

# Responsible Conduct of Research Policy

## Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (the University) is committed to the development and maintenance of a research culture that reflects its core values, as outlined in the [Ethical Framework](#). This culture is integral to the University's commitment to undertake world-class research.

(2) In fostering responsible and ethical research conduct the University will encourage respect and freedom of expression to cultivate the open exchange of ideas, mindful of the national interest.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy:

- a. establishes how the University and its Researchers and staff will comply with the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) ("the Code") including the governance and management arrangements for research at the University;
- b. seeks to minimise risk and protect the interests of the University, Researchers, and staff when engaging in research activities; and
- c. seeks to protect research participants, maintain animal welfare and protect the environment.

## Section 3 - Audience

(4) This policy applies to Researchers, staff, conjoint/honorary appointees, students, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates, external supervisors and volunteers involved in research at the University.

## Section 4 - Scope

(5) This policy applies to all research activities conducted under the auspices of the University by University Researchers.

## Section 5 - Document Specific Definitions

(6) In the context of this policy:

- a. 'Chief Investigator' means any person assigned to a research project with ultimate responsibility for the conduct of research. Chief Investigators may adopt alternative role titles such as, but not limited to, Lead Investigator or Research Supervisor, however, must uphold the responsibilities of Chief Investigator as outlined in this policy;
- b. 'foreign entities or individuals' refers to organisations, institutions, or associates formed in a jurisdiction, state, or country external to the University, and with whom a Researcher engages for proposed or ongoing research.
- c. 'peer review' means an impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a

related field;

- d. 'peer reviewer' means a University researcher conducting a peer review, including those conducting peer review for ethics applications; and
- e. 'researcher' means any University staff, conjoint/honorary appointments, students, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and volunteers who conduct research or contribute to research at the University.

## Section 6 - Overarching and Related Documents

(7) This policy is subject to the following overarching documents, and should be read in conjunction with these documents.

### Legislation

- a. [Animal Research Act 1985 No 123](#)
- b. [Animal Research Regulation 2010 \(NSW\)](#)
- c. [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 No 71](#)
- d. [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 No 40](#)
- e. [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 No 133](#)
- f. [Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994](#)
- g. [State Records Act 1998](#)
- h. [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018](#)
- i. [Defence Trade Controls Act 2012](#)
- j. [Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011](#)
- k. [Modern Slavery Act 2018](#)
- l. [Work Health and Safety Act 2001 No 10](#); and
- m. [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

### Codes

- a. [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) ("the Code");
- b. [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 2013](#); and
- c. [National Statement on ethical conduct in human research](#).

### Guidelines

- a. [Guidelines for Countering Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#) (University Foreign Interference Taskforce) ("the Guidelines").

## Section 7 - Responsibilities

### Researchers

(8) All University researchers are responsible for:

- a. accessing and understanding [the Code](#), the supporting Guidelines, and the requirements of both as they relate to research activities;
- b. accessing, understanding and adhering to this policy and its associated documents;
- c. reporting suspected breaches of [the Code](#) in accordance with the [Research Breach Investigation Procedure](#);

- d. disclosing to the University all collaborations, partnerships, contracts, grants, or other activities that are relevant or could appear to be relevant to proposed or ongoing research involving foreign entities or individuals;
- e. ensuring that adequate controls are developed and implemented to identify, manage, and monitor collaborations, partnerships, contracts, grants, and other activities involving foreign entities or individuals, to minimise the risk of foreign interference;
- f. upholding the principles of responsible research in all aspects of the research as outlined in [the Code](#);
- g. upholding the principles of the Guidelines, in the areas of culture and communication, foreign collaboration, research and intellectual property, and cyber security;
- h. undertaking induction and other training courses as soon as practicable when required or requested by the University, and prior to the commencement of funded research;
- i. playing an active role in supervision and peer review processes where applicable;
- j. reporting to the University instances where influence over supervision, peer, and grant review processes or research activities by foreign entities or individuals is suspected (foreign influence); and
- k. not seeking to influence a peer review or its outcome.

(9) Volunteer Researchers are also subject to the [Volunteer \(including Volunteer Researcher\) Policy](#).

(10) Responsibilities for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and supervisors, in addition to those outlined below, are reflected in the [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature](#) and the [Research Code of Practice for Students Enrolled in Honours Degrees - Guidelines](#), which should be read in conjunction with this document where applicable.

### **Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation**

(11) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (DVCRI) is responsible for establishing and maintaining:

- a. research governance and management practices in accordance with [the Code](#);
- b. a research culture that facilitates the prevention and detection of potential breaches of [the Code](#); and
- c. a disclosures register for research activities, collaborations, partnerships, contracts or grants involving foreign entities or individuals in support of the Guidelines.

### **College Heads**

(12) College Heads are responsible for ensuring that:

- a. all research staff are provided with appropriate induction, research integrity training and mentoring opportunities related to their responsibilities as outlined in this policy;
- b. research practices:
  - i. create a safe working environment for the conduct of research; and
  - ii. uphold the principles and requirements of this policy and its related documents;
- c. supervision of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates is in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature](#); and
- d. research supervisors have appropriate skills and qualifications prior to commencing supervisory duties, and are provided with an appropriate level of resources in order to conduct supervisory duties.

### **Assistant Deans (Research)**

(13) The Assistant Dean (Research)(s) will act as Research Integrity Advisors in accordance with [the Code](#) and the Guidelines and are responsible for:

- a. promoting and fostering responsible research conduct;
- b. providing advice regarding potential breaches of [the Code](#) and the Guidelines; and
- c. facilitating disclosures of research activities involving foreign entities or individuals.

## Chief Investigators

(14) Chief Investigators are responsible for:

- a. promoting a responsible research culture, including compliance with all relevant legislative obligations;
- b. providing guidance and mentorship on the conduct of responsible research to, and for monitoring the conduct of, Researchers and research trainees under their supervision;
- c. complying with the requirements of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the [Animal Research Act \(NSW\)](#), the [Animal Research Regulation \(NSW\)](#), and the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#) where animals are used in a research project;
- d. complying with the requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) where humans are used in a research project;
- e. disclosing all relevant interests related to research activities under their supervision (refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy definition of “relevant interest”);
- f. ensuring that Researchers under their supervision receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure their health, safety and welfare while undertaking research activities;
- g. assisting Researchers under their supervision to develop the necessary skills for peer review, and understanding their obligation to participate;
- h. ensuring that Researchers under their supervision receive appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision to ensure that research activities are resilient to foreign interference; and
- i. registering clinical trials where applicable, in accordance with clause 35.

## Peer Reviewers

(15) Peer reviewers are responsible for:

- a. undertaking peer review in a fair, constructive, rigorous and timely manner;
- b. applying standards equally to all research proposals;
- c. acting appropriately, respectfully, and in confidence;
- d. declaring all interests in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#);
- e. ensuring awareness of, and compliance with, the criteria to be applied during peer review including those of funding agencies and publishers; and
- f. giving proper consideration to analysis, theoretical framework, research methods and findings that challenge accepted ways of thinking.

# Section 8 - Training and Competency

(16) The University will provide regular training to all persons conducting research at the University.

(17) Training may be developed by or be across various business units of the University.

(18) Mandatory research integrity training must be completed when requested.

(19) The Research Integrity Unit will provide training to Assistant Deans (Research) to develop and promote the responsible conduct of research on a regular basis, or as required.

(20) Business units and staff involved in the development of training must implement adequate quality measures to ensure that the training:

- a. meets the needs of training participants;
- b. achieves the desired learning outcomes; and
- c. is reviewed regularly to ensure currency with this policy and any overarching and associated documents where applicable.

(21) Training may also be delivered in an unstructured format through peer review, mentoring and/or supervision practices.

(22) Research staff must:

- a. ensure that skills and knowledge gained from training provided by the University are applied to their research practices and conduct;
- b. where applicable, comply with the requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and/or the [Animal Research Policy](#) regarding competency; and
- c. where applicable, comply with the principles of the Guidelines.

## Section 9 - Disclosure of Interests

(23) University researchers must promptly disclose all interests that are, or may appear to be, relevant to research or proposed research to their line manager and, when circumstances require, to:

- a. the Chair of a meeting or committee;
- b. the University via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
- c. funding bodies;
- d. research participants;
- e. publishers and journal editors;
- f. research collaborators; and/or
- g. the public.

(24) Conflicts of interest must be disclosed promptly and proactively, and be managed in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

(25) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) supervisors and candidates are required to be familiar with and comply with the [Conflict of Interest for Higher Degree by Research Supervisors Guideline](#).

## Section 10 - Indigenous Engagement

(26) The University will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, either through direct engagement or via consultation with the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership, and/or the Wollotuka Institute, to ensure legal rights, local laws, customs and protocols are respected. Engagement will occur at appropriate intervals and timeframes to ensure that the University has sufficient knowledge and understanding of the significance and potential effect of research conducted by the University.

(27) Researchers should consider Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Protocols when undertaking engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Further guidance on ICIP protocols can be provided by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership.

(28) [Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders](#) and [Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Research](#) provides guidance for Indigenous research engagement.

## Section 11 - Research Approvals

### Ethics Approval

(29) All research involving humans or animals must be approved by the relevant Ethics Committee (Or other authorised approval authority) prior to commencement of any research activities.

(30) For human research the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) must be complied with. Please refer to the [Human Ethics - Application Procedures](#) webpage for procedures and forms.

(31) For research involving animals the [Animal Research Policy](#) must be complied with. Please refer to the [Obtaining approval for animal research](#) webpage for procedures and forms.

(32) University requirements for collaborative research projects involving ethics approvals must be met in accordance with the [Collaborative Research and Ethics Approval Guideline](#).

### Safety Approval

(33) A risk assessment and safety review must be completed for any new research activity in order to assess and mitigate any risks to the safety of persons involved in the research, prior to the commencement of research.

(34) Refer to the [Risk Assessments for Teaching and Research](#) webpage for instructions and forms to complete a risk assessment and safety review.

### Clinical Trials

(35) Clinical trials must be registered with a recognised registry to promote access to information about all clinical trials. The University recommends that clinical trials be registered with the [NHMRC Clinical Trials Registry](#).

## Section 12 - Peer Review

(36) All applications for ethics approval are subject to peer review as outlined in the [Research Peer Review Guideline for Ethics Applications](#).

(37) Peer review is to be conducted in accordance with College procedures and requirements where an ethics application is not required.

(38) Peer review will encompass:

- a. scrutiny of research analysis, methodology and findings, including any indication of fabrication or fraud;
- b. identification of errors and misleading statements; and
- c. verification of the calibre of research.

(39) Peer reviewers must not:

- a. contact the author(s) or other reviewers, unless authorised by the requestor of the peer review;
- b. seek to unduly influence the peer review process;

- c. be influenced by foreign entities or individuals (foreign influence);
- d. delegate their peer review responsibilities, unless authorised by the requestor of the peer review;
- e. take into account factors that are irrelevant to the peer review criteria;
- f. permit personal prejudices or stereotypical beliefs to influence the peer review process;
- g. take undue or calculated advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process; or
- h. participate in peer review outside their area of expertise.

## Section 13 - Intellectual Property

(40) All intellectual property related to University research is subject to the [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

## Section 14 - Research Data, Records and Materials

(41) The University will provide appropriate systems, facilities and procedures for the safe and secure storage of research data, and for the maintenance of accurate records.

(42) Research data, records and materials must be managed and stored in accordance with the:

- a. [Information Security Policy](#);
- b. [Records and Information Management Policy](#);
- c. [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#); and
- d. [Privacy Management Plan](#) where applicable.

(43) Where research data or information cannot be easily reproduced, these data and any associated primary materials must be managed and stored securely to ensure that:

- a. methods and results can be subject to scrutiny;
- b. outcomes can be validated;
- c. materials can be accessed for further research (where approved);
- d. the responsibilities of the University under applicable legislation and its own policies in relation to privacy and records management are met; and
- e. records relating to research breach allegations are retained until the matter is resolved.

(44) Researchers may retain copies of research data and primary materials. The College, Institute or Centre may retain original documents to ensure protection of the Researcher and the University. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that any copies of data and materials are retained in accordance with relevant University policies.

(45) Electronic research data will be classified and handled in accordance with the [Information Security Data Classification and Handling Manual](#).

(46) Research materials that require storage in a temperature controlled environment must be stored in accordance with the [Temperature Controlled Environments Policy](#).

(47) Systems for the retention and storage of research data and materials implemented by the University, its Colleges, Research Institutes and Centres, may be subject to auditing practices.

## Section 15 - Authorship

(48) Researchers must ensure that authorship of research meets the requirements of the [Research Authorship Procedure](#).

## Section 16 - Research Publication

(49) Publication of research findings is an important part of the research process and communicates the benefits of the research to the wider community. Publication may take the form of, but is not limited to:

- a. formal publication of the results in academic journals;
- b. web publishing; or
- c. conference papers.

(50) Research findings may also be disseminated to the wider community via public forums.

(51) Researchers must ensure that the dissemination of research findings:

- a. is responsible, accurate and broad;
- b. is in accordance with any relevant funding body requirements;
- c. is not in breach of any requirement of this policy or its associated documents; and
- d. does not place the University at risk.

(52) Research publication must be in accordance with the [Research Publication Responsibility Guideline](#).

(53) Where a student has undertaken research without an Intellectual Property Agreement (as per the [Intellectual Property Policy](#)), the student should not unreasonably withhold permission for a University staff member, or an approved external supervisor, to produce a scholarly publication based on data that was acquired by the student, provided that the students' contribution is appropriately acknowledged.

(54) With reference to clause 53, the University staff member or approved external supervisor is required to seek permission from the student to publish from research data acquired by that student.

## Section 17 - Research Reporting

(55) Parties to research within the University must fulfil their research reporting obligations, including:

- a. annual reporting to Council and required reporting to government by the Animal Care and Ethics Committee and the Human Research Ethics Committee;
- b. annual reporting of research activities, collaborations, partnerships, grants, and contracts involving foreign entities or individuals;
- c. progress and final reporting to funding bodies or ethics committees by Researchers, as required in research funding agreements or ethics protocols; and
- d. adverse events and protocol amendments.



## Section 18 - Research Promotion and University branding

(56) Promotion of research and the use of University branding or logos in research activities must be in accordance with the [Media Policy](#) and the [Corporate Identity Policy](#).

## Section 19 - Concerns and Complaints

(57) Concerns about animal research can be raised in accordance with information provided on the [Animal Ethics - Concerns About Research Animals](#) webpage.

(58) Concerns about human research can be raised in accordance with information provided on the [Human Ethics - Policies and Guidelines](#) webpage.

(59) Concerns regarding research not involving humans or animals can be raised in accordance with the [Research Complaints](#) webpage.

(60) Concerns regarding foreign interference involving research activities, collaborations, partnerships, grants, and contracts can be made to the University of Newcastle Foreign Interference Committee, via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

(61) Complaints that are unable to be resolved via any of the above mechanisms can be raised in accordance with the [Complaint Management Policy](#).

## Section 20 - Breaches

(62) A breach is a failure to meet the principles and responsibilities of [the Code](#), and may refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.

(63) Examples of breaches of the Code may include, but is not limited to:

- a. not meeting required research standards, including misuse of research funds;
- b. fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation;
- c. plagiarism;
- d. failure in research data management;
- e. failure to provide adequate supervision;
- f. failure to meet authorship requirements;
- g. failure to disclose conflicts of interest; or
- h. failure to conduct peer review responsibly.

(64) The University will investigate reported breaches in accordance with the [Research Breach Investigation Procedure](#).

(65) Suspected breaches in relation to the Guidelines should be reported to the University of Newcastle Foreign Interference Committee, via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). The DVCRI will investigate reported breaches with support from the Working Group.



## Status and Details

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<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Paula Jones Director, Research and Innovation +61 2 49215300
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Melissa Maloney Manager, Research Integrity +61 2 4985 4377 <hr/> Research and Innovation Services

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Higher Degree by Research (HDR)"** - Is a postgraduate university degree involving a unique supervised research project. These degrees are either a Masters of Philosophy, or a Doctoral degree (either Professional Doctorate or a PhD).

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Risk"** - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

**"Risk assessment"** - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Candidate"** - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"College"** - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.

**"Foreign influence"** - All governments, including Australia's, try to influence deliberations on issues of importance to them. These activities, when conducted in an open and transparent manner, are a normal aspect of international relations and diplomacy and can contribute positively to public debate.

**"Foreign interference"** - Foreign interference occurs when activities are carried out by, or on behalf of, a foreign actor that are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interests.