Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research

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The latest roadmap

- **Part A** advocates and describes best practice for both institutions and researchers. For example, how to manage research data and materials, how to publish and disseminate research findings, including proper attribution of authorship, how to conduct effective peer-review and how to manage conflicts of interest.

- **Part B** is designed to ensure there are agreed, fair and effective processes in place in the event of an allegation of research misconduct.
UWA Code of Research Conduct

• Based on NHMRC Code
• Procedures with dealing with allegations of research misconduct at http://www.research.uwa.edu.au/staff/research-policy/procedures
General principles

• UWA staff and students are committed to high standards of professional conduct.

• Researchers should only participate in work which conforms to accepted ethical standards and which they are competent to perform.

• Researchers are responsible for ensuring relevant ethical approvals: animals, human participants, biosafety.
Ethical approvals

- Primarily about safeguarding the welfare and rights of human participants, optimising the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes, and safeguarding the environment.

- Increasing public opinion
Management of research data

• Data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form.

• Data must be held for sufficient time to allow access and reference. Recommended a minimum 5 years from date publication, but up to 15 years for specific types (eg clinical studies)

• Wherever possible, original data must be retained in the school or research centre in which it was generated.
Management of research data (cont.)

• The location of original data must be identified.

• Researchers are responsible for ensuring appropriate security of confidential material (e.g., IP agreements), including that held in electronic media.
Publication and dissemination

• Researchers should, wherever possible, submit their research for peer review. Should include information on financial support.

• Multiple papers based on the same set(s) of data is not acceptable, except where there is full cross referencing (eg preliminary publications in a series need to be fully acknowledged)

• All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that published reports about research activities are complete, accurate and unambiguous.
Authorship

• Attribution of authorship depends to some extent on the discipline, but in all cases authorship reflects substantial participation, where all the following conditions are met:
  
  • Conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data.
  
  • Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
  
  • Final approval of the version to be published.
Authorship (cont.)

• Minimum requirement for authorship accords with the “Vancouver Protocol” as set out in:
Authorship (cont.)

• Authorship does not mean:
  • Participation solely in the acquisition of funding.
  • General supervision of the research group.
  • Being Head of School or holding other positions of authority.
  • Providing a technical contribution.
  • Providing data that has already been published or materials obtained from a third party.
Authorship (cont.)

• Order of authors can be a difficult issue:

Authorship order – Article is in Science, 4 pages long

Authorship (cont.)

- Authorship should be discussed early.
- One author should be given principal status with the responsibility for signing the Statement of Authorship form.
Conflicts of Interest

• Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest is essential – notify the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

• A conflict of interest exists where there is a divergence between an individual’s interests and their professional responsibilities.
  
  • e.g. financial involvement with an organisation with direct interest in the research outcomes; peer review of grant applications of a spouse or dependent; researcher (or dependent) has financial interest in funding agency or agency being paid from grant funds.
Breaches of the Code

• Defined as a contravention of the requirements or a deviation from the principles outlined in the Code.

• An alleged breach is research misconduct if there was intent and deliberation, recklessness or gross and persistent negligence.

• *Research misconduct* is defined at UWA to mean fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other practices that deviate from those commonly accepted in conducting and reporting research.
Research Integrity Advisors

• Experienced research at UWA who can advise on accepted research practices.

• Associate Dean (Research) in each faculty

• Provide advice on procedures for making an allegation of a potential breach of the Code.

• Other key contact is the Director UWA Research Services (campbell.thomson@uwa.edu.au or ext. 3027)