

# Research Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) To set out RMIT's commitment to research integrity and ethics, the responsibilities of RMIT and researchers in practicing research, and rules about the management of research.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to all research and all persons who conduct research as part of employment or enrolment with the RMIT Group.

## Section 3 - Policy

### Research Integrity

(3) Researchers apply the following principles to all aspects of their research:

- a. Honesty and accuracy; and
- b. Respect and fairness; and
- c. Rigour and objectivity; and
- d. Accountability; and
- e. Good stewardship.

(4) Researchers maintain high standards of research practice and follow the requirements of applicable institutional policies and professional or disciplinary standards, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.

(5) RMIT provides ongoing education and training for researchers in the responsible conduct of research.

(6) Researchers undertake education and training in the responsible conduct of research, and work to foster a culture of research ethics and integrity at RMIT and beyond.

(7) Researchers with supervisory responsibilities ensure that students and others undertaking research are properly supervised and mentored in responsible research conduct.

(8) When planning and conducting research:

- a. Researchers demonstrate respect for research participants, cultural heritage, animals used in research and the environment.
- b. Researchers conduct research safely and minimise risk associated with their research.
- c. Research that involves or affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities or groups, respects and values cultural and language diversity, and applies the core values of Reciprocity, Respect, Equality, Responsibility, Survival and protection, Spirit and integrity.
- d. Researchers represent themselves, their research and their accomplishments honestly, accurately and in a

manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field.

- e. Researchers disclose any conflicts of interest that could compromise the planning, proposing, conducting, reporting or reviewing of research in line with the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

(9) For data and methods:

- a. Researchers use appropriate methods to answer the research question.
- b. Researchers make and keep complete, clear, and accurate records of all research including data, methodologies and findings, in a manner that allows others to verify or replicate the work and in line with the requirements of the [Research Data Management Process].

(10) For authorship, publication and dissemination:

- a. Researchers agree and document authorship.
- b. A person is listed as an author of a research output when they have made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research described in the research output, are willing to be accountable for their contribution, and agree to be listed as an author, in line with the requirements of the [Authorship of Research Outputs Process].
- c. Researchers acknowledge all contributors and contributions to the research described in the research output.
- d. Researchers name RMIT University as their affiliation where warranted (where a part of the research was conducted at RMIT or with RMIT support), and may list multiple affiliations, as appropriate.
- e. Researchers appropriately cite and, where applicable, obtain permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, and respect all Intellectual Property rights.
- f. Researchers publish, communicate and report research honestly and accurately and in line with the [Disseminating Research Outputs Process].
- g. Researchers give fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations, and respect confidentiality when participating in peer review.

(11) When reporting breaches and research misconduct:

- a. RMIT staff and students seek advice and discuss any concerns about the conduct of research with research integrity advisers and report any suspected breaches or research misconduct.
- b. Allegations of breach or research misconduct are handled in line with the [Research Misconduct Process].

## **Human Research Ethics**

(12) RMIT and its researchers are committed to the ethical conduct of human research that meets the following principles:

- a. Respect for the rights, interests and welfare of the participants in human research
- b. Beneficence through minimising risk of harm or adverse impacts to research participants and enhancing potential benefits of research
- c. Justice in the distribution of benefits and adverse impacts of research
- d. Research merit and integrity.

(13) RMIT provides ongoing education and training for researchers in human research ethics.

(14) Researchers gain approval from the relevant Human Research Ethics Committee or College Human Ethics Advisory Network, where required, prior to the commencement of human research.

(15) Researchers follow any conditions imposed and maintain approval during the course of research in line with the [Human Research Ethics Process].

## **Animal Ethics and Welfare**

(16) Animals are only used in research and teaching activities if there is need for their use, and the activity has merit, integrity and justifiable benefit.

(17) In research and teaching, RMIT and its researchers minimise the impact on animals by:

- a. Replacing the use of animals with alternatives wherever possible;
- b. Reducing the number of animals used without jeopardising the statistical validity of research results or teaching objectives and without placing an excessive cumulative burden on individual animals;

(18) Refining research and teaching practice, and facilities to minimise unexpected adverse impacts on animals.

(19) RMIT maintains high standards of care, management, welfare, and use of animals in research and teaching activities.

(20) RMIT educates researchers and teachers on advancements in animal welfare, care and use standards.

(21) Researchers gain approval from the RMIT Animal Ethics Committee, where required, prior to the commencement of research with animals.

(22) Researchers follow any conditions imposed and maintain approval during the course of research in line with the [Animal Ethics Process].

## **Working Safely with Biological Agents**

(23) Researchers protect the health and safety of people, animals and the environment by identifying and managing risks posed by work with biological agents.

(24) RMIT educates researchers on institutional biosafety and research involving genetically modified organisms.

(25) Research involving the use of genetically modified organisms only commences once approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee or appropriate regulatory body has been gained.

(26) Researchers follow any conditions imposed and maintain approval in line with the [Research Involving Genetically Modified Organisms Process].

## **Research Structures**

(27) Policy rules 5.1 - 5.6 do not apply to Research Centres that are wholly externally funded or are a separate legal entity, Cooperative Research Centres, or Centres of Excellence.

(28) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation can establish the following research structures: Research Centres, Externally Funded Research Centres and Enabling Capability Platforms. The Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellors Research and Innovation can establish Research Groups.

(29) A Research Centre or an Externally Funded Research Centre is based in a College or School, and is established, managed, monitored and disestablished as outlined in the Research Centre Process [under development].

(30) An Externally Funded Research Centre is granted RMIT Research Centre status upon awarding of funding and is monitored in line with the funding rules set by the awarding body.

(31) A Research Group is based in a School, and is governed at a College level.

(32) Enabling Capability Platforms are University-level structures that are not exclusively associated with or owned by any individual RMIT College and cannot directly employ staff. No sub-platforms, or other derivation of an Enabling Capability Platform, will be established.

## Research Funding

(33) RMIT will not advertise grant opportunities from the tobacco industry or accept funding for research from the tobacco industry, except for non-health related research and in exceptional circumstances in line with the [Research Funding from the Tobacco Industry Process].

(34) RMIT will not accept funding that involves any promotion or advertising that supports the tobacco industry or the tobacco industry lobby and its activities.

## Research Processes

(35) The Executive Director, Research Strategy and Services is responsible for the establishment and review of [Research Policy](#) related processes and guidance materials.

# Section 4 - Procedures and Resources

(36) Refer to the following documents which are established in accordance with this policy:

- a. [Management of Breaches of Research Integrity Procedure](#)
- b. [Human Research Ethics Procedure](#)
- c. [Animal Ethics Process](#)
- d. [Authorship of Research Outputs Policy Process](#)
- e. [Disseminating Research Outputs Policy Process](#)
- f. [Research Centres Policy Process](#)
- g. [Research Data Management Policy Process](#)
- h. [Research Funding from the Tobacco Industry Policy Process](#)
- i. [Research Involving Genetically Modified Organisms Policy Process](#)

# Section 5 - Definitions

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|----------------------------------|--|
| Adverse event (Animal)           | Any event that has a negative impact on the wellbeing of an animal, which is anticipated by the researcher and included in the ethics application, see also 'unexpected adverse event' (defined below)   |
| Adverse event (Human)            | Any serious or unexpected event that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project or that affects or impacts the welfare of participants, researchers and/or others, in any research projects or activities that are subject to ethics approval.                                      |
| Animal                           | Non-human vertebrates and higher order invertebrates.  |
| Bio-specimen                     | Any biological material obtained from a person, for example tissue, blood, urine, saliva or any derivative from these including cell lines.  |
| Breach of good research practice | A deviation from RMIT research policy that is less serious than research misconduct. Repeated breaches may constitute research misconduct. Breaches may be due to honest differences in judgment in the management of the research project or honest errors that are minor or unintentional. |

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Delegated Officer                 | The person performing the role of the Delegated Officer as defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code). The Delegated Officer for RMIT staff is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) and the Delegated Officer for RMIT Higher Degree by Research students is the Dean of the School of Graduate Research.   |
| Designated Person                 | The person performing the role of the Designated Person as defined in the Code. The Executive Director, Research Office is the Designated Person for RMIT.   |
| Enabling capability platform      | A virtual platform designed to complement research activities in Colleges and Schools and enhance research impact, by encouraging collaboration. The Enabling Capability Platforms connect researchers from multiple disciplines and from across Colleges, under a strategic theme.  |
| Externally funded research centre | A research centre established principally with funding from sources external to RMIT. See also Research centre.  |
| Human Research                    | Research that involved human participants, data or bio specimens.  |
| Open access                       | The idea that research articles should be freely, immediately and permanently available online to anyone, rather than published in journals that only subscribers can access.  |
| Research                          | An original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding or insight, or research activities conducted as part of education or training. Typically research is driven by questions or hypotheses, builds upon existing knowledge, and can be examined by others in the field.  |
| Research centre                   | A Centre aligned with Schools and/or Colleges that undertakes research in areas of recognised disciplinary strengths and collaborative expertise, supported by advanced facilities and specialist resources.   |
| Research group                    | A Group located within a single School that undertakes research in areas of specific disciplinary strength, aligned to the School's research agenda.   |
| Research data                     | The material, data, records, files and other evidence, digital, physical or in other forms, upon which a research project's observations, findings, or outcomes are based.   |
| Research data management          | Organisation of the collection, analysis, storage, re-use and disposal of research data. It ensures that researchers and institutions are able to meet obligations to funding bodies, improve the efficiency of research, and ensure data are available to verify their findings or for reuse, where appropriate.  |
| Researcher                        | Anyone who carries out research on behalf of RMIT University. This includes staff, students, visiting researchers, research collaborators, and honorary and adjunct appointees.  |
| Research Misconduct               | Deliberate, reckless or persistent negligence in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research, including fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research, failure to declare or manage a serious conflict of interest, the avoidable failure to follow research proposals as approved by a research ethics committee, or wilful concealment or facilitation of research misconduct by others. It does not include honest differences in judgment in management of the research project or honest errors that are minor or unintentional, which may be classified as breaches. Repeated breaches of good research practice or RMIT research policy may also constitute research misconduct. |
| Tobacco industry                  | The tobacco industry comprises individual companies, or their component parts, whose primary business is the manufacture, distribution, promotion and sale of tobacco and related products.  |
| Tobacco Industry Funding          | Funding received from the Tobacco Industry. This does not include funds derived indirectly from the tobacco industry, in the form of taxes and duties, and then redistributed as targeted funding.   |
| Unexpected adverse event (Animal) | An event in which animal welfare has been impacted beyond what has been identified in the approved project.  |



## Status and Details

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| <b>Policy Owner</b>       | Calum Drummond<br>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation |
| <b>Policy Author</b>      | Jane Holt<br>Executive Director, Research Strategy and Services  |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>  | Research Services  |