Policy Document Administrator	Edwina Murphy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Policy Document Approver	Board of Directors
Responsible Body/Person	Academic Board
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	Academic Governance Charter Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards AUT Register of Approved Academics Grievance Resolution Policy – Students Research Integrity Policy Research Misconduct Registry
Related HE Standards	2.4, 4.1.1, 4.2.4, 5.2

1. PURPOSE

To set out the procedure to be followed for dealing with concerns about or allegations of **research misconduct**.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary. The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. STEPS

STEP 0 – CONCERNS RAISED DURING HDR CANDIDATURE

1. Discussion of appropriate AI use and careful referencing of all sources are matters for ongoing discussion between an HDR candidate and their supervisors as part of research training.
2. Candidates are to keep logs of their AI use.
3. Candidates must demonstrate sufficient mastery of the material to achieve the learning outcomes. This will be assessed as part of the supervisory process as well as at key milestones during candidature.
4. Candidates will not be permitted to progress beyond the milestones laid out in the Confirmation of Candidature Policy and the HDR Thesis Examination and Conferral Procedure if there are concerns about inappropriate AI use or insufficient referencing.
5. Candidates may appeal decisions not to progress candidature in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Policy – Students.

STEP 1 – INITIAL INQUIRY INTO THE ALLEGED MISCONDUCT

Notification of the allegation

1. When an academic staff member of an affiliated college becomes aware of an allegation of research misconduct, details should be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Research Integrity Office) within ten

working days.

2. If the allegation concerns the implementation of an ethics protocol by a coursework student, the academic staff member should also advise the Academic Dean. All other allegations of research misconduct by coursework students are dealt with under the *Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards*.

3. If the allegation concerns an HDR candidate, the principal supervisor and supervising college's Research Coordinator (RIA) should also be informed.

4. If the allegation concerns academic staff and/or associated researchers, the affiliated college's Research Coordinator (RIA) and Principal should also be informed.

5. Allegations may also be made directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (RIO) by members of the public or examiners, for example. Researchers should self-report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) if they become aware of a written allegation against them.

6. Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is the subject of the allegation, all references to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in this document will be taken to refer to the Vice-Chancellor or their delegate.

Deciding whether to proceed to a formal inquiry

7. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will ask the complainant to provide documentation supporting the allegation.

8. On receipt of the documentation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will consult with the Chair of Research Committee, if it is a matter of research misconduct, or the Chair of HREC if it concerns a breach of the *Statement on Ethical Conduct* related to an ethics protocol. If they believe that:

    - the allegation does not warrant further investigation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will inform the complainant within five working days of being informed of the allegation that the inquiry will not proceed, giving reasons. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will report to the next relevant committee meeting regarding the nature of the allegation and the response to the complainant, including the reasons it did not proceed.

    - the allegation warrants further investigation, a formal inquiry will be conducted.

STEP 2 – FORMAL INQUIRY INTO THE ALLEGED MISCONDUCT

Setting up the inquiry

1. If the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the relevant Chair determine that the allegation warrants further investigation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall write to the researcher informing them of the inquiry within ten working days, along with the following members of the relevant affiliated college.

For coursework students: the lecturer or project coordinator and Academic Dean.

For HDR candidates: the principal supervisor and the Research Coordinator.

For Academic staff and associated researchers: the Research Coordinator and Principal and, in the case of associated researchers, a suitable representative of any collaborating organisation named in the ethics protocol.

This communication will include:

- details of the allegation being investigated
- relevant documentation pertinent to the decision to proceed to a formal inquiry
- an invitation for the researcher to provide a response in writing within twenty days of the date on the communication
- an invitation for the researcher to address the committee either in person or via video conference
- an invitation to be assisted or represented by any staff member or student nominee from their affiliated college
- a copy of both the Research Integrity Policy and the Research Misconduct Procedure
- notification of suspension of human participant research, in the case of allegations relating to the implementation of ethics protocols, for the duration of the inquiry

2. The formal inquiry will proceed whether or not the researcher chooses to respond or attend.

Outcome of the inquiry

3. The conclusions of the relevant committee will be communicated to both the complainant and the researcher in writing by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) within ten working days of the formal decision. Where the relevant committee concludes that the actions of the candidate:

    - **did not constitute a breach** of the *Code for Research*, the *Statement of Ethical Conduct*, or research misconduct as defined above, no further action will be taken.
    - **lacked intent**, but constituted a breach of the *Code for Research* or *Statement of Ethical Conduct,*
        - the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will communicate with the researcher and affiliated college's Research Coordinator, along with the researcher's principal supervisor, project coordinator or lecturer (if relevant). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will detail the specific issues that need to be addressed by the researcher to rectify this breach and to ensure that in future they comply with the Research Integrity Policy, **Code for Research** and/or **Statement of Ethical**

Conduct, as appropriate. This may be in writing or via video conference, depending on the circumstances.

- If the incident arises during the examination process of an HDR candidate, then the examination process will be terminated, and the candidate will be permitted to re-write the work to correct the breach issues identified, and submit the rewritten work for a new examination

- **evidenced research misconduct**, the relevant committee will determine an appropriate disciplinary action. The candidate must be informed of their right to appeal, and copies of the Research Integrity Policy and the Research Misconduct Procedure must be included.

4. If the relevant committee concludes research misconduct has occurred, disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

    - failure of the unit or thesis;
    - exclusion from the course for a period not exceeding two (2) years;
    - exclusion from enrolment in any AUT award;
    - removal from the **Supervisor Register** for a given period of time;
    - removal from the **Graduate School of Research** for a given period of time;
    - removal from the AUT Register of Approved Academics for a given period of time;
    - another outcome appropriate to the case.

STEP 3 – APPEALS AGAINST OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL INQUIRY

Making an appeal

1. Researchers have the right to appeal against the outcome of the formal inquiry to the Academic Appeals Committee.
2. The researcher must put their grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of their concern and the grounds for its appeal.
3. The researcher will then send it to the AUT's Registrar for the attention of the Academic Appeals Committee.
4. This must be done within fifteen days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of the formal enquiry.
5. The AUT Registrar will then arrange a meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee and submit the researcher's appeal to their judgement. Note: The membership of the Academic Appeals Committee is decided on a case-by-case basis as per the Academic Governance Charter.
6. If the researcher is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academic Appeals Committee, they may make a final written appeal via Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA).

STEP 4 – RECORDKEEPING

Records storage

1. The AUT office is required to store data about academic misconduct, research misconduct and breaches of the *Code for Research* or *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* in the **Research Misconduct Registry** for a minimum period of seven (7) years from the date of the last incident recorded.
2. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will record all allegations received in the Research Misconduct Registry; however, this should not be construed as evidence that the researcher named has engaged in misconduct. The records of allegations are not to be provided to Research Committee, HREC or the Academic Appeals Committee unless they proceed to a formal enquiry.
3. As many of the following details as are relevant are to be included in the Research misconduct registry:
    - the researcher's name
    - the researcher's student number and enrolled award, if relevant
    - the allegation which was made, and by whom, with relevant dates
    - the initial documentation provided by the complainant
    - factors taken into consideration in determining whether further investigation was warranted
    - copies of correspondence
    - the evidence or other material on which the findings were based
    - the outcome and the reasons for its determination
    - any disciplinary action undertaken
    - the researcher's agreement to the specified outcome and/or
    - the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee
4. If the researcher is enrolled in an AUT award, their academic transcript will record the relevant outcome, where appropriate (e.g. failure of a unit).

Access to the records

5. Research Committee and HREC, via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), will have access to the records regarding the case they are considering, and to any other cases recorded against that researcher which proceeded to a formal inquiry, in order to assist in their determination.
6. Where a researcher appeals the outcome of the formal inquiry, the Academic Appeals Committee, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), will have access to all records regarding the formal inquiry relating to that case, and to any other cases recorded against that researcher which proceeded to a formal inquiry, in order to assist in their determination.

4. REFERENCES

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)

Guidance to support the Code

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025 | NHMRC

5. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	R&RSC	28 April 2017	28 April 2017	New document
2	R&RSC	27 July 2020	27 July 2020	Updated Template
3	Board of Directors	14 November 2022	14 November 2022	Name of policy changed from *Higher Degree Research Candidate Research Misconduct Procedure* to *Research Misconduct Procedure*; Scope broadened; Inquiry and appeals process modified; roles updated.
4	Academic Board	31 January 2025	31 January 2025	References updated, reference to collaborating organisations included, other minor changes.
5	Academic Board	31 July 2026	31 July 2026	Updated references to AI use and Statement on Ethical Conduct.

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