

# HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

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## 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach of the Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (IMC) ensuring that all aspects of conducting research involving human participants, including its design, approval and dissemination, are responsible and ethical. In particular, the policy aims to ensure that research involving human participants complies with the provisions of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*, and reflects the principles, set out in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, which characterise an honest, ethical and conscientious research culture.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Human Research Ethics Procedure* and the *Code of Conduct for Research Policy*.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students, honorary appointees, and any others engaged in research at IMC, or under the auspices of IMC, including in joint research projects with other institutions or organisations. Further, the policy applies to members of committees and governance bodies that are involved in the approval, management, or review of research.

### 3 DEFINITIONS

**Human research** means research conducted with or about people or their data or biological materials, including utilising surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, accessing people's information or data, and behavioural testing and observation.

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

**Researcher** means a person who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.

**Research Misconduct** means a breach, or breaches, of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, relevant IMC policies or procedures, or relevant legislation, that is or are, also intentional, reckless, or negligent.

### 4 PRINCIPLES

Where research involves human participants, their data and/or cultural knowledge, researchers must obtain appropriate human ethics approval, from the relevant Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), before commencing their research.

No research project is to be commenced until the required ethics approval has been obtained. The conduct of human research at IMC is characterised by the following principles, which reflect the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*:

- **Honesty**  
Researchers must be truthful and accurate in proposing, conducting, and reporting their research.
- **Rigour**  
Researchers must utilise robust methodology and pay attention to detail, avoiding or acknowledging biases.
- **Transparency**  
Researchers must share and communicate research methodology, data and findings responsibly and accurately, and disclose and manage actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- **Fairness**  
Researchers must treat others involved in their research fairly and with respect, giving credit to contributors to that research, including offering authorship where appropriate, and appropriately reference and cite the work of others.
- **Respect**  
Researchers must treat human research participants respectfully, including considering the needs of minority groups and vulnerable people.

## 5 ETHICS APPROVAL CATEGORIES

There are four categories of ethics approval, calibrated to take account of the type of research and the degree of risk involved in the research:

### 5.1 Course Clearance Ethics Approval:

The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) may approve teaching and learning activities involving negligible risk data collection for coursework purposes. Such activities are not normally considered independent human research projects requiring HREC review, unless the data are intended to be used for research purposes or dissemination beyond the course.

### 5.2 Low Risk Ethics Approval:

The Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) or a sub-committee of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) may approve human research projects which are negligible risk or low risk.

### 5.3 Full Review Ethics Approval:

Only the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) may approve research projects which have a risk level above low.

### 5.4 Collaborative Research with Another Institution:

Research projects carried out in collaboration with another institution may be approved under the processes of that other institution, provided that those processes align with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*. In such instances documentation confirming approval must be provided to the Research Office.

### 5.5 Guidelines as to which category of ethics approval is required, and the procedures for applying for each type of ethics approval, are set out in the *Human Research Ethics Procedure*, as amended from time to time. Where there is uncertainty as to which category of ethics approval is required for a particular project, then the Research Office should be contacted for clarification.

## 6 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 IMC is responsible for:

- maintaining an effective framework of governance and management ensuring responsible and ethical research conduct, and the proper ethical approval of research proposals;
- ensuring that the composition of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is consistent with the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical

Conduct in Human Research (2023);

- complying with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to responsible research conduct;
- providing inductions regarding, and ongoing education in, responsible and ethical research conduct for all members of the IMC community conducting or involved in research;
- monitoring and reviewing structures, arrangements and processes for the approval and conduct of research at IMC;
- ensuring there are effective mechanisms in place for identifying and managing perceived, potential and actual conflicts of interest; handling complaints; and ensuring accountability; and
- ensuring there are effective mechanisms in place for promoting and supporting a culture of ethical and responsible research, including the provision of relevant advice to those conducting, or involved in supporting, research.

## 6.2 Researchers are responsible for:

- familiarising themselves with, and adhering to, the principles and requirements of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*, relevant legislation, and IMC's policies, procedures and codes regarding the conduct of research;
- seeking and obtaining the necessary approvals for conducting research, and complying with all conditions of those approvals;
- notifying the appropriate IMC staff member or appropriate body of any adverse events or consequences arising from the research;
- notifying the appropriate body of any adverse events or unexpected outcomes arising from human research activity; and
- ensuring records of research activities are maintained and regular reports are provided to relevant IMC staff or appropriate body.

## 6.3 Supervisors are responsible for:

- providing guidance and mentorship to candidates on the ethical and responsible conduct of research;
- familiarising themselves with, and adhering to, IMC policies and procedures regarding Higher Degree by Research supervision.
- familiarising themselves with and adhering to, the principles and requirements of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, the

*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*, relevant legislation, and IMC’s policies, procedures and codes regarding the conduct of research; and

- reviewing, and providing support to candidates in developing, human research ethics approval applications prior to submission to RSC or HREC.

## 7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

### 7.1 Internal Documents

- i. Authorship Policy*
- ii. Code of Conduct for Research Policy*
- iii. Conflict of Interest Policy*
- i. Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy*
- ii. Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure*
- iv. Human Research Ethics Procedure*
- v. Research Higher Degree Registration and Roles of Supervisors Policy*
- vi. Research Materials and Data Management Policy*

### 7.2 External Documents

- i. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*
- ii. Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies 2012.*
- iii. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2021*
- iv. National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*
- v. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority, Guidance Note: Academic and Research Integrity, February 2024*

## 8 VERSION CONTROL

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2026.04	Academic Board	16 April 2026
2024.11	Academic Board	20 November 2024
2022.08	Academic Board	25 August 2022
2019.05	Academic Board	29 May 2019
2013.12	Academic Board	19 December 2013

## 9 STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP/MAINTENANCE

*The Research and Scholarship Committee oversees the implementation of, and compliance with, this Policy. For any enquiries or clarification, please contact [policy@imc.edu.au](mailto:policy@imc.edu.au).*