



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

POLICY: RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Purpose:	This policy outlines the responsibilities of all parties to research.
Responsible Executive:	Provost
Responsible Office:	Academic Services
Contact Officer:	Manager, Research Administration
Effective Date:	March 2006
Modification History:	Originally issued March 2006; reformatted July 2006/May 2007

Rationale

The University of Notre Dame Australia is committed to the highest standard of integrity in research. The responsibility for research quality and integrity is shared by the University – its Academic Council and Ethics Committees (and their sub-committees), Research Management Office, the School Research Committees, research supervisors, project directors and research students.

Principles

The Policy is based on the following general principles:

1. the fundamental goal of all research is the pursuit of truth.
2. in the pursuit of such truth all researchers at the University should:
 - maintain high ethical standards and comply with the University's procedures and policies for ethical clearance;
 - maintain high standards of professional conduct and ensure that their work enhances their profession and the good name and Mission and Goals of the University;
 - respect people, their privacy and ensure the safety of those associated with the research;
3. only participate in research which conforms to the ethical standards approved by the University and which they are competent to perform;
4. ensure validity and accuracy in the collection and reporting of data;
5. make research methods and results open to scrutiny and debate by colleagues and the profession at large;
6. ensure confidentiality;
7. guarantee that research data is not used for their personal advantage or that of a third party; and
8. disclose any situation that could lead to real or apparent conflict of interest.

Responsibilities

There are five parties with responsibilities in research

1. The University
2. Schools of the University
3. Research project principal researcher/director
4. Supervisors
5. Higher degree by research students

1. Responsibilities of the University

The University undertakes to ensure that:

- (a) Each staff member, at the time of appointment, is informed of the research policies, regulations, procedural rules, codes of practice and other and (where applicable) to any financial support provided by the University or other agency.
- (b) Each research student, at the time of admission, is informed of the research policies, regulations, procedural rules, codes of practice and other and (where applicable) to any financial support provided by the University or other agency.
- (c) Both the University and its researchers comply with statutory and other requirements. If research falls under the terms of reference of any relevant committee, it must be approved by the relevant committee(s) before research can begin. Researchers must comply with the

conditions that the committee(s) deems necessary for approval, including conditions about the conduct of the approved research.

- (d) Efficient data collection and information management systems that allow the University to monitor the academic progress and research output of each of its research students are implemented and that reports to relevant external authorities as may be required from time to time are provided.
- (e) The intellectual property that may arise directly from the work of research students and their supervisors is protected and ownership identified.
- (f) Appropriate grievance mechanisms are established.
- (g) Academic staff are assisted in improving their skill in the supervision of research students.

2. **Responsibilities of Schools**

The Deans of Schools undertake to ensure that:

- (a) Applicants who are recommended for admission to a research degree satisfy the minimum requirements set down for admission to candidature in the degree concerned, that the applicant is capable of undertaking the proposed project, and that the proposed research is appropriate for the degree and relevant to the disciplinary interests and expertise of the School.
- (b) The necessary resources, supervisory expertise and capacity, workspace, and other facilities are available to support each recommended applicant's academic needs.
- (c) The research student is integrated as fully as possible into the academic culture and collegial life of the School.
- (d) The progress of each research student is effectively monitored, that all emerging problems or difficulties are addressed in a timely manner, and that persisting or locally intractable problems are referred to the Executive Director, Academic Services.
- (e) The ratio of research students/trainees to supervisors is such that effective interaction, as well as effective supervision of the research at all stages is possible.
- (f) The names and credentials of potential examiners of the student's thesis are submitted to the School Research Committee for consideration.
- (g) When the University applies for a research contract or grant, the relevant School is responsible for
 - assessment of the quality of the research as proposed;
 - the quality of the research environment within which the research will be undertaken and the experience and expertise of the principal researcher and other key researchers involved;
 - ensuring that arrangements are in place for the research team to access resources and support to deliver the research as proposed and that agreements are in place which specify responsibilities for the management and monitoring of research

- ensuring that arrangements are in place to review significant developments as the research proceeds, particularly those which put the safety of individuals at risk, and to approve modifications to the design.
- Validation of the proposed research budget.

3. Responsibilities of the Principal Researcher / Project Director

When the University applies for an external grant or research contract, the Dean of the School ensures that:

- Although the legal agreement funding a sponsored project is between the sponsor and the University, the overall responsibility for management of a sponsored project within funding limitations rests with the principal researcher within the School who serves as the project director with full responsibility for approving all invoices, requisitions, and any other charges to be made to the project budget. The principal researcher is also responsible for any technical changes, project reports, and seeking endorsement of the Dean of the School for any proposed budget changes.
- Funds must be expended within the restrictions of the contract or grant and in accordance with the budget as approved by the Dean of the School.
- Researchers have gained ethical clearance from the appropriate Ethics committee prior to the commencement of research.

4. Responsibilities of Supervisors

Research supervisors are the primary source of guidance to research students in all matters of sound research practice. The responsibility of the supervisor is to oversee the work of the student and to provide the help, support and mentoring necessary to enable the student to complete the research and produce a thesis in the time agreed and within the available and agreed resources.

Supervisors are responsible to the Dean of the relevant School in respect of the supervision of the research students allocated to them. A person must decline appointment as a supervisor unless that person expects to be able to discharge the responsibilities of the position.

An effective and supportive relationship between supervisor and research student is critically important if the student's research is to be competently directed and of the highest possible standard in process and outcome.

The supervisor ensures that:

- The research student is aware of, and acts in accordance with, all University policies relevant to his or her research candidature, understands the need to comply with all agreed timelines and procedural requirements, and acknowledges the importance of ethical practice in the conduct of research and its publication.
- The research student has access to information on applicable government and institutional guidelines for the conduct of research, including those covering ethical requirements for studies on human or animal participants, requirements for confidentiality, protection of Intellectual Property, and occupational health and safety.

- (c) An appropriate agreement regarding the work required and submission schedules is negotiated and adhered to.
- (d) Any critical gaps in the student's substantive and/or methodological background that will inhibit the student's ability to progress or complete the study are identified as early as possible any and, in consultation with the Dean, to propose the means of overcoming the shortcoming/s.
- (e) Advice and guidance on the development and timely presentation of a formal research proposal is provided.
- (f) Regular contact with the student is maintained, meeting with a fulltime research student at least monthly to review the student's progress.
- (g) Progress on the agreed work plan is such as to permit the degree to be completed within the expected time frame, detailing in particular whatever the supervisor may regard as inadequate progress or work below the standard expected.
- (h) Data collection is not commenced prior to receiving written advice that the responsible committee/s has approved their research proposal and application for ethics clearance.
- (i) Timely feedback on the student's developing written output is provided.
- (j) Agreement with the student on authorship and appropriate acknowledgment in connection with any publications that may emerge during or after the period of candidature and which are clearly derivative of work done in the context the supervision provided is negotiated and recorded appropriately.
- (k) Progress reports are submitted within the prescribed timeframe and provide a frank account of the nature of the supervisory contact that has occurred during the period, progress achieved against agreed mileposts, and any changes to the research plan or its timeline.
- (l) Ensures the validity of research data obtained by a student under their supervision is, as far as possible.
- (m) Problems which cannot be resolved between the supervisor and the student are referred to the Dean of the student's School and/or the Executive Director, Academic Services and, where appropriate, the student is advised of the University's formal grievance procedures.
- (n) The completion of the thesis is closely overseen and advice provided to the student on (a) when or whether the dissertation or thesis is suitable, in form and content, for submission to the School's Research Committee as a preliminary to it being presented for external examination, and (b) expectations that must be met in relation to the physical form of the work and its submission to the Research Management Office.
- (o) The student has advanced notice about any significant periods during which the supervisor will be absent from the University and that arrangements for continuing contact are made prior to the absence. If such arrangements are not possible, suitable alternative supervisory

arrangements will be negotiated with the Dean of the School and the Manager, Research Administration.

- (p) Disclosure of any potential conflict of interest is provided in writing to: the Provost; the editors of journals to which papers are submitted; and to bodies from which funds are sought.
- (q) Any intellectual property which might result from the research is identified and reported to the Provost.

5. **Responsibilities of the Research Student**

Primary responsibility for the conduct of higher degree research work, its completion, and the writing of the thesis rests with the research student.

Students who accept supervised research degree places undertake to:

- (a) Make themselves familiar with the procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities of research students.
- (b) Negotiate with their supervisor an appropriate agreement/contract of work to be done and schedules to be adhered to with the supervisor.
- (c) Maintain regular contact with their supervisor and ensure that a reasonable schedule of meetings and submission of emerging written work is agreed and maintained.
- (d) Complete periodic progress reports giving a frank account of the nature of the supervisory contact that has occurred during the period, progress achieved against agreed mileposts, and any changes to the research plan or its timeline.
- (e) Accept full responsibility for the final copies of their thesis, ensuring that they meet fully the University's published requirements on presentation and content and comply with University policies on plagiarism and authorship.
- (f) Disclosure of any potential conflict of interest is provided in writing to: the Provost; the editors of journals to which papers are submitted; and to bodies from which funds are sought.
- (g) Inform the supervisor of any potential intellectual property which might result from the research being undertaken.

FOOTNOTES AND LINKS TO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

1. Joint NHRMC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research practice (1997) available at <http://www7.health.gov.au/nhmrc/research/general/nhmrcavc.htm> last accessed 11/4/05
2. University of Melbourne Code of Conduct for Research available at <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/r171r8.htm> last accessed 25/5/05
3. Edith Cowan University Guidelines on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship available at <http://www.ecu.edu.au/GPPS/ethics/> last accessed 11/4/05
4. Privacy Act (1988) and Privacy Amendment Act (October 2001). Available at: <http://www.privacy.gov.au/act/> National Privacy Principles (part of Privacy Act 1988). Available at: <http://www.privacy.gov.au/publications/npps01.html>
5. Uniform Requirement for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals 1997. Available at <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/policy/procedures/Vancouver/Vancouver.pdf>