



TITLE: POLICY ON THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

APPROVED: 21 MAY 2019

REVIEW DATE: 20 MAY 2022

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy formally adopts the principles and responsibilities in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#), or any subsequent published revision thereof (the *Code*).
- 1.2 The *Code* establishes a framework for responsible research conduct that provides a foundation for high-quality, credible research that the community can trust.
- 1.3 This Policy is to be read with the QIMR Berghofer *Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, which together set out the principles and procedures for reporting, receiving and resolving complaints about potential Breaches of the *Code* in accordance with the [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\), or any subsequent published revision thereof](#) (the *Guide*).
- 1.4 This Policy replaces two previous Policies: the *Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the *Research Misconduct Policy* (details noted below).

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 QIMR Berghofer is committed to upholding the highest integrity standards in research.
- 2.2 QIMR Berghofer adopts and endorses the *Code's* general principles and responsibilities for the responsible conduct of research, by creating a conscientious research culture, characterised by honest and ethical conduct.
- 2.3 Departures from the standards of conducting research outlined in this policy may amount to serious misconduct and/or Research Misconduct on the part of the individual researchers (this includes but is not limited to Visiting Scientists, Affiliate Scientists, students and volunteers).

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 It is MANDATORY for all researchers conducting research under the auspices of QIMR Berghofer to comply with and conduct their research in a manner consistent with the standards set out in this Policy and other Institute policies and to comply with the *Code*.
- 3.2 This Policy applies to all QIMR Berghofer employees and researchers, other than as outlined in paragraph 3.3 below.
- 3.3 This Policy:

- 3.3.1 does not apply to complaints relating to the Director and CEO as these will be dealt with in accordance with the QIMR Berghofer *Complaints involving the Director and CEO (Public Official) Policy*;
- 3.3.2 does not address disciplinary action for complaints that are substantiated as these are addressed by the QIMR Berghofer *Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Policy*;
- 3.3.3 does not address other forms of misconduct such as harassment, bullying or financial misconduct. These are addressed through the QIMR Berghofer *Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Policy* or other procedures established by QIMR Berghofer and amended from time to time;
- 3.3.4 does not cover complaints relating to other Institutions as these will be referred to the relevant Institution to deal with.

4. PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

- 4.1 All employees and researchers are expected to:
 - 4.1.1 Read and abide by this Policy, the *Code* and the QIMR Berghofer *Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*;
 - 4.1.2 Conduct their research with integrity and according to the *Code*'s general principles and responsibilities;
 - 4.1.3 Comply with any other QIMR Berghofer policies, procedures and guidelines and any other legal or regulatory requirements that are relevant to their field of research;
 - 4.1.4 Obtain the following approvals before commencing research:
 - 4.1.4.1 Safety approval;
 - 4.1.4.2 Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval and comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* for all work involving human subjects, samples or data (when required);
 - 4.1.4.3 Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) approval and comply with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* for all work involving animals;
 - 4.1.5 Conduct research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in accordance with the relevant guidelines adopted by the NHMRC^{1,2} and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies³;
 - 4.1.6 Encourage consumer and community participation in research, which if undertaken, must be conducted in accordance with the NHMRC *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research*; and

¹ *Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders*, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018.

² *Keeping Research on Track II*, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018.

³ *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012.

4.1.7 Obtain any other regulatory approvals that are relevant to their field of research⁴.

5. BREACHES OF THE CODE AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

5.1 A breach of the *Code* is defined as a failure to meet the principles and responsibilities of the *Code* and may refer to a single breach or multiple breaches. Examples of breaches of the *Code* include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Not meeting required research standards** – for example by conducting research without the required ethics approval or misuse of research funds;
- **Fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation** – for example fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of research data or source material, or falsification and/or misrepresentation to obtain funding;
- **Plagiarism** – for example plagiarism of someone else’s work, including theories, concepts, research data and source material, and duplicate publication (also known as redundant or multiple publication, or self-plagiarism) without acknowledgement of the source;
- **Research data management** – for example inappropriate destruction or disclosure of research records, research data or source material;
- **Supervision** – for example failure to provide adequate guidance or mentorship on responsible research conduct to researchers or research trainees under their supervision;
- **Authorship** – for example failure to acknowledge the contribution of others fairly, or misleading ascription of authorship;
- **Conflicts of interest** – a failure to disclose and manage conflicts of interest; and
- **Peer review** – a failure to conduct peer review responsibly.

5.2 Breaches of the *Code* occur on a spectrum, from minor (less serious) to major (more serious). Repeated or persistent breaches will likely constitute a serious breach.

5.3 Research Misconduct is defined as a serious breach of the *Code* which is also intentional, reckless or negligent. Fabrication and falsification are types of breaches that are commonly recognized as being undertaken intentionally or recklessly and are examples of Research Misconduct. Repeated or persistent breaches will likely constitute a serious breach, which will trigger consideration of Research Misconduct.

5.4 Research Misconduct does not, however, include honest differences in judgement. Unintentional errors do not usually constitute Research Misconduct unless they result from behaviour that is reckless or negligent.

5.5 Once a breach has been found, the seriousness of the breach of the *Code* is to be determined on a case-by-case basis and requires good judgement, careful deliberation and an appreciation of the context and accepted academic disciplinary norms.

5.6 All complaints relating to potential Breaches of the *Code* and Research Misconduct will be dealt with in a procedurally fair manner, that is:

5.6.1 Proportional, fair, impartial, timely, transparent and confidential;

5.6.2 In accordance with the QIMR Berghofer *Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*; and

⁴ In accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice and standards.

5.6.3 In accordance with the *Guide*.

- 5.7 Substantiated complaints of Research Misconduct may be considered to be Serious Misconduct and dealt with under the QIMR Berghofer *Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Policy*.
- 5.8 Every reasonable effort will be taken to restore the reputation of any researcher alleged to have engaged in improper conduct of research when such complaints cannot be substantiated.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 QIMR Berghofer, Employees and Researchers:

The primary responsibility for ensuring the integrity of research lies with both the individual researcher and QIMR Berghofer. Any employee or researcher who is concerned that another researcher has not conducted their research in accordance with the *Code*, must report their concerns as described in the QIMR Berghofer *Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

6.2 Research Integrity Advisor (RIA):

A RIA is an experienced researcher/scientist appointed by QIMR Berghofer to provide confidential advice to researchers, and employees who are unsure about a research conduct issue and may be considering whether to make a complaint. RIAs will explain the options open to the person(s) considering, making or having made a complaint. RIAs do not investigate complaints or contact the person who is the subject of the complaint or their supervisor.

6.3 Designated Officer:

The Designated Officer is a senior member of the QIMR Berghofer Faculty other than the Director and CEO, for example the Deputy Director. The Designated Officer is appointed to receive complaints about the conduct of research, potential breaches of the *Code* or Research Misconduct and to oversee their management and investigation where required.

6.4 Research Integrity Office (RIO):

The RIO is comprised of staff with responsibility for managing the research integrity process at QIMR Berghofer. The RIO will include a Research Integrity Officer, a staff member appointed to conduct a preliminary assessment of a complaint about research.

6.5 Director and CEO:

The Director and CEO has responsibility for receiving reports of the outcomes of processes of assessment or investigation of a potential or found breach of the *Code* or Research Misconduct and deciding on the course of action to be taken.

7. CONSIDERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 All allegations of research misconduct or of breaches of the *Code* will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the QIMR Berghofer *Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

8. CONTACT OFFICER FOR THIS POLICY

QIMR Berghofer Deputy Director

9. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

This Policy replaces two previous policies:

- *Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research*, approved by Council on 16th June 2009; and
- *Research Misconduct Policy*, approved by Council on 6th December 2016.

Revised as the *Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct* and endorsed by DCC on 9 April 2019.

Revised as the *Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct* and endorsed by Staff Association on 16 May 2019.

Revised as the *Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct* and approved by Council on 21 May 2019.

10. REFERENCES

10.1 External references

Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, 2013
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes>

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, 2018
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018>

Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/ethical-conduct-research-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-and-communities>

Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/research-and-guides/ethics/gerais.pdf>

Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, 2018
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/guide-managing-and-investigating-potential-breaches-code>

Keeping Research on Track II, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/keeping-research-track-ii>

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, 2007 (Updated 2018)
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018>

Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2016
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research>

10.2 **Relevant QIMR Berghofer policies and procedures (available on the intranet)**

Appointments to Roles under the “Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct”
Code of Conduct
Complaints involving the Director and CEO (Public Official) Policy
Conflict of Interest Policy
Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Policy
Policy on the Criteria for Authorship
Procedures for Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
Public Interest Disclosure Policy
Recordkeeping and Research Data Management Policy (and Guidelines)