Responsible Conduct of Research Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethics in the conduct of research, and is committed to upholding the standards set out in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 (the Code).

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This policy provides the University's overarching research framework for adopting the Code and for complying with the relevant sections of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Threshold Standards).

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to:

a. all research activities conducted under the auspices of the University;
b. all staff, including adjunct, visiting, emeritus and conjoint appointees;
c. Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates who carry out research under the auspices of the University;
d. students completing a thesis or dissertation as part of a higher education coursework course;
e. HDR candidates supervised by Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) staff; and
f. Menzies staff supervising HDR candidates.

(4) This policy does not apply to students undertaking coursework units at the University. Allegations of academic misconduct for coursework students are managed under the Academic Integrity Policy.

(5) This policy does not generally apply to staff of Menzies unless they are conducting research specifically under the auspices of CDU rather than Menzies.

Section 4 - Policy

(6) The conduct of research at the University requires the University to identify and manage legal and regulatory obligations relating to research, and to ensure research is conducted in a manner that is consistent with the University's values and governance documents.

(7) Research and its associated activities will be conducted in accordance with a research policy framework that complies with the Threshold Standards, through:

a. ethical conduct of research and responsible research practice;
b. clear ownership and management of intellectual property;

c. successful management of research partnerships;
d. clear requirements for publication and authorship; and
e. resolution of allegations of misconduct in research.

(8) Research at the University will be conducted, or overseen, by staff with qualifications, research experience and skills relevant to the type of research undertaken and their role. A system for accurate and up-to-date recording of the research outputs of staff and HDR candidates will be maintained.

(9) This policy:

a. ensures the University adopts the Code;
b. establishes how the University and its researchers and staff will comply with the Code and the Threshold Standards;
c. seeks to minimise risk and protect the interests of the University, researchers, staff and HDR candidates when engaging in research activities; and
d. seeks to protect research participants, maintain animal welfare and protect the environment.

(10) In the event of any inconsistency between the Code and University's governance and other documents, the Code will prevail.

Principles

(11) The University adopts the principles of responsible conduct of research in the Code to ensure that University processes are consistent with those principles.

(12) The following principles apply to all research activities at the University:

a. honesty, rigour and accountability in developing, undertaking and reporting research;
b. transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings;
c. fairness in the treatment of others;
d. respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment;
e. recognition of the right of First Nations peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them; and
f. promotion of responsible research practices.

(13) All staff, adjunct, visiting, emeritus and conjoint academic appointees and HDR candidates undertaking research at the University must consult the Code, be aware of the principles and their responsibilities in the Code and conduct their research in accordance with those principles.

Responsibilities of the institution

(14) The University endorses the responsibilities of institutions as set out in the Code, namely, to:

a. establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct;
b. identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and policies relating to the conduct of research;
c. develop and maintain a current and readily available suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code;
d. provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles;
e. ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources;

f. appoint and provide regular training to Research Integrity Advisors who assist in promoting and fostering responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code;
g. support the responsible dissemination of research findings and, where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner;
h. provide access to facilities for safely and securely storing and managing research data, records and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference;
i. facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the Code;
j. provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code and to investigate and resolve these complaints;
k. 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;
l. support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the Code and
m. base findings of investigations on the balance of probabilities and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

Responsibilities of researchers

(15) The University endorses the responsibilities of researchers as set out in the Code, namely, to:

a. support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice;
b. provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct;
c. undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct;
d. comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct;
e. 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;
f. ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect are applied to human research;
g. engage with First Nations peoples and respect their local laws, customs and protocols;
h. 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;
i. adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results;
j. retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials, and where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these records by interested parties;
k. disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly and, where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner;
l. disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
m. 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;
n. acknowledge those who have contributed to the research;
o. cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately;
p. participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content; and
q. report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.

Menzies School of Health Research

(16) Under the terms of the agreement between the University and Menzies, the Menzies School of Health Research is responsible for developing and enacting its own research and research ethics governance documents. In general, staff at Menzies do not fall under this policy or other university research governance documents, unless they are carrying out research specifically under the auspices of the University or supervising HDR candidates. The University's governance documents do apply to HDR candidates enrolled at CDU who are supervised by Menzies staff.

(17) In circumstances where this policy and related policies and procedures apply, the Director Menzies School of Health Research is considered the equivalent to a Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor and is included in the collective definition of a "head of a Faculty or institute."

Allegations of breaches of the Code

(18) Allegations of breaches of the Code will be dealt with in accordance with the Responsible Conduct of Research Procedures.

(19) Where an allegation of misconduct relates to a Higher Degree Researcher who is also a staff member, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President Research and Innovation will determine which procedures apply with reference to the context in which the alleged breach occurred.

Section 5 - Non-compliance

(20) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(21) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(22) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th November 2023
Review Date	7th November 2026
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	2nd November 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890
Implementation Officer	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890
Enquiries Contact	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.