

Peer Review Standards (interim)

1. Introduction

The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Australian Code)* was substantially revised in 2018 and the *Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Macquarie Research Code)* subsequently amended and issued in July 2019.

The *Macquarie Research Code* articulates broad principles and responsibilities which underpin the responsible conduct of research across varied research contexts and disciplines. It is in place to ensure that research being undertaken under the auspices of Macquarie University is conducted with the highest standards of ethics, responsibility and integrity.

The detail provided in the former *Australian Code* and *Macquarie Research Code* about how the principles and responsibilities should be applied to specific elements or stages of the research process (in this case, to Peer Review) is being refined and clarified. This detail will be included in accompanying guides being written by the Australian Research Council (ARC), National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Universities Australia. Until each guide is issued and the associated policies and guidance at Macquarie University are adjusted, researchers are expected to refer to the relevant chapter of the former *Macquarie Research Code* (reproduced in section 4).

The *Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure* describes how deviations from the principles and responsibilities outlined in the *Macquarie Research Code* (including failing to meet these standards) must be reported, assessed, investigated and managed.

2. Purpose

These standards supplement the *Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Macquarie Research Code)* and outline the expected standards of peer review.

3. Scope

- a. These standards apply to anyone who conducts research or research support under the auspices of Macquarie University, as per the *Macquarie Research Code*.
- b. While these standards establish the regular expectations for all Macquarie researchers, additional requirements may be imposed on those involved with external/overseas institutions, external funding bodies or publishers, external collaborators, or where required by local legislation, for example in the case of HDR Candidates subject to cotutelle or joint PhD agreements or researchers with a conjoint appointment.
- c. Researchers may consult with a Research Integrity Advisor (RIA) at any time for advice in relation to the implementation of these standards.

3. Chapter 14. Peer Review

Duplicated from the first edition of the *Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Part A: Principles and Practices to Encourage Responsible Research Conduct*

1. Peer review is the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
2. Researchers in receipt of public funding have a responsibility to participate in the peer review process. Macquarie University encourages researchers to participate in peer review to provide public credibility to the reporting of research.
3. Researchers who are asked to participate in peer review should do so in an ethical, confidential and timely manner. Researchers should not agree to review any research for which they have a conflict of interest, or where the research is outside their area of expertise. In some circumstances, where there are limited numbers of potential reviewers with relevant expertise it may be unavoidable that a reviewer has some conflict of interest.
4. A conflict of interest must be disclosed to the person/organisation requesting the review either prior to accepting the request or as soon as the conflict of interest becomes apparent. The conflict of interest must then be taken into account.
5. Researchers whose research is being peer reviewed must not seek to influence the process or the outcomes.
6. Supervising researchers have a responsibility to assist trainee researchers in developing the necessary skills for peer review and understanding their obligation to participate.

4. Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
ARC	Australian Research Council
Australian Code	<i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018</i>
Australian Guide	<i>Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i>
Macquarie Research Code	<i>Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i>
Macquarie Research Code Procedure	<i>Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure</i>
RIA	Research Integrity Advisor: A member of Macquarie University staff who has been nominated by the DVC(R) to promote the responsible conduct of research and provide advice to those with concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the <i>Macquarie Research Code</i> . Research Integrity Advisors are people with research experience, wisdom, analytical skills, empathy, knowledge of the University's policy and management structure, and familiarity with the accepted practices in research.

5. Key related documents

5.1 Macquarie University policies and standards

- a. Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- b. Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure
- c. Authorship Standards
- d. Collaborative Research Standards
- e. Conflict of Interest Policy (and Standards)
- f. Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy
- g. Publication and Dissemination Standards
- h. Research Data Management Standards
- i. Supervision of Students Undertaking Research

5.2 External documents

- a. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018
- b. Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes
- c. Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- d. Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies
- e. National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research

6. Commencement and amendment history

6.1	Contact Officer	Research Integrity Office
6.2	Implementation Officer	Director, Research Ethics and Integrity
6.3	Approval Authority / Authorities	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
6.4	Date of Commencement	July 2019 – Interim standards under review
6.5	Documents Superseded by this document	This document presents chapter 14 of the former <i>Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2014</i> and will be updated following the release of the Guide on Peer Review expected to be issued by NHMC, ARC and Universities Australia)