research Misconduct against Staff/Students**

(92) Allegations of research misconduct are considered serious. It is expected that the principles of confidentiality, sensitivity to all parties and procedural fairness are applicable.

(93) Allegations of research misconduct require very careful handling. When an allegation is made, the protection of all interested parties is essential.

(94) Interested parties may include:

- a. the person bringing the allegation;
- b. the person against whom a complaint is made;
- c. research students/trainees and staff working with the person concerned;
- d. journals, or other media, in which allegedly fraudulent papers have been or are about to be published;
- e. funding bodies that have contributed to the research;
- f. in some cases the public - for example if a drug is involved.

(95) Adequate protection of the complainant and the accused demands absolute confidentiality and reasonable speed in the early stages of investigation. On the other hand, the protection of other parties may involve some disclosure. In such cases, the Vice-Chancellor would make the judgement.

(96) Supervisors shall make reasonable efforts to resolve incidents of possible misconduct informally, with the expectation that, in many cases, situations will be resolved with appropriate guidance, counselling, conciliation, or other appropriate action that may include staff development.

(97) In the case of staff misconduct in research, disciplinary action will be initiated in accordance with the appropriate employment agreement.

(98) In the case of research students, a formal process for investigations of allegations of research misconduct is contained in the [Misconduct - Student Research Misconduct Policy](#). All allegations of research student misconduct in research shall be directed to the Dean of Research Studies for preliminary investigation.

## Section 5 - Guidelines

### Examples of Misconduct

(99) Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Misappropriation: A researcher or reviewer shall not intentionally or recklessly
  - i. plagiarise, which shall be understood to mean the presentation of the documented words or ideas of another as his or her own, without attribution appropriate for the medium of presentation;
  - ii. make use of any information in breach of any duty of confidentiality associated with the review of any manuscript or grant application;
  - iii. intentionally omit reference to the relevant published work of others for the purpose of inferring personal discovery of new information.
- b. Interference: A researcher or reviewer shall not intentionally and without authorisation take or sequester or materially damage any research-related property of another, including without limitation the apparatus, reagents, biological materials, writings, data, hardware, software, or any other substance or device used or produced in the conduct of research.
- c. Misrepresentation: A researcher or reviewer shall not with intent to deceive, or in reckless disregard for the truth,
  - i. state or present a material or significant falsehood, or
  - ii. omit a fact so that what is stated or presented as a whole states or presents a material or significant falsehood.

## Other Documentation

Vancouver Protocol

The RESPECT Guideline

On Being A Scientist - Responsible Conduct in Research

(100) Suppressing Research Data by Brian Martin

(101) UWS ethics policy and review is guided by the following national guidelines:

(102) Joint NHMRC / AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice 1997

(103) [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans](#)

(104) [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#)

(105) [Health Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research - 2003](#)

(106) UWS Biosafety and Radiation Safety review is guided by National and State guidelines and standards: [Office of the Gene Technology Regulator](#).

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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