

Research and Research Training Policy Framework

1. Purpose

The Institute is required and committed to ensuring that research and research training is consistent with the legal and regulatory obligations. This policy provides an overarching framework for ensuring that research is conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity, and in a manner that is consistent with the Institute’s values and policies. Policies and procedures relating to specific aspects of the conduct of research are nested under this framework.

2. Scope

This policy framework and its associated policies apply to all Institute staff, visiting academics, partners, contractors and students who are involved in research or the support of research, including all Institute Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
the Code	<i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> , Australian Government (2018)
associated policies	The associated policies to be to this policy framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and Procedure; • HDR Examination Policy and Procedure; • HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure; • HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy.
Research Ethics Committee	Appointed by and reports to Academic Board and is comprised of three members, with gender and campus representation (where possible), as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an external member (Chair); • two internal academic staff members suitably qualified and experienced in research, research ethics and research training.
HDR Committee (HDRC)	The HDRC is a sub-committee of the Research and Scholarship Committee, with its composition and terms of reference contained in the Schedule to this Framework.

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Term	Definition
research	is original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight and is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions or understandings. This includes the combination and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.
research training	is a formal course of postgraduate study, currently Masters (Research) degrees, that lead to the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques and knowledge in the conduct of research, and requires the production of a substantial original research output, such as a thesis. Also known as higher degree(s) by research (HDR).
researchers	any individual or group of persons who conduct research at or on behalf of the Institute.
Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC)	reports to Academic Board and is comprised of a minimum of three members, with gender and campus representation (where possible), as follows: the Research Coordinator (Chair), and at least one representative from each school - being the Head of School (or their nominees).

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Research, research training and associated activities must be conducted in accordance with this policy framework and associated policies, and the Code to enable the Institute to achieve:

- honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research;
- integrity in the Institute's research training and to ensure academic standards;
- conformance with principles of academic freedom, as encapsulated in MIT's Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy;
- clear responsibilities and accountabilities for decisions affecting Higher Degree by Research candidates;
- transparency in the Institute's research training processes and consistency and fairness in decisions affecting Higher Degree by Research candidates;
- ethical conduct of research and responsible research practice;
- clarification of ownership and management of intellectual property;
- successful management of research partnerships;
- clarification of requirements for publication and authorship;

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- resolution of allegations of misconduct in research;
 - recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them; and
 - promotion of responsible research practices.
- 4.2. Research may normally only be conducted, or overseen, by staff with qualifications, research experience and skills relevant to the type of research undertaken and their role.
- 4.3. The responsible conduct of research includes the proper management and retention of the research data and primary materials. The Institute will maintain a system for accurate and up-to-date recording of the research outputs of staff. Data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form for ease of identification and retrieval. Confidential research data and records must be maintained securely. All management of research data is determined in accordance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.
- 4.4. All research conducted under the auspices of the Institute will be required to use the requirements of the following (taking into account the scale and nature of the research):
- Higher Education Standards Framework (2015);
 - *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, Australian Government (2018);
 - *The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government 2007 (Updated 2018);
 - *The Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition*, Australian Government (2013);
 - *Guide to Data sharing considerations for Human Research Ethics Committees*, Australian National Data Service (2018).
- 4.5. The Institute expects that those engaged in research activity are committed to high standards of professional conduct and integrity. Researchers have a responsibility to ensure their research activities adhere to the principles contained in this policy framework and associated policies and the principles of the Code. Researchers should understand the Code and ensure persons under their supervision such as students are aware of, and comply with, its obligations.
- 4.6. Prior to commencement of a research endeavour, the Institute will make all researchers and candidates aware of the Institute's *Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure*, and the Institute's *Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy*.
- 4.7 The Institute will record research outputs, appropriately classified and include peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed outputs, such as publications and reports.

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- 4.8 All research partnership agreements including collaborative research projects must be submitted to Executive Management Committee (EMC) and the Board of Directors for approval and consideration of any broader risk management, legal, regulatory, ethical, financial or conflicts of interest issues that may be attached to the proposed research and how the Institute will manage the partnership or collaborative research.

5. Research Training

- 5.1 The Institute recognises that graduate research training makes an important contribution to the Institute's research activities and requires candidates to produce quality research. The Institute will provide higher degrees by research in a supervisory environment of research activity or other creative endeavour, inquiry and scholarship. All higher degree by research students will be given the opportunity to develop their research potential and produce original outputs that contribute to the relevant field to the best of their ability, as far as is possible.

Research is specified in the learning outcomes for each research higher degree, with the amount and type of research varying, depending on the qualification. HDR may contain some coursework subjects designed to build skills and knowledge in a discipline or in research methods; however research, research training and independent study associated with research will constitute at least two thirds of the course.

This policy applies to: Masters (Research) Degrees. The outcome of the research component of the qualification is the execution of a substantial piece of research.

- 5.2 The criteria for minimum entry requirements are inclusive and address the following aspects at levels specified by the HDRC from time to time:
- prior learning, including level and duration of prior tertiary education studies;
 - academic merit;
 - English language proficiency;
 - equivalence measures;
 - qualifications and experience related to the field or fields of the Higher Degree by Research;
 - special factors, including residency, performance at interview and folios;
 - other matters that the Academic Board considers relevant to the reasonable prospects of success of applicants in a course.

The minimum entry requirements for a specific research higher degree are specified in the accreditation document for the degree.

When making decisions on the equivalence of grounds for entry with the minimum entry requirements, the Institute may consider whether applicants have achieved the required level of knowledge and skills to have a reasonable prospect success in the course. Decisions must be evidence based, transparent and fair.

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5.3 Research in Higher Degrees by Research must be supervised by a minimum of two appropriately registered and accredited academic supervisors (the "supervisory panel"), appointed by the Institute. When determining suitability for supervision duties and appointing supervisors, the following are factors the Institute should consider:

- academic qualifications;
- research productivity, including research income, publications, and/or successful research degree completions within the last five years;
- supervisory experience;
- potential conflicts of interest;
- attendance at mandatory supervision training;
- current supervisory load.

The Institute will provide HDR candidates with a supervisory panel that has an appropriate mix of expertise in the discipline(s) of the candidate's research, the relevant research methods, and in supervising successful research degree completions. The processes for supervision will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the HDRC. Also see *HDR Supervision and Examination Policy*.

5.4 Progress

Academic progress is monitored through:

- performance in enrolled units, where applicable;
- completion and submission of major reviews as required during the candidature period.

These components are used to monitor and manage candidate progress to ensure early identification of needs and concerns, provide timely feedback on progress and establish a clear plan of action.

Candidates undertaking a Masters (Research) Degree will participate in an Annual Progress Review (APR) during each year of enrolment including -

- confirmation of candidature review;
- draft thesis review.

Reviews of progress are used to monitor and manage candidate progress, to ensure early identification of needs and concerns, provide timely feedback on progress and establish a clear path of action. Unsatisfactory academic progress, including behind schedule status will be addressed in accordance with the *HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy*.

5.5 Disputes

A person dissatisfied with a decision under this policy framework may lodge a complaint subject to the requirements of the *Research Policy and Procedure*; and for students the *Academic Appeals Policy*, and/or the *Student Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure*.

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6. Role, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

6.1 The Institute

The Institute is responsible for encouraging and supporting responsible research conduct. To foster responsible research conduct, the Institute will:

- establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct;
- identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the conduct of research;
- 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 Code;
- provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles;
- ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources;
- promote and foster responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code;
- support the responsible dissemination of research findings.
- where necessary (for example, if research findings turn out to be refuted), take action to correct the record of the research in a timely manner;
- 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;
- facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code;
- provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code;
- investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code;
- ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code is timely, effective and in accord with procedural fairness;
- support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code;
- base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

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6.2 Researchers

Researchers are responsible for upholding the principles of the Code through core behaviours that characterise the responsible conduct of research and must only undertake work which upholds accepted ethical and professional standards of integrity and which they are competent to perform. In addition, according to the Code, researchers must:

- understand the Code and ensure persons under their supervision such as students are aware of it and comply with its obligations;
- be responsible for incorporating into their research the broad ethical principles of justice, truth and respect for people and their privacy and avoidance of harm to them as well as respect for non-human subjects of research;
- 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;
- ensure correct acknowledgement of all contributions, commit no fabrication or falsification of data or evidence, and no plagiarism;
- comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct;
- engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols;
- support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice;
- provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct;
- undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct;
- ensure that the ethical principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research;
- adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results;
- 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;
- disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner;
- disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
- 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;
- participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content; and

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- report suspected breaches of the Code in accordance with the *Managing Complaints about the Conduct of Research Procedure*.

6.3 The RSC will provide overarching support and guidance to Institute research aligned with Institute strategic priorities and risk appetite, including:

- maintain oversight of the management of research partnerships in accordance with the relevant collaborative research agreement and in conjunction with the researchers;
- assess whether the research is worth conducting and the benefits justify any potential risks; and
- provide academic governance to ensure appropriate controls for any foreseeable risks.

6.4 The Research Ethics Committee will consider all research requiring ethics approval.

6.5 The Executive Dean is responsible for-

- the promulgation, implementation and review of this policy;
- fostering responsible research conduct; and
- oversight of internal quality assurance of research and research training.

6.6 The entitlements, roles and responsibilities of supervisors and candidates are defined in the *HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy*.

6.7 **Monitoring, Review and Assurance**

The Academic Board is responsible for continuously monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring its ongoing relevance, veracity and consistency with underlying legislation and associated policies and procedures.

6.8 **Recording and Reporting**

All Institute records shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Institute's *Record Management Policy and Procedure*.

Recording and reporting for research management and research integrity activities will be in accordance with their relevant policy and procedure.

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7. Implementation and communication

This procedure will be implemented and communicated through the Institute via:

- announcement on the Institute’s webpage;
- internal circulation to staff; and
- staff professional development.

8. Supporting documents and References

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

Australian Government, *The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)*.

Australian Government, *The Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013)*.

Australian National Data Service, *Guide to Data sharing considerations for Human Research Ethics Committees (2018)*.

Australian Qualifications Framework

Education Services for Overseas Student (ESOS) Act 2000 and National Code 2018

Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy

Copyright Policy and Procedure

Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure

HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure

HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy

HDR Theses and Examination Procedure

MIT Scholarship of Teaching and Research Fund guideline

Records Management Policy and Procedure

Research Policy and Procedure

Scholarship of Teaching and Research

Staff Code of Conduct

Student Academic Progress Policy and Procedure

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The Schedule:

The Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC) - Terms of Reference

HDRC composition

The HDRC is comprised of three members, with gender and campus representation (where possible), as follows:

- a member of the professoriate nominated by Executive Dean (Chair);
- one academic staff member of each School, nominated by their Head of School.

The HDRC will be formally appointed from the nominations on an annual basis at the first meeting of Academic Board, with membership to continue until the next year's committee is appointed.

HDRC Responsibilities

1. The HDRC provides leadership for delivery of postgraduate research and research training.

It is responsible for:

- overseeing rules, policies and procedures for candidates;
- monitoring candidate performance;
- overseeing the confirmation and thesis assessment processes;
- promoting quality research training environment and outcomes; and
- overseeing new, and reviewing current, HDR courses.

2. The HDRC will evaluate and report on research degree courses through:

- reviewing admissions, progress, attritions and completions detail and providing annual summary reports to the Research and Scholarship Committee;
- considering examination outcomes;
- considering candidate surveys;
- assessing alignment with the strategic directions of the Institute; and
- assessing alignment with the Institute's statement of graduate attributes.

Such evaluations differentiate particular and distinct cohorts to monitor the performance and outcomes of all candidates and courses, regardless of location or mode of delivery.

3. The HDRC will advise the Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) on all matters relating to higher degree by research quality and performance and the academic governance of research training activities of the Institute, and on the administration of higher degree by research candidature, including policy and procedures regarding:

- applications for candidature;
- the progress and supervision of candidates;
- the application and maintenance of supervisory registration; and
- the appointment of examiners.

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4. The HDRC may establish standing committees and working groups as required for the conduct of the committee's business. One standing committee that is statutory is the Assessment Committee, which considers the outcomes of research student theses.

5. The HDRC will:

- monitor the administration of research higher degree courses at the school level;
- provide advice and recommendations in relation to the administration of higher degrees by research;
- address any matters concerning higher degrees by research which are referred to it by the RSC, Academic Board or the Executive Dean;
- monitor compliance with the HES Framework (Threshold Standards), receive and consider relevant reports and ensure appropriate actions are recommended to the RSC; and
- receive and review course review reports for higher degree by research courses, and make appropriate recommendations to the Research and Scholarship Committee.

Meetings

6. A quorum for a meeting of the HDRC is a majority of the membership.

7. Meetings shall be conducted a minimum of two times per year, with the timing to align with supporting the business of the RSC and/or consideration of student thesis assessments. Meetings will be published in an annual schedule of meetings, approved by the committee chair.

8. Minutes of the HDRC meetings will be submitted to the agenda of the next RSC meeting, through which they will be received by Academic Board.

9. Where a member has a perceived or material conflict of interest, they must declare this to the chair and to the meeting before the item of business is discussed.

10. Variations to the terms of reference and/or composition of the HDRC must be approved by the Academic Board on recommendation from the RSC.

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