Responsible Peer Review Procedure

Purpose
This Procedure describes the principles and professional responsibilities of researchers and research trainees undertaking peer review activities. It has been developed to meet the standards set out in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research\(^1\) and the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity\(^2\) and should be read in conjunction with the UNSW Research Code of Conduct.

Scope
This Procedure applies to all researchers of UNSW. Undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students are excluded from the scope of this Procedure.

Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?
☐ Yes, however Local Documents must not breach mandatory requirements in University-wide Codes of Conduct, Policies, Standards and Procedures.  ☐ No

Procedure Processes and Actions

1. Introduction
Responsible peer review ensures that research meets accepted disciplinary standards and ensures the dissemination of only relevant findings, free from bias, unwarranted claims, and unacceptable interpretations.

The Responsible Peer Review Procedure (this Procedure) covers the principles of peer review and the responsibilities of researchers and research trainees undertaking peer review activities and is part of the UNSW research governance framework. It should be read with other laws and UNSW policies, procedures and guidelines.

This Procedure stands beside but does not exclude or replace other legally binding researcher obligations. No part of this Procedure is a substitute for personal responsibility.

2. Procedure
2.1. Principles of Responsible Peer Review
The following principles of research integrity apply to responsible peer review:

1. **HONESTY** in all aspects of research;
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY** in the conduct of research;
3. **PROFESSIONAL COURTESY & FAIRNESS** in working with others; and
4. **GOOD STEWARDSHIP** of research on behalf of others.

2.2. Responsibilities
The following responsibilities of peer review apply to researchers at all stages of peer review:

\(^2\) See [http://www.singaporestatement.org](http://www.singaporestatement.org)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2.1. Fairness</th>
<th>Be fair and seen to be fair by all involved throughout the peer review process.</th>
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<td>2.2.2. Transparency</td>
<td>Remain transparent throughout all stages of the peer review process.</td>
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<td>2.2.3. Independence</td>
<td>Provide independent advice, as required, during the peer review process.</td>
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<td>2.2.4. Appropriateness and balance</td>
<td>Only undertake peer review if you have appropriate experience, expertise and knowledge.</td>
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<td>2.2.5. Participation</td>
<td>Make available time to participate in peer review processes, including mentoring of research trainees, whenever possible.</td>
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<td>2.2.6. Confidentiality</td>
<td>Ensure the fairness and robustness of peer review and ensure that the content and/or outcomes of any process are treated as confidential. Unless mentoring research trainees in responsible peer review, do not discuss work under review with others.</td>
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<td>2.2.7. Impartiality</td>
<td>Remain objective, impartial, free from bias; do not consider matters that are not relevant to the review criteria. Do not attempt to interfere with the process or seek to influence its outcomes when your own work is undergoing peer review. Notify the relevant organisation for which peer review is being conducted if any conflict of interest arises during the peer review process and seek advice from the organisation (for example, a UNSW Research Integrity Advisor, funding agency or journal) whether to continue or cease review.</td>
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<td>2.2.8. Timeliness</td>
<td>Provide comments in a prompt manner and submit on time. Contact the relevant organisation as soon as possible if unable to complete the review or provide a report, as required, on time.</td>
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<td>2.2.9. Quality and excellence</td>
<td>Conduct yourself in accordance with best practices.</td>
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2.2.10. Professionalism

Ensure that comments provided are professional and detailed enough to allow appropriate assessment of the work.

2.2.11. Duty to report

Notify the relevant organisation (journal, funding agency, or, if UNSW researcher, then a UNSW Research Integrity Advisor) immediately if you detect any irregularities, have any concerns about ethical aspects of the work, are aware of substantial similarity between the manuscript and a concurrent submission to another journal or a published article, or suspect that misconduct may have occurred during either the research or the writing and submission of the manuscript. Maintain confidentiality and do not personally investigate the matter further, unless the relevant organisation asks for further information or advice.

3. Breaches of the Procedure

3.1. This Procedure forms part of the UNSW Research Code of Conduct. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic may determine that a breach of this Procedure may be dealt with as a breach of the Research Code of Conduct.

3.2. Examples of actions that can be deemed breaches of this Procedure include, but are not limited to:

3.2.1. Intentionally delaying the review process;
3.2.2. Using information from pieces under review without permission;
3.2.3. Breaching applicable confidentiality provisions;
3.2.4. Failing to declare and/or manage any conflict of interest;
3.2.5. Conducting and undertaking peer review without sufficient experience, expertise or knowledge;
3.2.6. Making inappropriate comments on the work of researchers being peer reviewed.

3.3. Alleged breaches of this Procedure are handled in the first instance in accordance with the Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct Procedure.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities and Principles outlined in this Procedure, the following additional responsibilities apply:

4.1. Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic

The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic is responsible for the development, promulgation, implementation and review of this Procedure.

4.2. Research Integrity Advisors

Research Integrity Advisors will be available to offer advice and clarification on matters related to this Procedure. Research Integrity Advisors will assist in the local promulgation of this Procedure.

4.3. Heads of School & Centre Directors

Heads of School and Centre Directors will assist in the local promulgation of this Procedure. Heads of Schools and Centre Directors are responsible for creating an environment which allows researchers to carry out their responsibilities under this Procedure through the provision of appropriate resources and facilities.
4.4. Supervisors of Research Trainees

Supervisors of Research Trainees are responsible for ensuring that research trainees are appropriately trained and mentored in responsible peer review, as set out in this Procedure. When Supervisors are mentoring research trainees, they take responsibility for ensuring confidentiality of the peer review process.

5. Support & Advice

Research Integrity Advisors are the first point of contact for support and advice on this Procedure. Contact details for UNSW Research Integrity Advisors can be found on the Research Gateway, at http://research.unsw.edu.au.

Information can also be sought from:
Director, UNSW Integrity
Email: enquiries.research@unsw.edu.au
Phone: (02) 9385 2983 or (02) 9385 2700

6. Further information

Information and advice on this Procedure is available from:
- the Research Gateway
- news@unsw
- University Research Committee
- Research Integrity Advisors
- Heads of School and Centre Directors.

7. Acknowledgements

UNSW acknowledges the following sources in the development of this Procedure:
- The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, which was written by participants of the World Congress on Research Integrity.
- The NHMRC Principles of Peer Review
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Accountabilities

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<tr>
<th>Responsible Officer</th>
<th>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic</th>
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<td>Contact Officer</td>
<td>Director, UNSW Integrity</td>
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Supporting Information

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<tr>
<th>Legislation Compliance</th>
<th>This Procedure supports the University’s compliance with the following legislation: Nil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Document (Policy)</td>
<td>Research Code of Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Documents</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Documents</td>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research Code of Conduct</td>
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<td>Conflict of Interest Policy</td>
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<td>Conferring Academic Titles Policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</td>
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<td>Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct Procedure</td>
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Conflict of interest is to be understood in the context of the UNSW Conflict of Interest Policy. A conflict of interest involves a conflict between the public duty and private interests of a public official, in which the public official has private interests which could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.

Early Career Researcher
Researcher who is within five years of the start of their research career.

Higher Degree Research Candidate
UNSW enrolled candidate undertaking a graduate research program.

Peer review
Peer review is the 'impartial and independent assessment of the scholarly work, research, or ideas of others who have knowledge and/or expertise in the same or related field'. Peer review includes, but is not limited to, group meetings and assessment of theses, grant applications, conference abstracts, and research works submitted for publication or display including books and creative works.

Peer reviewer/s
UNSW researcher or research trainee engaged in peer review.

Publication
Any output where peer review has been requested, including but not limited to: books, journals, conference papers, literary and scholarly works.

Research
Original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight.

Researcher
Any Higher Degree Research Student, any UNSW employed staff member conducting research, or any person conducting research who has been conferred an academic title by UNSW in accordance with the Conferring Academic Titles Policy.

Research Integrity Advisor
Deputy/Associate Deans (Research) appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research to provide advice on the responsible conduct of research and processes for dealing with allegations of research misconduct.

Research Trainee
Higher degree research candidate or early career researcher.

Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Approval date</th>
<th>Effective date</th>
<th>Sections modified</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</td>
<td>2 June 2014</td>
<td>2 June 2014</td>
<td>This is a new Procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Acting Head of Governance</td>
<td>18 February 2016</td>
<td>29 February 2016</td>
<td>Administrative update to senior roles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic</td>
<td>25 July 2017</td>
<td>15 August 2017</td>
<td>Administrative update to senior positions</td>
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3 UNSW Conflict of Interest Policy
4 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Chapter 6
5 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research