

# Research Policy



## Purpose/objective

The purpose of this Policy is to enshrine ethical research practices at Australasian Academy of Higher Education (AAHE) and to outline the processes for dealing with breaches of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Australian Government \(2018\)](#). The Policy should be read in conjunction with the plans, policies and procedures that form AAHE's overarching framework for the conduct of research, including the:

- Strategic Plan
- Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Academic Staff Scholarship Policy and Procedure
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure
- Performance Management Policy and Procedure
- Academic Promotions Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Policy and Procedure
- Prevention of Fraud Policy and Procedure.

## Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all AAHE staff, students, honorary and visiting appointments.

## Definitions

<b>Australian Research Code</b>	Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Australian Government (2018)
<b>Investigation Guide</b>	Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
<b>Research</b>	also referred to at AAHE as "Discovery Scholarship", is original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight and involves the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions or understandings. This can include the combination and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative, and it may be funded or unfunded work
<b>Researcher</b>	any individual or group of persons who conduct research at or on behalf of AAHE
<b>Research Framework</b>	the combination of policies, plans and procedures that regulate and guide research activity at AAHE

<b>Metadata</b>	information that describes the research data characteristics such as content, format, location and access rights
<b>Research Data</b>	the data, observations, results records or other evidence that comprise research observations, findings or outcomes regardless of the form or the media on which they may be recorded
<b>Primary Materials</b>	research materials that are physical objects such as survey questionnaires and recordings

## Policy

### 1. Principles

- 1.1 This policy draws from the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (*Australian Research Code*).
- 1.2 The principles underpinning the *Australian Research Code* applicable to AAHE are:
  - a) **Honesty** in the development, undertaking and reporting of research.
  - b) **Rigour** in the development, undertaking and reporting of research.
  - c) **Transparency** in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings.
  - d) **Fairness** in the treatment of others.
  - e) **Respect** for research participants, the wider community.....and the environment.
  - f) **Accountability** for the development, undertaking and reporting of research.
  - g) **Promotion** of responsible research practices (*Australian Research Code*, p. 2)

### 2. Governance and Management

- 2.1 Academic Board is responsible for establishing and maintaining good governance practices for the responsible conduct of research.
- 2.2 The Dean is responsible to Academic Board for the day-to-day management of the responsibilities that follow.
- 2.3 Academic Board will:
  - a) ensure compliance with the *Australian Research Code*, all relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the conduct of research
  - b) develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensures that AAHE's institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the *Australian Research Code*
  - c) promote responsible research conduct for all AAHE researchers and those in other relevant roles
  - d) ensure supervisors of research students at AAHE have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources

- e) promote responsible research conduct and provide advice to staff, students, honorary and visiting scholars with concerns about potential breaches of the *Australian Research Code*
- f) support the responsible dissemination of research findings, and where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner
- g) oversee access to facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allowing access and reference (see also *Privacy Policy & Procedure*)
- h) facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the *Australian Research Code*
- i) provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the *Australian Research Code*
- j) investigate and resolve potential breaches of the *Australian Research Code*
- k) ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the *Australian Research 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 *Australian Research Code*
- m) base the findings of their investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure that any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

### 3. Responsibilities of Researchers

All researchers are required to:

- a) support a culture of responsible research conduct at AAHE and within their disciplinary field
- b) support responsible research conduct by other researchers or research students under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct
- c) familiarise themselves with responsible research conduct under the *Australian Research Code*
- d) comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and AAHE 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 principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to all research projects
- g) where research involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, engage with and respect the legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders
- 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. Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties
- j) disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly. 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 the 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 Australian Research Code to the author and/or the Dean as appropriate.

## Procedure

### 1. Project approval

- 1.1 A researcher who wishes to conduct research at or affiliated with AAHE must first forward a research proposal containing study rationale and objective(s) together with full methodological details to the Dean.
- 1.2 The Dean will approve the proposal to go forward for approval by Academic Board and propose the names of an *ad hoc* Research and Ethics Committee to Academic Board for their approval.
- 1.3 The Research and Ethics Committee will comment on the academic merit and compliance with the *Australian Research Code* of the proposal or (if applicable) with the *National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research*) and forward the project to Academic Board for approval or rejection.

### 2. Data storage and retention

- 2.1 Research materials and data, metadata and records of those must be kept in a format and for a period that is consistent with recommendations of the *Australian Research Code* and the *National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research (if applicable)*.
- 2.2 Research data should be retained for a minimum period of 5 years from the date of the award of the degree or publication, whichever is the later.
- 2.3 Research data must be available for discussion with other researchers, subject to AAHE privacy requirements and legal, contractual, confidentiality and ethical considerations. It must be easily identifiable and retrievable by authorised users.
- 2.4 Researchers are encouraged to make their research data available as open access unless restrictions are required.

- 2.5 Research materials and data must not be disposed of until after the specified period of retention, or prior to the resolution of any challenge to the results of the research, whichever is the longer period.
- 2.6 Research materials and data must be disposed of in a safe and secure manner, in compliance with IMC policy requirements.
3. **Breaches of the Code**
  - 3.1 AAHE will manage research concerns or complaints and investigate potential breaches of the *Australian Research Code* in accordance with the [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) (the *Investigation Guide*).
  - 3.2 The *Investigation Guide* outlines the preferred model for institutions to use when:
    - a) investigating and managing potential breaches,
    - b) determining any corrective actions to ensure, and
    - c) a finding of research misconduct may be made.
  - 3.3 An allegation of a breach of the *Australian Research Code* will be reported to the Dean who will make a preliminary assessment of the potential breach and may resolve or dismiss the complaint or refer the matter to investigation by a panel.
  - 3.4 Academic Board will determine the appropriate composition of the investigation panel after receiving advice from the Dean and will ensure that a formal complaint is addressed sensitively and with care, to avoid adverse consequences for the individuals involved wherever possible.
  - 3.5 The investigation panel will then follow the procedures specified in the *Investigation Guide*.

## Related documents and relevant legislation

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (S 4.1 - 1, 2 and 3).

TEQSA Guidance Note: Research and Research Training

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (Australian Research Code).

National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research

Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (Investigation Guide)

Strategic Plan

Academic Staff Scholarship and Professional Development Policy and Procedure

Intellectual Policy and Procedure

Staff Code of Conduct

Student Code of Conduct

Workforce Plan

Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

Performance Management Policy and Procedure

Academic Promotions Policy and Procedure

Privacy Policy and Procedure

Prevention of Fraud Policy and Procedure

## Document information

**Document owner:** Academic Board

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