

# Code of Conduct for Research Rule

## Section 1 - Overview

(1) The University of New England (UNE) expects research to be conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity. The University of New England Code of Conduct for Research Rule (CCR) articulates the broad principles that characterise an ambitious, honest, ethical and conscientious research culture. The CCR establishes a framework for responsible research conduct that provides a foundation for high-quality research, credibility and community trust in the research endeavour.

(2) The CCR is based on the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) (ACRCR 2018), developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC), and Universities Australia. It addresses the regulatory requirements established under the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#) through the Higher Education Standards Framework.

(3) Compliance with the ACRCR 2018 is a requirement for the receipt of funding by the ARC, NHMRC and many other national funding bodies. The CCR must be read in conjunction with other relevant policy instruments and guides.

(4) The CCR is subject to legislative requirements and UNE staff collective agreements. Where there are any inconsistencies between the CCR, legislation or the collective agreements, the legislation and collective agreements take precedence.

## Section 2 - Scope

(5) The CCR applies to all UNE Representatives and Students who carry out Research under the auspices of UNE.

## Section 3 - Rule

### Principles of Responsible Research Conduct

(6) The following principles are the hallmarks of responsible research conduct.

- a. Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
  - i. Present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting research.
- b. Rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
  - i. Underpin research by attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases.
- c. Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings:
  - i. Share and communicate research methodology, data and findings openly, responsibly and accurately;
  - ii. Disclose and manage conflicts of interest.
- d. Fairness in the treatment of others:
  - i. Treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect;
  - ii. Appropriately reference and cite the work of others;

- iii. Give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.
- e. Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment:
  - i. Treat human participants and communities that are affected by the research with care and respect, giving appropriate consideration to the needs of minority groups or vulnerable people;
  - ii. Ensure that respect underpins all decisions and actions related to the care and use of animals in research;
  - iii. Minimise adverse effects of the research on the environment.
- f. Recognition of the right of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them:
  - i. Recognise, value and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property and connection to land of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples;
  - ii. Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples prior to research being undertaken, so that they freely make decisions about their involvement;
  - iii. Report to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples the outcomes of research in which they have engaged.
- g. Accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
  - i. Comply with relevant legislation and policies;
  - ii. Ensure good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research;
  - iii. Consider the consequences and outcomes of research prior to its communication.
- h. Promotion of responsible research practices:
  - i. Promote and foster a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research.

## **Responsibilities of UNE**

(7) UNE has an obligation to encourage and support responsible research conduct.

(8) UNE is accountable to funding organisations, as well as Australian and international communities for how research is conducted.

(9) To foster responsible research conduct UNE will:

- a. Establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct.
- b. Identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations and policies related to the conduct of research.
- c. Develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the CCR.
- d. Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers, supervisors, research trainees and those in other relevant roles.
- e. Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications, training and resources.
- f. Identify and train Research Integrity Advisors who assist in the promotion and fostering of responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the CCR.
- g. Support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.
- h. Provide access to facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference in accordance with:
  - i. [Research Data Management Policy](#) and the [Management and Storage of Research Data and Materials Procedures](#);

- ii. [Open Access to UNE Research Publications and Data Policy](#) and the [Open Access to UNE Research Publications and Data Procedures](#);
  - iii. [Research UNE Deposit, Collection and Access Rule](#) and [Research UNE Deposit, Collection and Access Procedures](#);
  - iv. [Knowledge Assets and Intellectual Property Policy](#); and
  - v. The University's [Records Management Rule](#) and [Records Management Procedures](#).
- i. Facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the CCR.
  - j. Provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the CCR. Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the CCR.
  - k. Ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the CCR is timely, effective and in accord with procedural fairness.
  - l. Support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the CCR.
  - m. Base findings on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

## Responsibilities of Researchers

(10) Researchers will uphold the principles of responsible research conduct in all aspects of their research.

(11) Researchers will:

- a. Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.
- b. Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.
- c. Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.
- d. Comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research.
- e. Ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research. Researchers working with human participants must ensure that they obtain approval from the UNE Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and adhere to the requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2023\)](#).
- f. Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols. Research involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples must also be in accordance with [Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018](#), [Keeping Research on Track II 2018](#), and the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#).
- g. Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of research involving animals, and minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals. Researchers involving vertebrate and higher invertebrate animals must ensure that they obtain approval from the UNE Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) and adhere to the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013](#) or agreed AEC partnering.
- h. Researchers should conduct their research so as to show consideration for the wider community, with reference to the [Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research 2016](#).
- i. Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results.
- j. Retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials. Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties. During and after completion of the relevant research, researchers must comply with the [State Records Act 1998](#) as

reflected in UNE policy instruments pertaining to the management of research materials and data, including:

- i. [Research Data Management Policy](#) and the [Management and Storage of Research Data and Materials Procedures](#);
  - ii. [Open Access to UNE Research Publications and Data Policy](#) and [Open Access to UNE Research Publications and Data Procedures](#);
  - iii. [Research UNE Deposit, Collection and Access Rule](#) and [Research UNE Deposit, Collection and Access Procedures](#);
  - iv. [Knowledge Assets and Intellectual Property Policy](#);
  - v. the University's [Records Management Rule](#) and [Records Management Procedures](#).
- k. Disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately, and where relevant broadly. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.
- l. Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#) and the [Conflicts of Interest Procedures](#).
- m. Ensure that authors of research outputs are all those, and only those, who have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author in accordance with the [Research Authorship Policy](#).
- n. Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research in accordance with the [Research Authorship Policy](#).
- o. Cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately in accordance with the [Research Authorship Policy](#).
- p. Participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely, and maintains the confidentiality of the content.
- q. Report suspected breaches of the CCR in accordance with the [Research Conduct - Managing Potential Breaches Procedures](#).

## Supervisors and Research Trainees

(12) UNE requires that supervisors and research trainees comply with the University's requirements as provided in the relevant Higher Degree Research policy instruments.

## Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings

(13) UNE promotes the responsible publication and dissemination of research findings with the expectation that:

- a. all parties to the research (eg. sponsors, researchers, students and participants) are informed of the nature and scope of confidentiality agreements;
- b. researchers and, where necessary, research sponsors, are informed about the UNE [Knowledge Assets and Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- c. researchers are aware of contractual arrangements that may restrict, delay or limit publication;
- d. research sponsors are informed about the importance of publication in research so that publication is not delayed beyond the time needed to protect intellectual property and other relevant interests;
- e. researchers are assisted in communicating research findings consistent with the UNE [Media Policy](#);
- f. researchers are supported in making their research publications openly accessible, consistent with the [Open Access to UNE Research Publications and Data Policy](#), through Research UNE; and
- g. the reporting of research results for publicity purposes gives proper acknowledgment of partner institutions and sponsors involved in collaborative research, in alignment with the [Collaborative Research Rule](#).

## Peer Review

(14) UNE encourages its researchers to take part in the peer review process, as reviewers and subjects of review in

research, research performance and management:

- a. in the assessment of grant applications;
- b. in the assessment of materials for publication;
- c. in research performance reviews;
- d. in staff selection and promotion processes.

(15) UNE expects that participants in peer review:

- a. understand and comply with the criteria of the review;
- b. are suitably qualified with appropriate expertise to participate in the review;
- c. are fair and timely in their review;
- d. maintain confidentiality of content and outcome of the process;
- e. declare all conflicts of interest, and avoid the influence of any personal prejudice and/or any irrelevant considerations in the process;
- f. do not take undue or calculated advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process;
- g. give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking.

(16) UNE stipulates that researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not seek to influence the process or outcome.

(17) UNE encourages supervising researchers to assist research trainees to develop the necessary skills for peer review.

## **Collaborative Research Across Institutions**

(18) For the purposes of the CCR, collaboration across institutions is not restricted to other higher education institutions.

(19) UNE supports and encourages collaborative research within and outside Australia, where and when it is appropriate, and where there is a formal agreement that follows the principles of the UNE [Collaborative Research Rule](#).

## **Research Breaches, Complaints and Allegations**

(20) A failure to meet the CCR is a breach of the CCR.

(21) A breach of the CCR occurs on a spectrum from minor breaches to those that are more serious.

(22) A serious breach of the CCR that is carried out with intent or recklessness or negligence is particularly egregious and may be referred to as research misconduct.

(23) The [Research Conduct - Managing Potential Breaches Procedures](#) outlines the procedures UNE uses to investigate and manage potential breaches, determine any corrective actions to ensure the integrity of the record, and when a finding of research misconduct may be made.

(24) Where breaches, complaints and allegations are made which relate to human or animal ethics, those matters must be referred in the first instance to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee or Animal Ethics Committee, respectively.

## Rule Administration

(25) Substantive amendment or revision of the CCR must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer.

(26) Records Management

- a. Actions relating to the implementation of the CCR must be recorded and managed in accordance with the University's [Records Management Rule](#).
- b. Actions relating to breaches, complaints and allegations of the CCR must be identified and treated as confidential information and managed in accordance with the University's [Records Management Rule](#).

## Quality Assurance

(27) The Academic Board will monitor the effectiveness of the CCR through:

- a. benchmarking the University's standards with those adopted elsewhere;
- b. information available from the review of records relating to the CCR's implementation.

## Authority and Compliance

(28) The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to Section 29 of the [University of New England Act 1993 \(NSW\)](#), makes this University Rule.

(29) UNE RepUNE Representatives and Students must observe it in relation to University matters.

(30) The Rule Administrator, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, is authorised to make policies and associated information for the operation of this University Rule. The policies and associated information must be compatible with the provisions of this Rule.

(31) The CCR operates as and from the Effective Date.

(32) Previous policy on the Code of Conduct for Research Rule and related documents are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Rule.

(33) Notwithstanding the other provisions of the CCR, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may approve an exception to the CCR where the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer determines the application of the CCR would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer under this clause must be documented in writing and must state the reason for the exception.

## Section 4 - Definitions Specific to this Document

(34) For the purposes of the CCR document, the following definitions apply:

- a. 3Rs - The 3Rs are three principles that underpin a systematic framework to achieve the goal of humane experimental techniques. The principles are: Replacement of animals with other methods; Reduction in the number of animals used; and Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals.
- b. ACRCR 2018 - [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#).
- c. Balance of probabilities - The civil standard of proof, which requires that, on the weight of evidence, it is more probable than not that a breach has occurred.
- d. Breach - A failure to meet the CCR. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
- e. CCR - Code of Conduct for Research Rule.

- f. Conflict of interest - A conflict of interest exists in a situation where an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the professional actions of a person are or may be unduly influenced by other interests. This refers to financial or non-financial interest which may be a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest.
- g. Peer review - The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
- h. Researcher - person (or persons) who conduct(s), or assists with the conduct of research.
- i. Research misconduct - A serious breach of the CCR which is also intentional or reckless or negligent.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	23rd June 2019
<b>Review Date</b>	23rd June 2022
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Approval Date</b>	22nd June 2019
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not applicable
<b>Unit Head</b>	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"UNE Representative"** - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

**"Student"** - Is an admitted student or an enrolled student, at the relevant time: 1. an admitted student is a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study; 2. an enrolled student is a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.

**"Authorship"** - Authorship is defined as substantial contributions in a combination of the following: conception and design of the project; analysis and interpretation of research data; and drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation.

**"Research Trainee"** - Is any higher degree research (HDR) student (whose degree is comprised of at least two-thirds research), a postdoctoral research fellow or an early career researcher (within 5 years of obtaining PhD).

**"Research"** - Is 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, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative (defined by the Australian Research Council).

**"Effective Date"** - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.

**"Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander"** - Is a person who is of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and is accepted and known as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they have lived.

**"Allegation"** - An allegation is a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof.

**"Complaint"** - A complaint is defined as a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.