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Preamble

The Australian and international community expects research to be conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity. 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 of research in Australia or research conducted under the auspices of Australian institutions.

The primary responsibility for ensuring the integrity of research lies with individual researchers and institutions. The Code sets out 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 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 across all disciplines.

This Code does not incorporate 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 applicable laws and codes.

The Code will be supported by a number of Guides that detail how to comply with the principles and responsibilities of the Code. The advice is relevant to the diversity of Australian research institutions and research disciplines. Institutions and researchers are strongly encouraged to follow the advice in the Guides. For institutions, the Guides provide a reference for the development of processes that promote the principles and responsibilities of the Code.

The Code represents the core behaviours that characterise the responsible conduct of research. A failure to meet the principles and responsibilities set out in the Code is a breach of the Code. A breach of the Code occurs on a spectrum from minor breaches to those that are more serious. A serious breach of the Code that is carried out with intent or recklessness or negligence is particularly egregious and may be referred to as research misconduct. The *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Code* (the Investigation Guide) outlines the preferred model for institutions to use to investigate and manage potential breaches, determine any corrective actions to ensure the integrity of the research record and when a finding of research misconduct may be made.

The Australian Research Integrity Committee will use the Investigation Guide as a benchmark for reviewing how an institution funded by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) or Australian Research Council (ARC) has managed a potential breach of the Code.

Compliance with this Code is a requirement for the receipt of funding by NHMRC and ARC.

Other research agencies are encouraged to adopt this Code as a mandatory requirement.

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

- Present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting research.

P2 **Rigour** in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- Underpin research by attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases.

P3 **Transparency** in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings

- Share and communicate research methodology, data and findings openly, responsibly and accurately.
- Disclose and manage conflicts of interest.

P4 **Fairness** in the treatment of others

- Treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect.
- Appropriately reference and cite the work of others.
- Give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.

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

- Treat human participants and communities that are affected by the research with care and respect, giving appropriate consideration to the needs of minority groups or vulnerable people.
- Ensure that respect underpins all decisions and actions related to the care and use of animals in research.
- Minimise adverse effects of the research on the environment.

P6 **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

- Recognise, value and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property and connection to land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prior to research being undertaken, so that they freely make decisions about their involvement.
- Report to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the outcomes of research in which they have engaged.

P7 **Accountability** for the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- Comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines.
- Ensure good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research.
- Consider the consequences and outcomes of research prior to its communication.

P8 **Promotion** of responsible research practices

- Promote and foster a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research.

Responsibilities 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 conducted. To foster responsible research conduct, institutions will:

R1 Establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct.

R2 Identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the conduct of research.

R3 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.

R4 Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles.

R5 Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources.

R6 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.

R7 Support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.

R8 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.

R9 Facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code.

R10 Provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code. Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code.

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.

R12 Support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code.

R13 Base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

Responsibilities of researchers

Researchers will uphold the principles of responsible research conduct in all aspects of their research. To this end, researchers will:

R14 Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.

R15 Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.

R16 Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.

R17 Comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. 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.

R18 Ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research.

R19 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols.

R20 Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of research involving animals and minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals.

R21 Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results.

R22 Retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials. Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties.

R23 Disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.

R24 Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

R25 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.

R26 Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research.

R27 Cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately.

R28 Participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.

R29 Report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.

Definitions

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 civil standard of proof, which requires that, on the weight of evidence, it is more probable than not that a breach has occurred.
Breach	A failure to meet the principles and responsibilities of the Code. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
Conflict of interest	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. This refers to a financial or non-financial interest which may be a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest.
Institution	Includes universities, independent research institutes, hospitals or any other organisation that conducts research. May refer to one or multiple institutions.
Peer review	The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
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.
Research misconduct	A serious breach of the Code which is also intentional or reckless or negligent.
Researcher	Person (or persons) who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.

Development of the Code

The Code has been jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia as a guideline under 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	Period
Professor Mike Calford (Chair)	Provost, University of Tasmania	April 2015–December 2017
Professor Mike Brooks	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, University of Adelaide	April 2015–December 2017
Professor Andrew Davidson	Medical Director, Melbourne Children's Trials Centre, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute	April 2015–December 2017
Emeritus Professor Toni Makkai	Former Dean, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University	April 2015–December 2017
Professor Philip Mitchell	Head of the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales	April 2015–December 2017
Emeritus Professor Janice Reid	Former Vice-Chancellor and President, Western Sydney University	April 2015–December 2016
Dr Paul Taylor	Director, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University	February 2016–December 2017
Professor Mandy Thomas	Executive Dean, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology	April 2015–August 2017
Dr Karolyn White	Director, Research Ethics and Integrity, Macquarie University	April 2015–December 2017
Dr Sarah Winch	Head of the Discipline of Medical Ethics, Law and Professionalism, The University of Queensland	December 2016–December 2017