CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH POLICY

Category	Policy
Review	1 year from date of Approval
Code	ARP009
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Version	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Review Date
2024.11	Deputy President (Education)	20 November 2024	30 September 2025

1 PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (the Institute or IMC) is committed to maintaining responsible research practices in an environment that fosters integrity and professional conduct.

This policy is based on the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018* (*Australian Code*). It should be read with other relevant policies and procedures in the Institute's policy framework and is subject to legislative requirements.

This policy aims to provide a framework for ethical research practices and outline the processes for dealing with breaches of the Code and research misconduct.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all the Institute's staff, students and honorary appointments.

3 DEFINITIONS

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Australian Code) means the code developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and Universities Australia.
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Authorship means a status given to a researcher who makes a substantial intellectual or scholarly contribution to a research output and accepts responsibility for that contribution.

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[1] https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018

Human research includes any research with or about human participants and their data. Examples of human research most likely to be relevant to research activities at the Institute include: surveys and questionnaires; interviews; focus groups; access to individuals' information; and behavioural testing and observation

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement) means a statement released by the Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council.

Research has the meaning provided in the Australian Code p. 5: 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 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.

Researcher means a person who systematically investigates and studies materials, sources, or data to establish facts, advance knowledge, and/or develop new insights in their chosen field. In the context of higher degrees and university research, this includes students enrolled in research programs, academic staff, and other contributors who engage in scholarly inquiry, applying appropriate methodologies to produce original research outputs, contribute to existing knowledge, and adhere to ethical research standards.

Research Committee (RC) means a committee of Academic Board that is a managerial and governance body responsible for IMC's higher degree research programs oversight, research training, research ethics and other research activities.

Research Misconduct means a breach of the Australian Code that is intentional, reckless, or negligent. Research misconduct may include, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest errors or differences in interpretation or judgment of data.

4. RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH CONDUCT

4.1 General Principles of Responsible Research

4.1.1 The Institute will:

- establish a research governance framework that promotes compliance with all guidelines, legislation, policies and procedures relating to the ethical and professional conduct of research

- provide induction and ongoing training in responsible research practice for research staff and students

- support appropriate supervision and mentoring of researchers

- encourage cooperation with an open exchange of ideas between peers and respect for freedom of expression and inquiry

- provide a safe working environment in which research may be conducted and endeavour to ensure the safety of all associated with the research

- establish and communicate processes for managing allegations of breaches and research misconduct

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2 https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2023

4.1.2 Researchers shall:

- foster and maintain a research environment of intellectual honesty and integrity, with scholarly rigor

- respect the rights of those affected by their research

- manage conflicts of interest so that ambition and personal advantage do not compromise ethical or scholarly considerations

- adopt methods appropriate for achieving the aims of each research proposal
- follow legislative and policy requirements for proper practices for safety and security

- when giving information about themselves, cite awards, degrees conferred and research publications accurately, including the status of any publication,

- report and disseminate research findings responsibly

- adhere to legislative requirements, policies, guidelines and procedures for responsible research

- report perceived breaches or perceived research misconduct promptly as directed by this policy

4.1.3 Researchers must be aware of and conduct research in accordance with the *Australian Code,* this policy and other relevant policies and guidelines, including those associated with any bodies from which they are receiving research funds.

Research involving human participants must meet provisions for ethical research practice as prescribed in:

- The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007);* and

- The Institute's *Human Research Ethics Policy*

In addition, researchers undertaking research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should also consult:

- Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies[3]

4.2 Management of Research Data and Primary Materials

During and after the completion of the relevant research, researchers must comply with the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) and the Institute's policies and procedures regarding the management of research materials and data, including the *Research Materials and Data Management Policy.* Compliance with these documents includes:

- appropriate recording and referencing of research data

- retention of research data for a minimum required period

- maintenance of confidentiality in a manner consistent with ethical and legal requirements; and

- accessibility of material and data related to publications.

4.3 Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings

Research findings may be disseminated in a variety of ways. These include formal publication in academic journals and books, as well as inclusion in professional and institutional repositories and non-refereed publications, such as web pages, films etc.

4.3.1 The Institute promotes the responsible dissemination of researcher findings by:

- establishing an environment of honesty, integrity and responsible dissemination of research output

- ensuring that researchers and research sponsors are informed of the nature and scope of confidentiality agreements and contractual arrangements that may restrict, delay or limit publication

- ensuring that research sponsors recognise the importance of publication in research so that publication is not delayed beyond the time needed to protect intellectual property and other relevant interests; and

- supporting comprehensive communication of research findings by accommodating open access to output and guiding researchers on publication options.

4.3.2 Researchers must:

- give a complete account of research findings, ensuring accurate reporting

- account for any restrictions due to knowledge assets, intellectual property, cultural sensitivity or legal constraints relating to the sponsorship of publication activities

- seek peer review before public release of research findings

- acknowledge other work accurately and appropriately

- acknowledge contributions made by participants and sponsors

- declare conflicts of interest

- provide details of research results to research participants and parties impacted by the research before publication

- obtain permission from the original publisher before republishing research findings

- correct the record in a timely manner if they become aware of misleading or inaccurate statements about their work

- retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials to facilitate verification of findings if required

- make relevant data and materials accessible to other researchers as appropriate, in line with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data principles, unless prohibited by ethical, privacy or confidentiality matters, as set out in the Australian Code

- comply with all obligations under funding agreements for the dissemination of research findings

- consider the potential for misuse of research findings and, where necessary, take steps to mitigate this risk

- when submitting substantially similar work to more than one publisher, disclose this at the time of submission

4.4 Authorship

Researchers must comply with the Institute's *Authorship Policy,* ensuring that:

- the criteria of authorship are met, and a *Statement of Authorship Form* is lodged with signatures of the author/co-authors of the publication

- no person who meets the conditions of the definition of 'authorship' is excluded as an author without their written permission

- collaborating researchers agree on the authorship of a publication
- Written consent is obtained from those individuals named in acknowledgement as contributors to the research

4.5 Peer Review

The Institute supports peer review through the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.

The Institute encourages its researchers to participate in peer review as both reviewers and subjects of review.

Researchers participating in peer review should:

- be suitably qualified with appropriate expertise
- be fair, timely and respect confidentiality
- declare all conflicts of interest

Researchers whose work is undergoing a peer review must not seek to influence the process or outcome.

4.6 Conflicts of Interest

Following integrity and good research practice, IMC staff members must comply with the Institute's *Conflict of Interest Policy* and disclose, record, and manage all perceived conflicts of interest appropriately. Conflicts of interest are resolved in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Policy*

Researchers must:

- maintain records of activities that may lead to conflicts of interest, including those arising from collaborative research, and ensure that these do not impact other research activities; and
- disclose the existence of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest as soon as they become apparent.

4.7 Collaborative Research Across Institutions

The Institute supports collaborative research across institutions nationally and internationally.

Before the commencement of collaborative research, there must be written agreement between the partners on managing the joint research project. The contract should follow the general principles of the *Australian Code* and include the following information:

- ownership of intellectual property, confidentiality and copyright, sharing commercial returns, and responsibility for ethics and safety
- the identification by each collaborating institution of a person from their institution who is to manage research data, primary materials, and other items to be retained at the end of the project; and
- the protocols to be followed by partners when disseminating the research outcomes, and the management of primary research materials and data.

5. BREACHES AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

5.1 Research Misconduct means a breach of the Australian Code that is intentional, reckless, or negligent. Research misconduct may include, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest errors or differences in interpretation or judgment of data.

5.2 Breaches of the Code

Research misconduct does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretation or judgements of data. These errors are called Breaches of the Code and are generally remedied within the School in which the research occurs.

5.3 Complaints and Allegations

- Anyone concerned that a researcher has not acted responsibly must take action in a timely manner, as required by the Code and other relevant policies, or they may be deemed complicit

- Persons considering making allegations of a breach of the Code or research misconduct should initially consult the Deputy President (Education) or delegate , who may be approached in confidence for advice and an explanation of options

5.4 Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Code

Roles and Responsibilities
- Designated Officer (DO): The Deputy President (Education) or delegate will serve as the DO, responsible for receiving complaints about potential breaches of the Code and overseeing their management and investigation
- Assessment Officer (AO): A senior staff member or researcher appointed by the DO to conduct preliminary assessments of complaints
- Research Integrity Advisors (RIAs): Experienced researchers appointed to provide confidential advice on research integrity issues and the Code
- Investigation Panel: A group of individuals with appropriate expertise appointed to investigate allegations of breaches of the Code
- Responsible Executive Officer (REO): The President, will serve as the REO, and has final responsibility for receiving reports of the outcomes of processes of assessment or investigation of potential or found breaches of the Code and deciding on the course of actions to be taken

If a complaint is made regarding the Deputy President (Education), the President will take the role of DO, and appoint a delegate, external to the Institution, to take the role of REO. If the President is investigated, the Deputy President (Education) will appoint a delegate, external to the Institution, to take the role of REO.

Receiving and Managing Complaints
- Complaints about potential breaches of the Code should be submitted in writing to the DO
- The DO will determine whether the complaint relates to a potential breach of the Code
- Anonymous complaints will be considered based on the information provided
- The Institute will protect complainants from adverse consequences of making complaints

Preliminary Assessment
i) The DO will assign a suitable AO to conduct a preliminary assessment.
ii) The AO will:
a) Gather and evaluate facts and information
b) Assess whether the complaint, if proven, would constitute a breach of the Code
c) Provide a written report to the DO with recommendations for further action
iii) Based on the preliminary assessment, the DO will determine whether the matter should be:
a) Dismissed
b) Resolved locally with or without corrective actions
c) Referred for investigation
d) Referred to other institutional processes

Investigation
If an investigation is required, the DO will:
a) Prepare a clear statement of allegations
b) Develop terms of reference for the investigation
c) Nominate the Investigation Panel and Chair

The Investigation Panel will:
a) Conduct a thorough, fair, and timely investigation
b) Provide opportunities for the respondent to respond to allegations
c) Make findings of fact to determine whether a breach of the Code has occurred
d) Prepare a draft report of the investigation

e) «The respondent will be provided with the draft report or a summary of relevant information and given an opportunity to comment

f) The Panel will finalize the report and provide it to the DO with recommendations.

Outcomes and Communication

- The DO will provide the final report and recommendations to the REO.
- The REO will make the final decision on whether a breach has occurred and determine the Institute's response
- The REO will communicate the findings to the respondent and the complainant, as appropriate
- If a breach is found, the Institute will take appropriate corrective actions and may inform relevant parties (e.g., funders, publishers).

Appeals and Review
- The respondent may request a review of the investigation on procedural grounds
- External review may be sought through the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC).

<u>Additional Considerations</u>

- For collaborative research across multiple institutions, the Institute will cooperate with partner institutions to ensure a coordinated approach to investigating potential breaches
- Matters involving potential corrupt conduct or criminal behaviour will be referred to appropriate external agencies
- If a complaint relates to an activity that could harm humans, animals, or the environment, immediate action will be taken to minimize risk, independent of the Code investigation.

5.6 Procedural Fairness, Natural Justice and Confidentiality

Staff or students who are the subjects of allegations of a breach of this Code or research misconduct will be treated consistently with legal requirements and principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and in a manner respectful of cultural sensitivities.

Confidentiality will be maintained, and privacy respected. Where there has been public awareness of allegations, and after an investigation of research misconduct,   the allegations are unfounded, the public record will be corrected.

5.7 Other Interested Parties

The DO for the investigation shall consider whether action is required to protect the interests of other interested parties external to the Institute, such as journals and other media reporting research, research funding bodies and the public.

5.8 Institutional Support

The Institute is committed to fostering a robust research culture. In addition to the research training described in section 4 of the Research Support Guidelines for Academic Staff, and in line with the Australian Code, IMC will appoint and train Research Integrity Advisors (RIAs).

RIAs will:

- Have knowledge of the Code and institutional processes related to research integrity
- Provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code
- Assist in the promotion of a culture of research integrity within the Institute
- Be familiar with the resources and processes available to support responsible research practices
- Be available to researchers and students for confidential discussions about research integrity issues
- Guide researchers and students to relevant policies, resources, and appropriate institutional services
- Not be involved in any subsequent investigation processes related to matters on which they have provided advice

The Institute will:

- Ensure RIAs are appropriately trained and supported in their role
- Publicly identify RIAs and provide their contact information to all researchers and students.
- Regularly review and update the RIA program to ensure its effectiveness in promoting research integrity.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

    i.   *Research Higher Degree Registration and Roles of Supervisors Policy*

    ii.   *Authorship Policy*

   iii.   *Conflict of Interest policy*

   iv.   *Human Research Ethics Policy*

    v.   *Research Materials and Data Management Policy*

7. VERSION CONTROL

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2024.11	Deputy President (Education)	20 November 2024
2023.10	Academic Board	12 October 2023
2019.06	Academic Board	27 June 2019

The Deputy President (Education) oversees the implementation and compliance of this policy. Please contact the Deputy President's office via - policy@imc.edu.au for any enquiries or clarifications related to this policy.