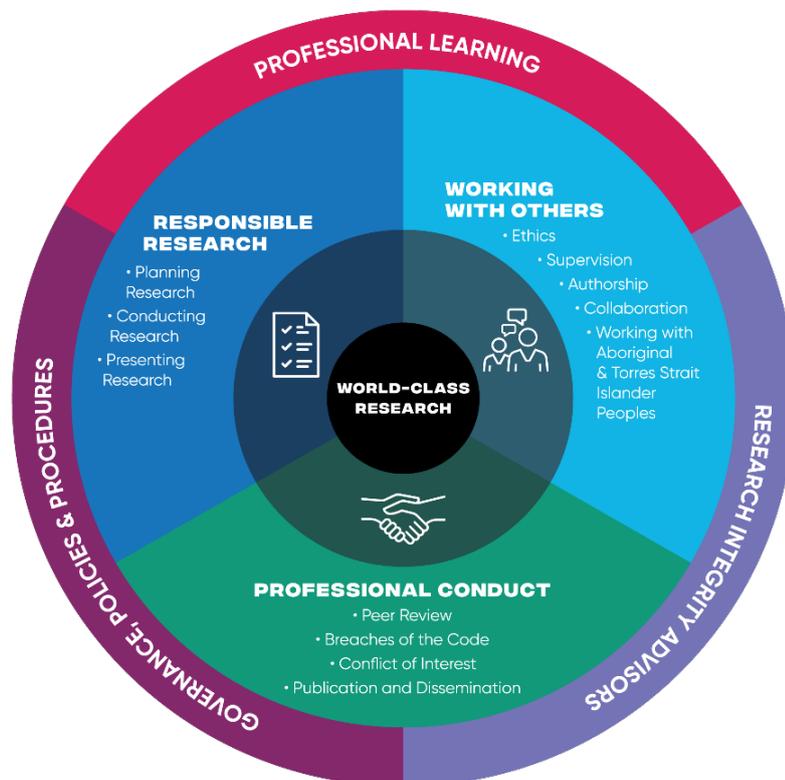


## Research Integrity Framework

Integrity is one of ECU's core values - being ethical, honest and fair. Integrity is also a key component of world-class research. In Australia, all researchers are required to comply with [The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code). The Code sets out the principles that characterise an honest, ethical and conscientious research culture that facilitate high quality research along with responsibilities for institutions and for researchers to uphold in all aspects of their research.

At ECU, our approach to research integrity and meeting the principles and responsibilities of the Code, is addressed through three components of world class research; **responsible research**, **working with others** and **professional conduct**.

This approach is underpinned by policies, guidelines and resources with an additional focus on creating a strong research culture. To complement our approach, ECU has a comprehensive professional learning program for researchers and support from our Research Integrity Advisors.



### Responsible Research

At ECU, our approach to Research Integrity and meeting the principles and responsibilities of the Code, is addressed through three components. Responsible Research is the first component of this approach and encompasses **Planning**; **Conducting**; and **Presenting** your research.

#### Planning Research

Good, early research planning can save time and avoid problems later in the research program. Although research planning is discipline specific, there are some key concepts that all researchers should consider when embarking on a research project:

- Developing a proper research plan;
- Getting necessary institutional approvals; and
- Confirming research agreements before the project begins.

The [responsible research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to meet their research planning responsibilities.



## Conducting Research

Researchers have a responsibility under the Code to conduct research that complies with the ethical principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect and for animal research, the 3R's (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered and applied.

All research must be conducted using methods which are appropriate to the aims of the research and clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research, including research data and primary materials are retained and where possible access is provided to interested parties.

When conducting world class research at ECU it is important to:

- Obtain ethics approval;
- Develop and monitor a data management plan;
- Store and secure all research data;
- Properly retain research data as required; and
- Where possible, provide ongoing access and reuse of the research data.

The [responsible research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their research conduct responsibilities.

## Presenting Research

Data collection and analysis techniques vary widely by discipline. It's important researchers are familiar with the expected and accepted practices, techniques and measures that are used within their field of research as the Australian Code requires researchers to adopt methods that are appropriate to the aims of the research and make sure the conclusions are justified by the results.

Researchers also have a responsibility to their colleagues and the wider community to disseminate a full account of their research and to acknowledge those who have contributed to it.

The [responsible research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their research presentation responsibilities.

## Working with others

Working with others is the second component of ECU's approach to research integrity and includes adhering to your **ethics approval guidelines**, adequately **supervising** research students, recognising all contributing **authors** correctly, working **collaboratively** with others, including working with **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**.

### Ethics

All research undertaken at ECU must be tested through the [Research Ethics Management System](#) (REMS) to establish the level of ethical review required. Research ethics approval ensures all ECU research complies with the ethical principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect and for animal research, the 3R's (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered and applied.



Researchers must also comply with the suite of policies, procedures and practices for responsible research conduct, any funding agreements, funding rules or guidelines along with any agreements in place for unfunded research.

The [working with others research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their ethics responsibilities.

## **Supervision**

When supporting, mentoring, managing or supervising other researchers, ECU staff will provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct and will engage with the policies, procedures and practices that support research integrity. Information for supervisors is available through the [GRS webpages](#) and includes access, information and support on the supervisor induction and refresher training, supervising off campus candidates and the supervisor handbook and toolkit.

The [working with others research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their supervision responsibilities.

## **Authorship**

Researchers must 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. All authors must agree to be listed as an author as well as acknowledging those who have contributed to the research.

Researchers should discuss authorship of all future publications at the outset of a research project, and any agreements reviewed whenever there are changes in participation and/or the content of the publication. The [ECU Statement of Authorship form](#) is a useful tool to support this practice.

The [working with others research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their authorship responsibilities.

## **Collaboration**

Researchers must comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Researchers must also ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the research.

The [working with others research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their collaboration responsibilities, including:

- Developing and monitoring collaborative research agreements;
- Complying with any multi-institutional agreements and all ECU policies and procedures; and
- Conducting research responsibly and reporting potential breaches of the agreement.

## **Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research has great scope to improve services and outcomes for peoples and communities. Appropriate preparation and planning in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community-controlled organisations, can ensure that research projects respect shared values as well as diversity, priorities, needs, and aspirations of communities.

ECU has a responsibility to ensure we facilitate ethical research that engages and recognises indigenous participants as part of the research journey.

The NHMRC publication titled *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* (NHMRC, 2018) sets out six core values of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These include spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, equity, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility which are important to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. They ensure all human research undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities:

- respects the shared values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;
- is relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, needs and aspirations;
- develops long-term ethical relationships among researchers, institutions and sponsors; and
- develops best practice ethical standards of research.

The [working with others research webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their responsibilities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Professional Conduct

Professional Conduct is the third component of ECU's approach to research integrity and includes the process of **peer review**, **breaches to the code**, declaring and managing **conflicts of interest** and **publishing** and **disseminating** research findings responsibly.

### Peer Review

Peer review is 'the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field' (NHMRC 2018). Researchers must participate in the peer review process, conduct peer review responsibly and avoid interference in the peer review process. ECU researchers should also complete the professional conduct module within the Epigeum [research integrity professional learning program](#) to be aware of their obligations relating to peer review.

The peer review process may also draw attention to departures from the principles in the Code, by identifying plagiarism, duplicative publication, errors and misleading statements. Peer reviewers should familiarise themselves with the processes involved in [reporting potential breaches](#) of the Code identified during the peer review process.

The [professional conduct webpage](#) explores these concepts further and provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their peer review responsibilities.

### Breaches to the Code

Research conduct which fails to meet the principles and responsibilities of the Code (including; not meeting required research standards, fabrication, falsification, misrepresentation and plagiarism), may be defined as a breach. ECU manages breaches of the Code through the Research Misconduct Policy supported by the 'Guide



to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018’.

The Code sets out a number of responsibilities for researchers and institutions when preventing, detecting, reporting and investigating potential breaches to the code. For more information on those responsibilities, along with ECU's approach to managing breaches or to raise a concern or complaint on research conduct see the [managing breaches webpage](#).

### **Conflict of Interest**

Researchers are required to disclose and manage all interests that are relevant or could appear to be relevant to proposed or ongoing research. The [ECU Conflict of Interest Policy and guidelines](#), which set out the requirements for the disclosure and management of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and outlines the principles, roles, responsibilities and procedures that govern the University's process.

The [professional conduct webpage](#) provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their conflict of interest responsibilities including access to online or face to face training.

### **Publication and Dissemination**

Researchers have a responsibility to their colleagues and the wider community to disseminate a full account of their research and to acknowledge those who have contributed to it. ECU promotes an environment of collegiality, honesty, integrity, accuracy and responsibility in the authoring, reviewing and publication of research findings.

The [professional conduct webpage](#) provides researchers with resources and information to support them in meeting their publishing responsibilities including links to a suite of library resources.

## **Supporting structures: Governance Policies & Procedures, Professional Learning and Research Integrity Advisors**

### **Professional Learning**

Whether early in their career or an experienced researcher, ECU provides support and training to help all researchers build the knowledge, competencies and skills required to have a successful research career. It is important for researchers of all levels (including postgraduate research students) to develop transferrable and professional skills for degree completion, career progression, personal development and employability. Research Services provides support through:

- The Researcher Professional Development Framework (RPDF), an evidenced-based framework that is designed to provide a holistic view of researcher development across an academic career;
- Research integrity online professional learning program hosted by Epigeum; and
- A calendar of all research related training workshops and events.

The [researcher professional development webpages](#) contain more information and resources to support researchers at ECU.

## **Governance Policies and Procedures**

Research integrity at ECU is supported by a number of policies, guidelines and procedures. While a robust policy suite is currently available to support research integrity, the research policy landscape is currently under review by Strategic Governance Services to provide a streamlined approach to research policies at ECU, operationalised through a number of governance instruments including standards, guidelines and procedures. This work is taking place across 2020 and 2021, further information will be available as the program of work develops.

There are a number of governance resources available to further support researchers including ECUs approach to clinical trials and the research governance framework for institutes, centres and research programs.

## **Research Integrity Advisors**

Research Integrity Advisors (RIA) are experienced researchers located within each school who actively promote the responsible conduct of research across ECU. RIA's are available to provide advice and support to the ECU research community relating to research integrity and to uphold the principles of responsible research conduct in accordance with the Code. They may also be consulted by staff or students who have a concern or complaint relating to research conducted at ECU and may act as a source of advice on the university's processes and a point of referral.

The Research Integrity Advisor role at ECU is one that will be formally launched late 2020. A webpage and number of resources will be available both to the RIAs and the wider research community.