Research Integrity Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Policy promotes the values and principles that underpin quality research and sets out the minimum standards expected of the University and all persons involved in research and research training. It constitutes a governance and management framework designed to create an environment that promotes the responsible, safe and ethical conduct of research and to enhance the reputation of the University and its researchers.

(2) This Policy embraces the principles of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) (Cth) (the Australian Code), the Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 (the Assessment and Investigation Guide) and the other associated good practice guides (Management of Data and Information in Research: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Authorship: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research) to establish and maintain good governance and management practices relating to the conduct of research activities within the University. It is the responsibility of VU Research leadership to encourage good practice.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all University staff and students.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) VU Research is committed to the principles of the Australian Code. Namely, honesty, rigour, transparency, fairness, respect, recognition, accountability and promotion.

(5) The University has established a research integrity governance and management framework, comprised of this Policy and associated Procedures, that:

a. promotes quality research underpinned by a culture of responsible and ethical conduct to enhance the reputation of the University, researchers and research as a profession;
b. includes the adoption and implementation of a suite of institutional policies, guidelines and procedures that outline roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, and appropriately minimise and manage risk associated with the conduct of research; and
c. provides formal training and continuing professional development on all aspects of the Australian Code and this Policy for all researchers and those in other relevant roles.

(6) The University has appointed experienced researchers to create a network of Research Integrity Advisors (RIAs). The primary roles of RIAs are to promote and foster the responsible conduct of research and to be a source of collegiate advice to researchers.

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Victoria University's Research Commitments

(7) All persons involved in research will maintain high standards of research integrity (the components of this responsibility are outlined in the University's Research Integrity Procedures).

(8) All University researchers, that is, research mentors, graduate researchers, research trainees, and technical and other support staff when directly involved in research, will comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies related to the design, conduct and reporting of research, and participate in relevant professional development activities offered by the University.

(9) All University researchers will adhere to the provisions of the Australian Code and this Research Integrity Policy, and will not engage in research misconduct. Where it is alleged there has been non-adherence or that research misconduct has occurred, the matter will be dealt with under the Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure.

(10) The University is committed to the Research responsibilities below, which are outlined in the following procedures:

a. Research Integrity - Research Data Management Procedure;
b. Research Integrity - Authorship Procedure;
c. Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure.

Research data and materials

(11) Researchers will maintain comprehensive notes, books, and records related to research activities, including details of observations, processes and other significant actions or findings, together with any research data and materials necessary to verify the integrity of a research project.

(12) Research data and materials will be retained for a prescribed period beyond the completion of a project as set out in the Management of Data and Information in Research: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research to enable research outcomes to be validated and justified.

Supervision of trainee researchers

(13) Research supervisors will have the appropriate skills and qualifications to guide students. They will also mentor and guide their trainees with regard to the responsible conduct of research (see Higher Degrees by Research Supervision Procedure).

(14) The University supports supervisors through procedures relating to the supervision of work, mentoring and the professional development needs of research trainees and responsibilities of supervisor/trainee.

Publication and dissemination of research findings

(15) University research will be disseminated responsibly and should be disseminated widely.

(16) The Australian Code and this Policy applies to all forms of refereed and non-refereed publications that enable research to be shared by other researchers, professionals and the wider community.

(17) University researchers will disseminate research findings responsibly through publication in academic journals, conference papers, books, exhibitions, films, performances, websites, other media or professional and institutional repositories.

(18) University researchers will promptly take appropriate action to correct the record where there are potential

problems with a reported output.

(19) University researchers will take all reasonable steps to avoid publishing with an illegitimate/vanity/pay-to-pay/predatory publisher.

Authorship

(20) The University and its researchers will ensure fair and appropriate attribution of authorship, acknowledge contributions to scholarly works recognising the moral rights of others and avoid plagiarism in accordance with the Research Integrity - Authorship Procedure.

Conflicts of Interest

(21) Conflicts of interest can arise in a range of contexts relating to research and will be managed to ensure judgements and decisions are not influenced by, or perceived to be influenced by, personal interests or associations.

(22) All persons involved in research will recognise and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the University Conflict of Interest Policy, Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy and the University's Guidelines on Conflict of Interest in Thesis Examination.

Collaborative research with organisations and individuals outside the University

(23) While this commitment may vary, collaborations raise specific research integrity issues. All research collaborations will be dealt with through a written agreement and University researchers involved will comply with any multi-institutional and/or collaborative agreements.

Breaches of the Australian Code and Research Misconduct

(24) The University's arrangements for investigating alleged breaches of the Australian Code (including research misconduct) are described in the Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure.

(25) All persons involved in University research will contribute to the University's efforts to prevent and detect potential breaches of the Australian Code.

Research Integrity, Ethics and Compliance with Regulatory Bodies

(26) The University has established processes to promote research integrity, including formal mechanisms designed to ensure research involving or impacting on humans, animals or the environment is designed, conducted and reported in accordance with relevant regulatory systems. These standards are consistent with, and additional to, the obligations, values and principles articulated by the Australian Code and this Policy.

(27) There is additional guidance for research with Aboriginal people/issues - First Nations Action Plan 2025 – 2028 and Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders, 2018.

(28) The University has a commitment to sustainability in research. Protecting Country underpins all that VU does – including its research and impact. The University's Sustainability Policy addresses conducting research with impact that will focus on delivering outcomes that benefit people, place and planet.

(29) The University has obligations in relation to sanctions compliance and foreign interference considerations in research. Researchers have obligations to:

a. be aware of and conduct due diligence in relation to foreign interference risks as part of Research training,

collaborations and funding processes as required by the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme; and,

b. be aware of and undertake appropriate risk assessments in relation to Australian sanctions laws and research training, collaboration and admissions.

Occupational Health and Safety

(30) Nothing in this Policy alters any legal obligation related to or involving Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). All persons involved in research will be aware that they may be personally liable at law for breaches of OHS that occur in the conduct of their research.

Section 4 - Procedures

(31) Research Integrity - Research Data Management Procedure

(32) Research Integrity - Authorship Procedure

(33) Research Integrity - Guide to the Management of Potential Breaches of the Australian Code Procedure

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(34) HESF Standards: 4.1 Research; 4.2 Research Training; 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity; 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability; 7.3 Information Management.

Section 6 - Definitions

(35) Acknowledgement

(36) Authorship

(37) Breach of the Australian Code

(38) Collaboration: A collaboration occurs when an organisation or individual either within or external to the University work together where there is a commitment of resources by both the parties.

(39) Confidential information: Commercially valuable information or a trade secret, a secret or sacred information (usually communicated by Indigenous people) or other information which is treated as confidential by a research participant, a person involved in research, or the University. It does not include information which:

a. is in or becomes part of the public domain (other than through a breach of confidence); or
b. was known to the recipient at the time of disclosure (unless such knowledge arose through a breach of confidence); or
c. the recipient can prove was independently acquired or developed without breaching any obligations of confidence.

(40) Conflict of Interest

(41) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate: A student at Master or Doctoral level AQF 9 or 10 respectively, of which two thirds or more that is of work is research or research training.

(42) Intellectual Property: Intangible property that is the result of creativity or scholarship, such as patents and copyrights.

(43) Moral Rights: Personal legal rights belonging to creators of copyright works and cannot be transferred, assigned or sold.

(44) Persons Involved in Research

(45) Plagiarism: Involves the use of another person's intellectual output and presenting it, in any form, as one's own without appropriate attribution or acknowledgment.

(46) Principal Investigator

(47) Records: The material form of information, related to or derived from research. Records may include correspondence, grant or ethics applications, technical reports, signed consent forms, information sheets for research participants or other similar documents. For the purposes of this Policy, records do not include research data and materials.

(48) Research: All conduct leading up to, in preparation for, during and after the completion and reporting of:

a. an investigation undertaken to gain original knowledge, validate previous research, or use existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings;
b. a creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge;
c. experimental development into applications software, new programming languages and new operating systems.

(49) Research Mentor

(50) Research Trainee

(51) Research Misconduct

(52) Research supervisor

(53) Researcher

(54) Under the auspices of Victoria University: Research where any of the following statements are true:

a. the research will be conducted on a University site or facilities or using University equipment or services;
b. the research will be claimed for activity-based funding;
c. the research will be described (e.g. in recruitment or consent material or in research outputs) as University research;
d. the research is a component of the University academic program; or
e. the researcher(s) want the University's insurance or indemnity arrangements to cover the research.

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	14th May 2026
Review Date	14th May 2029
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	6th May 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Acknowledgement" - Crediting a contribution to a publication or research project where the contribution is not a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution sufficient for a person to be named as an author.

"Authorship" - An author is an individual who has made a substantial intellectual contribution to a research output and is accountable for the research output.

"Breach of the Australian Code" - Conduct that: fails to comply with any provision of the Australian Code and the Research Integrity Policy, and is not so serious as to constitute research misconduct.

"Conflict of Interest" - A conflict of interest exists if an individual has a private interest that could influence, or reasonably be seen to influence, how they perform their university duties.

"Persons Involved in Research" - Researcher (including adjunct, honorary and visiting staff), research mentor, graduate researcher, research trainee, and technical and other support staff when directly involved in research.

"Principal Investigator" - The person named as the Principal Investigator or Primary Chief Investigator on a project or, if no one is named, the person with the overall responsibility for the project. Where there are more than one principal or chief investigators, the first named principal investigator or primary chief investigator, is considered to be the person responsible for the project.

"Research Mentor" - Anyone involved in the professional development and supervision of other researchers, including graduate researchers.

"Research Trainee" - A person who is new to research, a research assistant, or Higher Degree Research candidates undertaking or involved in research.

"Research Misconduct" - A serious breach of the Australian Code that is intentional, reckless, or negligent, consistent with the definition recommended in the Investigation Guide and referenced in ARC policy section 2.2.

"Research supervisor" - The Chief Principal Investigator (see definition) and, if different, the person responsible for the training, development, academic support or mentoring of a researcher or research trainee. In the case of a student

project, the research supervisor is a nominated supervisor on the project

"Researcher" - A person who undertakes, produces or performs research.