

Policy Title: Responsible Research Conduct

Policy Owner: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

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1. INTENT

- 1.1 The joint NHMRC/ARC/Universities Australia *Australian code for the responsible conduct of research* (Australian Government, 2018) (“the Code”) is used by universities as the standard for the responsible conduct of research in Australia. It requires all institutions receiving funding from the ARC or the NHMRC to support the maintenance of high standards of research conduct consistent with the Code.
- 1.2 The conduct of research at Edith Cowan University (ECU) will be characterised by high ethical standards and a commitment to quality, integrity and originality of research practice, underpinned by a respect for the truth and for those involved in the research process.
- 1.3 Good governance and administration of research practice at ECU will enhance the reputation of the institution and its researchers, minimise the risk of harm for all involved, and ensure high standards and quality in research are maintained throughout the organisation.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, affiliated researchers and students involved in research and research-related activities at ECU.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
“ARC” means	the Australian Research Council.
“NHMRC” means	the National Health and Medical Research Council.
“Research”	The concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so

	as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.
Researcher	Person who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.

4. POLICY CONTENT

- 4.1 It is a basic assumption of the University that staff and students are committed to the University's values of integrity, respect, rational inquiry and personal excellence. Researchers have a duty to ensure high standards of professional conduct and the integrity of their work, and that their research enhances the good name of the University and the profession to which they belong.
- 4.2 Researchers should only participate in work that conforms to accepted ethical standards and which they are competent to perform. When in doubt they should seek assistance with their research and research supervision from their colleagues or peers. Debate on, peer review of, discussion about, and criticism of research work in a collegial manner are essential parts of the research process.
- 4.3 Researchers have an obligation to achieve and maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty in the conduct of their research. They must be aware of and demonstrate: adherence to ethical principles of justice and veracity; respect for people, their privacy and avoidance of harm to them; respect for non-human participants in research; the wider community; and the environment.
- 4.4 Research must comply with established legislation, codes of conduct and guidelines that apply to their activities.
- 4.5 The University and its researchers have a responsibility to conduct appropriate planning to ensure the safety of all those associated with the research by adopting and conforming to the following principles of responsible research conduct:
 - i. proactive implementation of a research ethos among the ECU community;
 - ii. processes, methods and results which are open to scrutiny and debate;
 - iii. quality and originality;
 - iv. peer review of grant applications, all research-related documents and endeavours, and publications;
 - v. fair and accurate attribution of authors to research outputs and acknowledgement of those who have contributed to the research;
 - vi. highest quality of supervision of research trainees;
 - vii. acceptance of ethical guidelines;
 - viii. recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them;
 - ix. observance of confidentiality;
 - x. safe work practices and environment; and
 - xi. secure storage and management of research data, and where appropriate, allow access and reference.
- 4.6 Where research procedures are of a kind requiring approval by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee or Animal Ethics Committee, or by another safety

or validly-constituted regulatory committee, research must not proceed without such approval. The University's Research Services will not release research funds until such approval has been obtained. Similarly, Schools will not release funding to support research conducted by postgraduate students before formal approval of a research proposal and ethics clearance has been granted by a responsible committee.

- 4.7 The University's system of research governance assigns roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to all those who play a part in research activity. These include (but are not limited to) the following:
- (a) University Committees
 - i. *Research and Higher Degrees Committee (RHDC)*
 - ii. *Graduate Research School Committee (GRSC)*
 - iii. *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)*
 - iv. *Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)*
 - (b) University administrative offices and centres
 - i. *Research Services*
 - ii. *Graduate Research School*
 - iii. *Research Ethics Team within Research Services*
 - iv. *Research Themes and Institutes that provide a focus for research activity and which play an important role in fostering collaborative inter-disciplinary research and promoting a research culture within the University.*
 - (c) University Schools
- 4.8 The University's research policy framework establishes a system of governance that promotes high standards of research and the responsible conduct of research practice that is consistent with the Code, covering the following areas of research activity:
- i. the conduct, reporting, and dissemination of research;
 - ii. research supervision and training;
 - iii. governance, finance and administration;
 - iv. induction and professional development; and
 - v. misconduct
- 4.9 All staff and students of the University are required to be aware of the provisions of the Code, relevant University policies, and the responsibilities that have been assigned to them, to act accordingly and to seek advice from senior researchers when clarification is required.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for the following:

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner, being the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

Staff and students involved in research and research-related activities

Staff and students involved in research and research-related activities are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

6.1 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (jointly issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia), Australian Government, 2018.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

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