**Document Name**

RESEARCH CODE OF PRACTICE

**Document Number**

CO-RES-02

**Document Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Director of Research</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorisation</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>11 December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>Issue 2E</td>
<td>20 March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Date</td>
<td>Review of Issue 2E</td>
<td>11 December 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preamble

In developing its policies and guidelines for research, Excelsia College recognises its responsibility for establishing procedures and guidelines for the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects. Standards and Instruments consulted in the development of Excelsia College’s Research Code of Practice (CO-RES-02) include the following:

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (ACRCR) 2007
- UNSW Research Code of Conduct 2009

Definitions

Research

Following the definition of the Australian Research Council Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Annual Report 2012 (p 3) research is defined as “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 and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising ‘creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise applications’.” 3 [3 OECD (2002), Frascati Manual: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development, Paris.]

Higher Degree Research Student (HDR Student)

A student who is enrolled in a PhD or Masters Degree by Research

Student Researcher

A student who is undertaking a research project as a requirement of an undergraduate degree, or a postgraduate degree other than a PhD or Masters Degree by Research

Purpose and Context

This Research Code of Practice applies to all research activity carried out by, at or on behalf of Excelsia College. The policy, therefore, applies to all individuals who carry out research at or on behalf of Excelsia College whether as an employee, student or in some other representative or associated capacity.
In developing its Research Code of Practice, Excelsia College recognises its obligation to promote the responsible conduct of research. Research and the furtherance of human knowledge is a foundational task of tertiary institutions, and Excelsia College is committed to the highest standards of professional conduct. Researchers at, or associated with, Excelsia College, are therefore expected to conduct their work in accordance with legislative requirements, recognised national and international ethical standards and the highest expectations of their disciplines.

This policy forms a code of practice for the responsible conduct of research. It aims to:

a. promote the highest possible standards of research practice;
b. protect all those associated with the research from any avoidable harm that may arise from failures to maintain high standards of research conduct;
c. encourage freedom of expression and mutual collaboration through the open exchange of ideas;
d. apply clear procedures to manage the conduct of research, including procedures for managing research misconduct;
e. protect or otherwise balance the rights of all those associated with the research, including student researchers, HDR students, staff, research participants and the public.

The Excelsia College Research Code of Practice recognises the relationship between researchers and research participants as the basis on which human research is conducted. The Code enshrines the four values in the National Statement: respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence. The Code proclaims that human research requires critical reflection that is informed by these four values, and that the design, review and conduct of research must reflect each of these values. In summary:

- Respect is central, involving the recognition that each human being has value in and of him/herself and that this value must inform all interaction between people. It also involves providing for the protection of those with diminished or no autonomy.
- Research that has merit is justifiable by its potential benefit, designed using appropriate methods, based on thorough study, designed to ensure respect for participants, and conducted or supervised by experienced researchers with appropriate qualifications.
- Justice involves a regard for the human sameness that each person shares with every other. While benefit to humankind is an important result of research, it also matters that these benefits are achieved through just means, are distributed fairly, and involve no unjust burdens.
- Researchers should exercise beneficence in taking account of the risks of harm and the potential benefits of research to participants and to the wider community, in being sensitive to the welfare and interests of people involved in their research, and in reflecting on the social and cultural implications of the research. Where the risks to participants are no longer justified by the potential benefits of the research, the research must be suspended to allow time to consider whether it should be discontinued or at least modified.
Research Ethics

- All researchers at Excelsia College will comply with the highest ethical standards for the conduct of research.
- Accordingly all persons undertaking research at Excelsia College must comply with established guidelines such as the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Humans Research (2007)*, the *Values and Ethics - Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003)*, Excelsia College Work Safety Policy and related Work Health and Safety legislation.
- Proposals for all research must be submitted to the Research and Research Ethics Committee for approval.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Researchers must inform research participants and funding agencies of any limits on confidentiality and anonymity.
- Confidential information must only be used for the purposes for which it was made available.
- Students and academic staff have an obligation to ensure that promises of confidentiality and/or anonymity are maintained through careful and secure storage of research data.
- Students and academic staff should protect privacy, where appropriate, by adequately disguising personal identities in written and oral reports of the research, and by discussing only data germane to the purpose of the research.
- Students and academic staff should not reveal information received in the course of the research where an assurance of confidentiality has been promised.

Management of Research Data

- For the purposes of this document, research data is defined as the originally constituted body of evidence, or other materials, on which the findings or interpretation of the research are based.
- Research data must be securely stored to ensure that the validity of the data can be demonstrated as required and to ensure that Excelsia College meets its obligations relating to privacy under NSW legislative requirements, Intellectual Property protection under international laws and any other confidentiality or research agreements entered into in relation to the research.
- Data underpinning research conducted at Excelsia College (including electronic data) must be recorded in a protected, durable and appropriately referenced form.
- Research data and other records relating to research must be retained for at least the minimum periods required by the NSW State Records Act, funding agency or publisher guidelines or in accordance with discipline norms, whichever is the longer period.
Authorship

• Authorship is defined by the ACRCR as substantial participation in the preparation of a paper or report, in a combination of:
  o conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data;
  o analysis and interpretation of research data
  o drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation.
• Researchers must acknowledge all persons who contributed significantly to the research, writing and publication process, and, where applicable, include them as authors or co-authors.
• Plagiarism, misreporting of results, or other research-related malfeasance or fraud is unacceptable.
• No person who is an author, consistent with the criteria for authorship, may be excluded as an author without their permission in writing. Similarly, no person who has contributed to the acquisition of funding, or the collection of research data, can be intentionally excluded from its analysis or interpretation for the purpose of authorship.
• All others who contributed to the work and who are not authors, must be recognised by being named in footnotes or in the Acknowledgments section, and their specific contribution and role in the work must be fully acknowledged. If individuals are acknowledged, their approval must be sought in writing.
• Authorship of a research output is a matter that must be discussed between researchers and agreed upon at an early stage in a research project, and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation.
• Researchers must ensure that they appropriately and accurately cite the relevant work of others.
• Supervisors must ensure that all HDR research students are fairly treated. Agreement should be reached between the candidate and members of the supervisory panel concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgment of contributions during and after candidature. Unless there is a formal agreement to the contrary, students own their own intellectual property. (See Intellectual Property Policy)
• It will normally be the case that a HDR student or student researcher will be first author in any multiple authored article that is substantially based on the student's own research project and unique contribution.
• There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate's and any supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project. (See Conflict of Interest Policy)

Publication

• Unless there are compelling reasons, research findings should be publicly accessible, especially to research participants.
• Researchers must ensure that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous.
• Publication of multiple papers based on the same set(s) or sub-set(s) of data is improper unless there is full cross-referencing within the papers (for example, in a series of closely related work, or where a complete work grew out of a preliminary publication and this is fully acknowledged).
• Simultaneous submission to more than one journal or publisher of material based on the same set(s) or sub-set(s) of data must be disclosed at the time of submission.
• Publications must include information on the sources of financial support for the research; such disclosure should be discussed at the time research funding is negotiated.
• Researchers must describe accurately the state of any publication to which they refer (in preparation, submitted, under review, accepted for publication, in press).
• Researchers must make public the institutional or organisational context in which the research took place. Financial and other forms of support, including any contribution from the client (or sponsor) in framing and defining the research, should be openly acknowledged.
• Researchers have an obligation to refrain from seeking or accepting research grants, assignments, or contracts, that are likely to violate this Code of Practice.

Peer Review

• Peer review is the “impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field”1. Researchers are encouraged to participate in peer review to provide public credibility to the reporting of research.
• Researchers in receipt of public funding in particular should participate in the peer review process.
• Researchers who are asked to participate in peer review should do so in an ethical, confidential and timely manner. Researchers should not agree to peer review any research for which they have a conflict of interest, or where the research is outside the area of expertise.
• Researchers whose research is being peer reviewed must not seek to influence the outcomes or process.
• Supervising researchers have a responsibility to assist trainee researchers in developing the necessary skills for peer review and understanding their obligation to participate.

Supervision of HDR Students

• Supervisors have a responsibility to monitor and discuss research ethics and all aspects of the conduct of research with HDR students and student researchers. Students retain ethical responsibility for their own actions, and should take account of the advice on ethics provided by their teachers, supervisors and the College.
• Supervisors should ensure that the number of research students under their supervision does not exceed their capacity to provide close and effective intellectual and ethical engagement.
• Supervisors should ensure that the community is not misused as a student resource. They must take care not to exploit groups, or to place on them repetitive and burdensome demands.

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1 ACRCR, Chapter 6, page 6.1
• When student research is funded by outside agencies, supervisors should ensure there is a suitable research contract which: provides remuneration to the student as appropriate; makes explicit agreements as to ownership and the use of data produced; and provide protection against unethical pressures.
• Supervisors should ensure that reasonable precautions have been taken by students with regard to their own safety during the research process.
• Supervisors must be satisfied that the research methods and outcomes of researchers under their supervision are appropriate and valid. Supervisors must also ensure that HDR students and student researchers are appropriately acknowledged for their work.

Potential Conflicts of Interest

• Researchers should disclose, at the earliest possible time (for example, in a grant application), any conflict of interest which has the potential to influence grant applications, the conduct of research, reporting of research, applications for appointment and promotion, or the commercialisation of research.
• Disclosure of conflicts of interest must be made to external bodies from which funds are sought, editors of journals, and to the readers of published work.
• Researchers should make every attempt to avoid any conflict of interest with the potential to influence grant applications, the conduct of research, and outcomes of research such as commercial activities or personal advancement.

Responsibilities under This Code

• Each Head of School and the Director of Research is responsible for the conduct of research within their areas of responsibilities and for the observance of the Research Code of Practice.
• Any allegation of non-compliance with the Code will be dealt with in accordance with the Procedure for the Handling of Allegations of Research Misconduct.
• Research misconduct does not include genuine errors or differences in interpretation or judgments of data.
• In the first instance, a person considering making an allegation of non-compliance with the Code should seek advice from an Advisor on Research Integrity.
• Breaches of the Code are defined as specific actions or omissions that constitute breaches of this Code, but lack the seriousness of consequence or willfulness to constitute research misconduct. Such breaches will be remedied by counselling or advice. Their repetition or continuation may, however, lead to more serious consequences and may constitute research misconduct.
• Research misconduct is defined as serious breaches of the Code that are sufficiently substantial to warrant formal allegation, investigation, and denial or admission. If proven, such misconduct would be expected to lead to disciplinary action by the institution.
• Any person who is alleged to have failed to comply with the Code will be treated fairly, allowed to respond to the allegations in writing, and have the matter determined in a timely manner.