Research Principles

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For more than 150 years, the Royal Charter of the University of Sydney has included the phrase "the promotion of useful knowledge". The University of Sydney Act specifically identifies amongst the objects and functions of the University "the promotion … of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence". Throughout its existence the profile and reach of the University has grown nationally and internationally with an expanding network of partner institutions and the exchange of ideas, research and disciplinary advances. Our students and our staff who are engaged in research are participants in a global culture of research and inquiry at the University.

The University of Sydney is an international research institution which values:

- Excellence – of students, staff, research, research environment and research training
- Intellectual inquiry
- Academic Freedom
- Diversity of defensible opinions and values
- Integrity and ethical practice in all academic endeavours

The University subscribes to the definition of research offered by the OECD:

- creative work, undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications;
- any activity classified as research is characterised by originality; it should have investigation as a primary objective and should have the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for humanity's stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) to be recognisably increased. Most higher education research work would qualify as research;
- pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research and experimental development.

The understanding of research at the University accords parity of esteem to academic research and creative artistic work.

Nine major principles support research and research training at the University of Sydney:

1. **The University values excellence in research**
   Research in the University is undertaken in the belief that it will benefit society by increasing knowledge, foster innovation and discovery, enrich culture, and contribute to social well-being.

2. **The University promotes the acquisition of research skills**
   All researchers are encouraged to evaluate critically and independently the literature of their own and related research fields; to be able to define a research problem (and to establish its significance); to be able to plan and develop ways of investigating it; to execute, critically evaluate and report on the outcome (including critical reflection on progress); and to understand the theory, operation and appropriate application of relevant techniques and methodologies.

3. **The University fosters an appreciation and understanding of the research environment and the proper management of research**
   All researchers are encouraged to understand and appreciate the ethical issues and intellectual property issues of their own and related research, occupational health and safety issues, and to be skilled in good research practice. Researchers need to understand how research is funded and evaluated (including government- and contract-funded research) and be able to justify their selection of techniques and methodologies in their research. All researchers are encouraged to manage their own research, to establish priorities and to develop the requisite skills.

4. **The University promotes the dissemination of research outcomes**
   The appropriate dissemination of research outcomes, whether as books, published papers, conference presentations, performances, exhibitions, patents, etc., is vital. Peer review begins within the research environment, and students should be encouraged to look to publication in appropriate media from early in their research career.

5. **The University encourages personal effectiveness and initiative in research**
   All researchers are encouraged to develop and demonstrate initiative and self-reliance, the ability to identify the need for extra skills or training and a willingness to learn new knowledge and techniques.

6. **The University promotes the development of effective communication skills**
   All researchers are encouraged to write clearly and concisely for a variety of audiences (thesis examiners, journal editors and readers, the general public, patent examiners, research contractors, etc.) and to be able to articulate and defend coherently their ideas, arguments, interpretations and research outcomes. They should be able to convince both expert and lay audiences of the merits of their research and that of their field.

7. **The University fosters the development of team work and leadership skills**
   Research requires collaboration, whether of a supervisor with an Honours or postgraduate candidate, of a colleague or colleagues, or of members of a research team. Students and staff alike are encouraged to learn how to work as part of a team and to adopt leadership roles in their team, working effectively with supervisors, peers and less experienced colleagues. All researchers are encouraged to listen, to give and receive feedback and to provide a considered response to the comments of others. In particular, they should critically evaluate, not uncritically follow, advice.

8. **The University promotes research-led teaching**
   The University's research ethos and strengths infuse all undergraduate and postgraduate learning and teaching. Research-led teaching emphasises the partnership of academics and students as they engage in the critical challenge of open exploratory inquiry and it encourages active learning, critical creative thinking and lifelong learning.

9. The University insists on ethical behaviour

The University expects all its researchers to take responsibility for ensuring scholarly and scientific rigour and integrity, in obtaining, recording and analysing data and in presenting, reporting and publishing results. Rigour and integrity are indicated by: (1) giving appropriate recognition to those who have made an intellectual contribution to the contents of a publication; (2) obtaining the permission of the author before using new information, concepts or data originally obtained through access to confidential data; (3) conforming to University requirements for working with humans, animals, and bio-hazards; (4) using research funds in accordance with the terms and conditions under which those funds were received; and (5) disclosing to the University any conflict of interest (financial, personal or other) that might influence their research.