



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council
Australian Research Council



UNIVERSITIES
AUSTRALIA
DISCOVER LEARN LEAD

The Australian code for the responsible conduct of research

Public consultation draft

November 2016

Preamble

The Australian and international community expects research to be conducted responsibly, ethically and for the benefit of the community. The *Australian code for the responsible conduct of research* (the Code) articulates the broad principles that characterise an honest, ethical and conscientious research culture. It establishes a framework for responsible research conduct that provides a foundation for high-quality research, credibility and community trust in the research endeavour. It outlines the expectations for the conduct and the dissemination of research. It also provides a mechanism to assure funders of research of the appropriate and proper use of funding.

The primary responsibility for ensuring the integrity of research lies with individual researchers and institutions. The Code identifies a set of principles and responsibilities that both researchers and institutions are expected to follow when conducting research. Critical to this endeavour are the moral leadership and espoused values of the institution and the shared values and expectations of honesty and integrity that characterise an institution's leadership and culture.

The previous version of the Code has served as an important point of reference to researchers and administrators. In addition, its widespread adoption has provided the Australian community, and those responsible for funding research, with greater cause for confidence in the integrity of research. This updated version of the Code has the same goal, but is presented in a simpler way that more clearly articulates the high-level principles, responsibilities and expectations that apply to all research.

It is expected that all institutions and researchers will adhere to the Code in the conduct of all research. Compliance with this Code is a prerequisite for receipt of National Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Research Council funding.

This Code does not incorporate all the laws, regulations and guidelines and other codes of practice that apply to the conduct of research. Those responsible for the conduct of research are expected to be aware of and comply with the different laws and codes that apply to the conduct of that research.

The Code is supported by a series of better practice guides and other supplementary material that provide more detailed, and in some cases discipline-specific, guidance about how institutions and researchers can implement the broad principles and responsibilities outlined. Information about the guides and other supplementary material can be found at [link](#).

Principles of responsible research conduct

The principles (P1–P8) that are the hallmarks of responsible research conduct are:

P1 Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- Information will be presented truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting on research, and any claims made will be justifiable and evidence-based.

P2 Rigour in conducting high-quality research

- Research will be underpinned by attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases.

P3 Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodologies and findings

- Research methodology, research findings and knowledge will be shared and communicated openly.
- Conflicts of interest will be disclosed and managed.

P4 Fairness in the treatment of others

- Fellow researchers will be treated fairly and with respect.
- The work of others will be appropriately referenced and cited.
- Appropriate credit, including authorship, will be given to those who have contributed to the research.

P5 Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment

- Human participants in research and communities that are affected by the research will be treated with care and respect.
- Respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions related to the care and use of animals in research.
- Adverse effects on the environment will be minimised.

P6 Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities significantly involved in or affected by research

- The heritage, diversity, cultural property and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities will be recognised, valued and respected.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities will be consulted and involved in decisions about research and will be informed about research outcomes and benefits.

P7 Accountability for the conduct of research

- Researchers and institutions will take responsibility for the research they conduct.
- Researchers will consider the consequences and outcomes of research prior to its communication.
- Researchers and institutions will ensure good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research.
- Research will comply with all relevant legislation and governmental and institutional policies and guidelines.

P8 Promotion of responsible conduct in the research community

- Researchers and institutions will promote responsible research conduct principles and mentor and supervise research trainees and early career researchers.

Responsibilities (R1–R12) of institutions

Responsible research conduct is fostered and underpinned by the research culture of the institution. Institutions have an obligation to encourage and support responsible research conduct. They are accountable to funding organisations and the Australian community for how research is undertaken. To foster responsible research conduct, institutions will:

- R1 Promote a research culture and environment that supports researchers in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.
- R2 Encourage open exchange of ideas between peers, and respect for freedom of expression and inquiry.
- R3 Provide training and education in responsible research conduct for all researchers and research administrators.
- R4 Ensure that supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources to supervise research.
- R5 Establish good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct.
- R6 Develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code.
- R7 Provide facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties.
- R8 Identify and comply with relevant legislation, regulations and policies related to the conduct of research.
- R9 Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code, and have mechanisms in place to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code.
- R10 Promote the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code. This should include identifying and training Research Integrity Advisors (RIAs) who provide advice to those with concerns about responsible research conduct.
- R11 Ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code is timely, effective and in accord with procedural fairness. Findings are to be made on the balance of probabilities.
- R12 Support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code and ensure that any consequent actions are proportionate to the breach.

Responsibilities (R13–R28) of researchers

Researchers will ensure the principles of responsible research conduct are manifest in all aspects of their research. More specifically, researchers will:

- R13 Foster, promote and maintain an approach to the development, conduct and reporting of research based on honesty and integrity.
- R14 Ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research.
- R15 Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities are consulted about research significantly affecting them.
- R16 Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) will be considered at all stages of research involving animals. Act to minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals.
- R17 Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- R18 Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions drawn are justifiable.
- R19 Disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly.
- R20 Retain clear, accurate and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties. Where required, maintain the confidentiality of research data, records and primary materials.
- R21 Cite and acknowledge other work appropriately and accurately and obtain permission for the use of unpublished work.
- R22 Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research.
- R23 Ensure that authors of research outputs are those, and only those, who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author.
- R24 Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers, or research trainees under their supervision, and monitor their conduct.
- R25 Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.
- R26 Participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.
- R27 Comply with the relevant, laws, regulations, disciplinary standards and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Ensure that appropriate approvals are in place prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research.
- R28 Report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.

Definitions for terms used in the Code

Term	Definition
3Rs	The 3Rs are three principles that underpin a systematic framework to achieve the goal of humane experimental techniques. The principles are: Replacement of animals with other methods; Reduction in the number of animals used; and Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals.
Balance of probabilities	The standard of proof required to determine whether there is sufficient evidence that it is more probable than not that the breach occurred.
Breach	Behaviour that fails to meet the principles or responsibilities of the Code, or fails to comply with relevant policies or legislation. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
Conflict of interest	<p>A conflict of interest in the context of research exists where either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. a person's individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations in research.2. an institution's interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of its research obligations. <p>A conflict may relate to financial interests or other private, professional or institutional benefits or advantages that depend significantly on the research outcomes.</p> <p>A conflict of interest may compromise the research process itself and/or the institutional processes governing research, and may lead researchers or institutions to base decisions about the research on factors outside the research requirements.</p> <p>A perception that a conflict of interest exists can be as serious as an actual conflict, raising concerns about an individual's integrity or an institution's management practices.</p>
Institution	Includes universities, independent research institutes, hospitals or any other organisation that conducts research.
Peer review	The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
Research	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.
Research data	Any data collected during research that could be used to validate the research findings and/or facilitate the reproduction of the research.
Researcher	Person or persons who conducts research, including academics, research trainees, Honours and Higher Degree Research students and professional staff.

Development of the Code

The Code has been jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia (UA) in accordance with the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992*. The development of the Code has been overseen by an expert working committee that consisted of the following members:

Member	Position
Professor Mike Calford (Chair)	Provost, University of Tasmania
Professor Mike Brooks	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, University of Adelaide
Professor Andrew Davidson	Medical Director, Melbourne Children's Trials Centre, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute
Emeritus Professor Toni Makkai	Former Dean, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University
Professor Philip Mitchell	Head of the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales
Emeritus Professor Janice Reid	Former Vice-Chancellor and President, Western Sydney University
Dr Paul Taylor	Director, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University
Professor Mandy Thomas	Executive Dean, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology
Dr Karolyn White	Director, Research Ethics and Integrity, Macquarie University

The Code is endorsed by UA, ARC and <other organisations to be inserted in final version>.

