1. Context

Torrens University Australia is committed to the highest standards of ethical and responsible research. The University expects all members of the University community to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles outlined in the Academic Freedom – Statement of Principles and the values of excellence, integrity, fairness and intercultural understanding. This policy is based on the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (the Code) and its accompanying Guides. The University expects all researchers and research managers to be familiar with its provisions and to conduct their research and related tasks in accordance with the Code, this policy and all other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.

2. Definition

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

Ghost authorship: a practice where an individual such as a research assistant or industry researcher meets the criteria for authorship but is not acknowledged as an author.

3. Scope

This policy:

- covers research which can be reasonably regarded as the responsibility of the University
- applies regardless of the research funding source or whether the research requires ethics approval.
- applies to all students, staff and other members of the University community engaged in research activity.

4. Principles

This policy is based on the principles of:

- honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research
  Researchers must present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting research.
- rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research
  Researchers must underpin research by attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases.
• transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings
  Researchers must share and communicate the research methodology, data and findings openly, responsibly and accurately, and disclose and manage actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

• fairness in the treatment of others
  Researchers must treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect, appropriately reference and cite the work of others, and give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.

• respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment
  Researchers must 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, show respect in the care and use of animals in research and minimise adverse events of the research on the environment.

• recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of significance to them
  Researchers must recognise, value and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property and connection to land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prior to research being undertaken, and report the outcomes of the research back to those involved in the research.

• accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research
  Researchers must comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines, ensure good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research and consider the consequences and research outcomes prior to its communication.

• promotion of responsible research practices
  All individuals involved in any University-research activity must promote and foster a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 University responsibilities

The University shall:

• maintain a framework for good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct,

• 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 University practices are consistent with 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 research supervisors have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources,

• 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 Code,
• support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record 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, and
• base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

5.2 Researcher responsibilities

The researcher shall:

• 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,
• 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,
• ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research,
• engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols,
• 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,
• 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,

- acknowledge those who have contributed to the research,
- cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately, and
- participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.

6. Standards of responsible research conduct

6.1 Management of research data

The Research Data Management Policy provides guidance on storage of research data and primary materials, ownership of research data and primary materials, retention of research data and records, access to research data and records, removal or movement of data and records, destruction of records, and collaborative research projects.

Researchers must keep clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research, including research data and primary materials in accordance with: (1) relevant information privacy and records management legislation; (2) University policies; and (3) Research Data Management Policy. Research data must have sufficient detail to justify research outcomes and enable verification of the research results.

6.2 Authorship and dissemination of research findings

The University expects fairness, honesty and best practice in authorship and the responsible dissemination of research findings, in accordance with the provisions of the Code and relevant University policies, including the Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy. This includes researchers:

- ensuring they acknowledge the work of other authors appropriately and accurately in publication and dissemination of their research,
- ensuring publication of research findings is complete, taking account of any restrictions relating to confidentiality requirements, contract requirements, intellectual property or culturally sensitive data, and where appropriate, including any negative findings and results which may be contrary to the hypothesis and/or conclusion,
- including information on all sources of financial and in-kind support for the research, including recognition of support from Torrens University Australia, as well as any potential conflicts of interest,
- being aware of and declaring any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, such as sources of funding or commercial interests or affiliations, when confirming their authorship contribution,
- ensuring the accuracy and integrity of their direct contribution to the research output,
- taking reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the contributions of all co-authors,
- ensuring that any concerns about the accuracy or integrity of any part of a research output are appropriately responded to,
- accurately describing the status of publications (in preparation, submitted, under review, accepted for publication, in press), research funding (applied for, granted, funding period), and awards conferred,
- ensuring that when privately reporting research that has not been subjected to peer review, the unpublished status of the work and the peer-review mechanisms to which it will be subjected are stated fully,
• ensuring that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous,
• correcting the record as soon as possible if they become aware of unintentional misleading or inaccurate statements about their work,
• disclosing if they are submitting substantially similar work to more than one publisher at the time of submission,
• acknowledging and fully disclosing Torrens University Australia and sponsors involved in any collaborative research, except where restrictions have been agreed with the sponsor,
• where feasible and requested, providing research participants with an appropriate summary of the research results,
• when publishing Indigenous knowledge obtained through sources including unpublished manuscripts, or audio or video recordings, seeking approval from the Indigenous people involved in the project or the community from which that knowledge originates and the individual and collective contributors of the knowledge should be acknowledged, as appropriate,
• acknowledging other contributions to research that do not meet the criteria for authorship,
• obtaining permission from named contributors before acknowledging them in research outputs, since acknowledgement may imply a contributor's endorsement of the research output, and
• seeking advice from staff responsible for media liaison when discussing research findings with the media or wider community, to minimise the scope for misunderstandings.

In cases where an error, anomaly or breach of the Code and/or University policy has been identified in a publication or in the research findings, the University will act to correct the record as soon as practicable.

6.2.1 Criteria and accountability for authorship

While authorship conventions vary across disciplines, a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution must include one and should include a combination of two or more of the following attributes:

• conception and design of the project or output
• acquisition of research data where this has required significant judgement, planning, design or input
• contribution of knowledge, where justified, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge
• analysis or interpretation of research data, or
• drafting significant parts of the publication or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation.

The University acknowledges that some journals and disciplines may require authors to meet a higher threshold than the criteria listed above. As such, researchers are expected to familiarise themselves with discipline-specific authorship requirements and ensure their authorship practices are consistent with established discipline-specific practices.

Authorship must not be offered purely on the following grounds:

• holding a position of authority (e.g. head of a research group or a supervisory role),
• facilitating the acquisition of funding,
• providing routine assistance in some aspects of the project, or
• providing a technical contribution, data that has already been published or materials obtained from third parties, but not providing substantial input to the project or publication.

Ghost authorship is not an acceptable practice.
Each individual author must be able to take public responsibility for the part of the work they contributed and those who meet the criteria for authorship must not be included or excluded without their permission in writing. If an individual does not agree to be accountable for their contribution, the contribution should not be included in the research output.

When there is more than one author of a research output, an authorship agreement should be in place before the commencement of writing up a research project. The authorship agreement should include:

- identification of those who will be recognised as the authors of the research output,
- a description of the contribution that each author has made (or will make) to the research output,
- an indication of the order in which the authors appear. The agreed order of authors should be consistent with any applicable disciplinary norms and publication requirements,
- identification of at least one corresponding author who is responsible for communication with the publisher and managing communication between the co-authors.

It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to maintain records of the authorship agreement. Where the corresponding author is not from the same institution as other listed authors, authors are encouraged to keep their own records.

As a project evolves, it is important to continue to discuss authorship, especially if new people become involved in the research and make a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution. The corresponding author should retain a record of any agreed changes to the authorship of a research output.

Written authorship acknowledgements and consents must be retained as part of the research records.

6.3 Peer review

The University encourages researchers to seek peer review for all research outputs and to participate responsibly in peer review of research by others, recognising that peer review is an important activity that has an impact on the researcher’s workload and status.

University staff acting as peer reviewers must:

- inform themselves about the criteria to be applied in the peer review process,
- review research objectively, impartially and in accordance with the review criteria,
- apply standards equally to all research under review,
- give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research,
- maintain professionalism in the tone of their comments, ensuring that peer reviews are as constructive as possible,
- disclose interests and manage conflicts of interest,
- assist research trainees under their supervision, including early career and HDR students, to develop the skills necessary for conducting peer review responsibly,
- adhere to the confidentiality requirements of all bodies utilising peer review including universities, publishers and funding agencies.
Peer reviewers must not:

- contact the author/s or other reviewers unless authorised to do so,
- seek to unduly influence the review process,
- delegate their responsibilities or ask others to assist with a review, unless authorised to do so,
- take into account factors that are not relevant to the review criteria,
- permit personal prejudice to influence the process (peer reviewers should be aware of how their own biases (conscious or unconscious) could affect the peer review process, including in relation to gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional employer and research discipline),
- take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, or use information from research projects under review, without permission,
- conduct a review for which one lacks appropriate expertise, or
- intentionally delay the review process.

Peer reviewers should also be aware that funding agencies and publishers are likely to have their own peer review policies, guidelines and expectations to which they must adhere.

Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not seek to influence the process or outcomes.

6.4 Conflicts of interest

The University requires researchers to disclose to the institution all interests that are relevant, or could appear to be relevant, to proposed or ongoing research, in accordance with the University’s Conflict of Interest Policy.

Researchers must:

- maintain records of activities that may be relevant to the assessment of whether a conflict of interest exists,
- disclose any new interest in a timely fashion,
- comply with the disclosure of interests policies and procedures of external bodies with which the researcher or staff member engages or is affiliated, for example funders, conference sponsors or organisers and publishers. Relevant roles may include, but not be limited to: company director, not-for-profit board member, scientific advisor or editor,
- update any disclosures of interest as circumstances change, and at least annually during the period during which the research remains active.

6.5 Collaborative research

The University supports collaboration between researchers, institutions, and industry where the research is appropriately managed via an agreement. Researchers involved in collaborative research must ensure an agreement is in place prior to the commencement of the research that addresses:

- expectations of each party in terms of definitions of roles and responsibilities,
- governance of the project,
- the use, management, sharing, ownership and stewardship of research data, primary materials and intellectual property, including access to assets or items that are retained at the end of the project, and in the event a researcher or institution leaves the collaboration during the project,
- requirements for the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest,
- management of confidentiality issues,
- protocols for authorship and acknowledgement of research outputs, including data outputs,
- funding arrangements (with funding sources declared transparently),
• any plans to commercialise research outputs and any entitlements to commercial returns,
• the designation of which party or parties are entitled to communicate on behalf of the collaboration,
• dispute resolution procedures,
• the procedures for managing and investigating potential breaches of the Code.

Researchers working on international collaborations must comply with the Code and relevant legislation and University policies in addition to any other relevant standards. If departures from standard Australian practices are required while overseas, researchers must seek approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) prior to the research activity.

Researchers should keep copies of relevant negotiations with collaborators.

All researchers involved in a collaborative research project must familiarise themselves with the formal agreement and comply with any contractual arrangements and related policies and legislation.

Agreements should be reviewed periodically to ensure that provisions remain current.

7. Suspected breaches of responsible research conduct

The University expects researchers, and any members of the University community, to act in a timely manner in reporting a case of suspected breach of the Code and/or this policy.

8. Breaches

Failure to comply with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action under the Staff Misconduct Policy. Persons considering making an allegation of a breach of this policy and/or the Code must refer to the Procedure for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct.

9. Research Governance

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research is ultimately responsible for the conduct of research within the University. Research governance responsibilities are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responsible committees and University community members</th>
<th>Role</th>
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| Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research                        | • Responsibility and accountability in matters relating to research policy, strategy and investment.  
• Approving the establishment, review and termination of research centres.  
• Approving applications from University staff and affiliates for external funding.  
• Approving collaborative projects with researchers from other institutions, including collaborative research agreements with third parties. |
| Governing Board                                          | Overseeing the overall research operational performance and strategic direction of research at the University |
| Academic Board                                           | Advising the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research on:  
• strategic research investment and priorities, |
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<tr>
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|                                                          | • research policy,  
|                                                          | • research operational matters, and  
|                                                          | • higher degree by research courses. |
| Research Committee                                       | • Overseeing the implementation of research strategy and management of research activities at the University.  
|                                                          | • Monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy, the Code and all other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.  
|                                                          | • Overseeing higher degree by research programs, including admission, enrolment issues and thesis examination. |
| Ethics Committee                                          | Monitoring and ensuring compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.  
|                                                          | Reviewing applications for ethics approval for human research projects. |
| Students, staff members and affiliates of the University conducting research activities | Complying with this policy, the Code and all other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements. |

10. References


