

QAF135: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1. Purpose

The Higher Education Leadership Institute ("HELI" or "the Institute") is committed to research quality, and to the highest standards of integrity and ethics in the development, ethical approval and conduct of all research and research training. HELI is committed to supporting its staff and students upholding the principles of research and scholarly integrity and ensuring that there is a clear and continued understanding of expectations relating to achieving and maintaining best practice in research and related scholarly activities.

HELI seeks to create and maintain an environment where research and scholarship activities are carried out with honesty, integrity, and scientific rigour.

This Policy describes the principles of the responsible conduct of research and scholarship and supports compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations relating to research and research training at HELI, including the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research ([the Code](#)), the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*, and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- a. All HELI students and staff, including full-time and part-time, continuing and casual, onshore and offshore academic staff. The policy also applies to consultants, contractors and other persons involved in Research in collaboration with HELI Staff, Candidates or students, or engaged by HELI to undertake specific Research.;
- b. All research activities, including research training;
- c. All staff and research supervisors;
- d. Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates.

This policy does not apply to students undertaking coursework units at the Institute. Allegations of academic misconduct for coursework students are managed under the Institute's Academic Integrity Policy.

3. Definition

Research: The HELI definition of Research and Scholarship is based on the definition used by the Australian Research Council (ARC) to frame the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) evaluation. 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.

4. Policy

Purpose of Assuring the Responsible Conduct of Research

HELI is committed to the highest standards of professional conduct. Hence, researchers at or associated with the Institute are expected to conduct their work according to regulatory requirements, recognising national and international ethical standards and the highest disciplinary and professional expectations.

The conduct of research at HELI requires HELI to specify obligations and responsibilities relating to research, and to ensure research is conducted in a manner that is consistent with the HELI's governance documents.

Research and its associated activities are prescribed by a research policy framework that complies with the Threshold Standards through:

- a. ethical conduct of research and responsible research practice;
- b. documented mechanisms for ownership and management of intellectual property;
- c. documented requirements for publication and authorship; and
- d. means to resolve allegations of misconduct in research.

Research at HELI is conducted and overseen by staff with qualifications, research knowledge, experience and skills relevant to the type of research undertaken and their role.

A system for accurate and up-to-date recording of the research outputs of staff and HDR candidates will be maintained.

This policy:

- a. ensures HELI adopts the Code;
- b. establishes how the HELI and its researchers and staff will comply with the Code and the Threshold Standards;
- c. seeks to minimise risk and protect the interests of the Institute, researchers, staff and HDR candidates when engaging in research; and
- d. seeks to protect research participants and the environment.

In the event of any inconsistency between HELI's governance and other documents and the Code, the Code will prevail.

5. Principles

HELI has adopted the following key principles in conducting research through the lifecycle from conception through development, delivery and dissemination in line with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code). The principles are:

- a. **Honesty:** HELI researchers must truthfully and accurately present information through the research lifecycle.
- b. **Rigour:** HELI researchers must underpin research by paying attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases in conducting research.
- c. **Transparency:** HELI researchers must share and communicate research methodology, data and findings openly, responsibly and accurately when declaring interests and when reporting research methodology and findings. This includes disclosing and sharing conflicts of interest.
- d. **Fairness:** HELI researchers must treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect. This includes giving credit for work through citations of other researcher's work and through acknowledgement of those who have contributed to the research.
- e. **Respect:** HELI researchers must treat with care and respect research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment, especially minority groups and vulnerable people.
- f. **Recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples in relation to**

research: HELI researchers must ensure that ATSI groups are:

- i. specifically acknowledged, valued and respected;
 - ii. involved in decision-making about research that affects or is of particular significance to them; and
 - iii. receive reports about the outcomes of research in which they have been engaged.
- g. Accountability: HELI researchers must comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines, ensure good stewardship of any public resources, such as grants, used to conduct the research and carefully consider the consequences and outcomes of research before its communication.
- h. Promotion of responsible research practices: HELI researchers must endeavour to promote and foster a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research

6. Responsibilities of HELI

HELI notes the following key institutional responsibilities through which to meet its obligation to encourage and support responsible research conduct, in line with the Code. HELI's policies ensure that it meets its responsibilities to:

- a. establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct;
- b. identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the conduct of research;
- c. 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;
- d. provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles;
- e. ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources;
- f. identify and train Research Integrity Advisors who assist in the promotion and fostering of responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code;
- g. support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner;
- h. provide access to 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;
- i. facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code;
- j. provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code. Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code;
- k. 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;
- l. support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code;
- m. base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

7. Specific Roles and Responsibilities

The Academic Dean is responsible for:

- a. Monitoring and reviewing Research and Scholarly Activity for the whole of HELI;
- b. Oversight of performance management of academic staff including Research and Scholarly Activity;
- c. Oversight of the allocation of internal funding for Research and Scholarly Activity.

The Associate Dean, Scholarship and Research is responsible for:

- a. Monitoring Research and Scholarly Activity and maintaining records of such activity;
- b. Reporting at least bi-annually to S&RC and Academic Board on Research and Scholarly Activity. The report will detail the types of activities undertaken, the individuals engaged in Scholarly Activities and the funds contributed by HELI to support the scholarly activities;
- c. Fostering discussion with peers on Research and Scholarly Activity;
- d. Considering, and making recommendations to the Academic Dean, requests to use HELI internal data for Research and Scholarly Activity;
- e. Coordinating agreements with external parties related to Research and Scholarly Activity.

8. Responsibilities of researchers

HELI endorses the responsibilities of researchers as set out in the Code. Each individual member of the internal academic staff is responsible for reporting accurate records of their Research activity within the HELI Research Portal and to the Associate Dean, Scholarship and Research. Academic staff Research and Scholarly activity is captured as the activity occurs and is monitored annually. All researchers will:

- a. support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice;
- b. provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct;
- c. undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct;
- d. comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct;
- e. ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research;
- f. ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect are applied to human research;
- g. engage with First Nations peoples where possible, and respect their local laws, customs, and protocols;
- h. adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results;
- i. retain clear, accurate, secure, and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials, and where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these

records by interested parties;

- j. disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately, and broadly and, where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner;
- k. disclose and manage actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest;
- l. ensure that authors of research outputs are all 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;
- m. acknowledge those who have contributed to the research;
- n. cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately;
- o. participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous, and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content;
- p. report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.

9. Training for Researchers

HELI will provide regular training to all persons conducting research, including HDR candidates. Research integrity training must be completed when requested by the Institute.

Staff involved in the development of training must implement adequate quality measures to ensure that the training:

- a. meets the needs of participants;
- b. achieves desired outcomes; and
- c. is reviewed regularly.

Structured programs may be provided by expert organizations such as Epigeum. Unstructured training may be provided through mechanisms such as peer review, mentoring, and research supervision.

10. Disclosure of Interests

Conflicts of interest must be disclosed promptly and proactively and be managed in accordance with the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. HDR supervisors and candidates are required to be familiar with the Institute's Conflict of Interest protocols.

The Code requires researchers to disclose to an institution all interests that are relevant, or could appear to be relevant, to proposed or ongoing research. Where required, relevant interests may also need to be disclosed to funding bodies, research participants, publishers and journal editors, collaborators and the public.

Under the Code, a conflict of interest exists in a situation where an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the professional actions of a person are or may be unduly influenced by other interests. The perception that a conflict of interest exists is a serious matter and can raise concerns about the integrity of individuals or the management practices of the institution, potentially undermining community trust in research.

11. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Researchers will consider Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Protocols when

undertaking engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples.

The Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities must be adopted: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders and Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Research provides guidance for Indigenous research engagement.

12. Research Integrity

HELI is committed to sound Research governance and management practices, promotion of responsible Research conduct, and providing a safe Research environment. HELI appoints academics with the strict expectation that they are personally and professionally responsible for conducting Research in a manner that is fully compliant with disciplinary, institutional and regulatory obligations.

HELI requires people engaged in Research under its auspices to maintain the highest standards of professional and responsible Research conduct and integrity. Researchers will ensure that they and their Research activities adhere to the principles contained in this policy and the principles of the 2018 Code. People who conduct or oversee Research at HELI will be appropriately skilled, experienced and qualified, relevant for the type of Research. Supervisors are responsible for modelling of behaviour and will ensure Candidates under their supervision are aware of, and comply with, the 2018 Code and its obligations.

Researchers (i.e. any person who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, Research) must:

- a. present information truthfully and accurately in developing, undertaking and reporting Research;
- b. identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in keeping with applicable requirements or standards;
- c. ensure that Research methods, results and outputs are robust, justifiable, conducted with rigour and open to scrutiny and debate;
- d. communicate Research results in a responsible manner, acknowledge the contribution and role of others in Research, including authorship where appropriate;
- e. ensure good stewardship of resources and minimise adverse effects of Research on individuals, communities and the environment;
- f. recognise, value and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property and connection to land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prior to Research being undertaken, and report the outcomes of the Research back to those involved in the Research;
- g. be aware of and comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines.

Where Research requires ethics and/or other relevant compliance approvals, HELI undertakes to seek approvals in accordance with the Ethics Review Committee Terms of Reference and other applicable policies and procedures prior to conducting their Research, attain such approvals if necessary, and conduct their Research in a manner consistent with the approval given.

13. Research conduct

- a. HELI expects Researchers, and any members of the HELI community, to act in a timely manner in reporting a case of suspected breach of the code and/or this policy.

- b. Failure to adhere to this policy and the code is a serious matter that may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- c. HELI's Responsible Integrity Breach Management Procedure outlines how to make, receive and report allegations and complaints about suspected Research breaches or misconduct.

14. Research ethics

HELI is committed to the Ethical conduct of Research and has developed relevant policies and procedures which meet the national standards. HELI encourages its staff, Candidates and students to freely pursue Research, subject only to the normal constraints of such investigation (e.g. legal and ethical considerations, practicality and feasibility, financial, etc.).

- a. Research will be conducted ethically and responsibly by staff, Candidates and students.
- b. Research undertaken by staff, Candidates or students that involves human participants must have prior written approval from the HELI Ethics Committee, and such approval is to be given at the discretion of the HELI Ethics Committee and may be subject to any conditions that the HELI Ethics Committee deems ethically appropriate.

15. Research Ethics Peer Review

Peer review has a number of important roles in research and research management, including:

- a. the assessment of research proposals and grant applications;
- b. the assessment and selection of material for publication and dissemination;
- c. the assessment of the research of Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates;
- d. the assessment of research quality, engagement and impact by government bodies; and
- e. other reviews or assessments of research conducted by individual researchers, teams, academic units and institutions.

Peer review provides expert scrutiny of proposed research or research outputs and helps to maintain high standards in research, including by ensuring that accepted disciplinary standards are met. At its best, peer review contributes to accurate, thorough and credible reporting of research.

Peer review may also draw attention to departures from the principles in the Code, including by identifying plagiarism, duplicative publication, errors and misleading statements.

Participating in peer review also provides benefits for researchers, including keeping abreast of the most recent research, improving critical analysis skills and understanding of peer review processes, and obtaining recognition for contributions to peer review.

16. Authorship Agreements

HELI will record appropriately classified Research outputs and include peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed outputs, such as journal publications, conference papers and Research reports.

HELI Researchers are required to comply with the criteria for authorship, for fair and appropriate attribution as outlined in the 2018 Code and associated Guide. An author is an individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and agrees to be listed as an author.

17. Research and Data Management

The responsible conduct of Research includes the secure, complete and accurate management and retention of the Research data and primary materials, such as questionnaires and recordings.

Ownership and management of intellectual property created by staff, Candidates and students at HELI is covered in the Intellectual Property Policy.

Research institutions have a responsibility to develop and implement policies and provide facilities and processes for the safe and secure storage and management of research data and primary materials in order to allow for the justification and verification of the outcomes of research. This will maximise the potential for future research and minimise the waste of resources that are of value to researchers and the wider community.

18. Research Collaborations and Partnerships

HELI encourages and supports collaboration between Researchers, institutions, industry and across jurisdictions. HELI will have agreements in place with selected organisations to enable collaborative Research. Such Research partnership agreements will include reference to ownership of intellectual property, conflicts of interest, responsibility for ethical and other clearances, data management, publication and commercialisation of Research outcomes.

Collaborative research between institutions can take various forms and include research partners in industry, the government and not-for-profit sectors, and researchers from multiple countries. Collaborative research can pose a range of challenges, including the need to accommodate specific research methodologies and research practices that exist in different research institutions, variations in regulatory and legal systems, institutional funding arrangements and organisational structures, and differing research cultures. These challenges should not be seen as a barrier to collaborative research, but as elements to be managed through normal risk management processes.

19. Breaches (Overview of the separate Research Integrity Breach Management Procedure)

HELI has no tolerance for Research Misconduct or unethical behaviour in its Research activities. All allegations that the 2018 Code has been breached will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant HELI policy and procedure.

The procedures for addressing allegations of Research Misconduct will be applied fairly and consistently, exhibit procedural fairness and will take into account the extent and type of Research Misconduct, and any history a person has in breaching the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The occurrence and nature of Research Misconduct and breaches of Research Integrity will be recorded and monitored. Data on breaches of Research Integrity will be used to inform improvements to Research practice and action will be taken to address any underlying causes of misconduct that are identified. The data and current best practice will inform the regular review of this Policy and any related procedures.

The Breaches Procedure provides examples of the range of behaviours that can constitute a breach of the Code. The seriousness of a breach is to be determined on a case-by-case basis and requires good judgement, careful deliberation and an appreciation of the context and accepted academic disciplinary norms. Institutions may choose to designate some serious breaches as 'research misconduct'. This document provides guidance on the use of the term.

This Breaches Procedure describes the rigour required when investigating potential breaches of the Code and provides a benchmark for the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC) to assess institutional processes used to investigate a potential breach of the Code.

Institutions must ensure that all investigations are procedurally fair. Investigations must be proportional, fair, impartial, timely, transparent and confidential. Investigations must also result in findings of fact to determine whether a breach of the Code has occurred.

20. Publication, Publication Reporting and Monitoring and related guides in the codes

Publication and dissemination of research is an important part of the research process, passing on the benefits to a diverse range of potential beneficiaries of research, including other researchers, research sponsors, consumers and industry, policymakers, and the public. Methods of dissemination continue to evolve and expand, which can assist in more effectively reaching diverse audiences.

The relevant Guide applies to dissemination of traditional and non-traditional research outputs (e.g. original creative works, performances and exhibitions) and non-refereed publications (e.g. conferences, interviews, pre-prints and social media), as well as dissemination undertaken as part of applications for research grants and forms of financial support.

21. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018

The [2018 Code](#) is a principles-based document that articulates the broad principles and responsibilities that underpin the conduct of Australian research. Developed jointly by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, the 2018 Code has broad relevance across all research disciplines. The 2018 Code is also supported by guides on specific topics to encourage responsible research conduct.

In addition to the development of the Code, guides on a range of key topics have been released and are briefly referred to below:

- a. [Managing and investigating potential breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- b. [Authorship](#)
- c. [Management of data and information in research](#)
- d. [Peer review](#)
- e. [Disclosure of interests and management of conflicts of interest](#)
- f. [Supervision](#)
- g. [Collaborative research](#)
- h. [Publication and dissemination of research](#)
- i. [Research Integrity Advisors Guide](#)

22. References

HERDC. (2018). *2018 Higher Education Research Data Collection. Specifications for the collection of 2017 data*. Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Education.

HESF. (2021). *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, Department of Education and Training.

National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia. (2023). [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. National Health and Medical Research Council.](#)

TEQSA. (2018). Guidance Note: Research and Research Training. Version 1.3. Melbourne, VIC: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

23. Associated documents

- a. QAF005 Academic Freedom, Integrity and Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy.
- b. QAF080 Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- c. FRM501 Human Research Ethics Committee Proposal Form.
- d. FRM502 Human Research Ethics Register.
- e. Breaches of Research Integrity Procedures
- f. QAF070 HELI Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- g. QAF136 Higher Degree Research Policy and Procedure

24. Version history

Document ID	QAF135 HELI Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship Policy
Category	Academic
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Approved by	Academic Board

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	24 November 2021	Initial document approval
2.0	Academic Board	7 March 2024	<p>The substantially revised Policy contains many essential improvements, including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of purpose, scope and definition; • Closer alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (the Code); • Inclusion of principles; • More detailed responsibilities of HELI and researchers, and specified research leaders; • Inclusion of reference to conduct breaches and the alignment to the new

			<p>procedures presented in this suite of 3 items;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of disclosures, training for researchers, and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; • Less specific information on HREC matters, which apply to research ethics processes, and on which more detail will be provided at the meeting.
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