Compliance with Disciplinary and Legal Regulations

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As a researcher, you are expected to abide by the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. [1] Among other responsibilities set out in the Code, researchers are expected to "comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines". Alongside the Code, universities have policies to ensure the responsible conduct of research. Further, academic disciplines often have different considerations that must be acknowledged, such as methodological approaches, perspectives, ethical codes [2] and evaluation practices. [3]

Why is it relevant?

Ethical and regulatory compliance is integral to good research and practice. Research integrity enables confidence in data collection, outputs and recommendations, [4] alongside the fair and dignified treatment of research subjects. [5] Complying with discipline-specific and legal requirements also minimises the risks of physical or mental harm to research subjects and the research team, as well as managing potential risks to associated organisations' reputations. [6]

Practical Steps

Key concepts to understand:

- **Research integrity:** conduct research honestly, ethically and rigorously. [1]
- **Responsible data management:** retain accurate, clear, secure and complete records of all data and materials used in research. [1]
- **Authorship and publication practices:** appropriately credit those who have made significant contributions to research and associated outputs. [7]

- **Supervision and mentoring:** supervisors have responsibilities towards those under their guidance, particularly to provide support, work cooperatively and ensure that all relevant training is completed. [8]
- **Research misconduct accusations:** if you are accused of breaching the Code, the investigating institution must abide by the principles laid out in Section 3 [9], allowing the accused to be heard, decisions to be made based on evidence and without bias.

Guidelines to consult:

- **Research ethics for human and animal research:** your research must go through an ethics review process aligned with the subject and methods; different standards are required for ethics exemptions, human and animal research (see the "Research Ethics" factsheet).
- **Laboratory regulations regarding biosafety and chemical / radiation material:** check the regulations of the laboratories you will be working in to ensure that you comply and understand what safety precautions must be taken (see the "Health and Safety" factsheet).
- **Indigenous Research Governance:** research involving Indigenous participants or knowledge requires consideration and understanding to ensure culturally appropriate methods and actions (see the factsheets on "Co-design with Indigenous Communities" and "Engage with Indigenous Communities").
- **Funding and Grant Compliance:** funding and grants often come with specific guidelines as to how research must be conducted and managed, and how funds can be spent. [10]
- **Disciplinary and Professional standards:** You must consider and comply with standards relevant to your discipline and profession such as methodological approaches, laboratory protocols, authorship conventions, and peer-review ethics.

References

[1] Australian Research Council, "Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 | Australian Research Council," accessed March 4, 2026, https://www.arc.gov.au/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018.

[2] Jens Aagaard-Hansen, "The Challenges of Cross-disciplinary Research," *Social Epistemology* 21, no. 4 (2007): 425–38, https://doi.org/10.1080/02691720701746540.

[3] Sara Doody and Kathryn S. Plaisance, “What Is ‘Good’ Science? How Disciplinary Norms and Expectations Discourage Broad Interdisciplinary Collaboration,” *Perspectives on Science* 33, no. 6 (2025): 685–721, https://doi.org/10.1162/POSC.a.566.

[4] Anna Catharina V. Armond et al., “Research Integrity Definitions and Challenges,” *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 171 (July 2024): 111367, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2024.111367.

[5] María Núñez-Núñez et al., “Research Integrity in Randomized Clinical Trials: A Scoping Umbrella Review,” *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 162, no. 3 (2023): 860–76, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.14762.

[6] Hamed Taherdoost, “Data Collection Methods and Tools for Research; A Step-by-Step Guide to Choose Data Collection Technique for Academic and Business Research Projects,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)* 10, no. 1 (2021): 10–38.

[7] Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, “Authorship: A Guide Supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research,” National Health and Medical Research Council, 2019, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/Authorship-Guide.pdf.

[8] Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, “Supervision: A Guide Supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research,” National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018.

[9] Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, “Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research,” National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018, www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r42.

[10] For example: “Funding Agreement | NHMRC,” accessed March 19, 2026, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/manage-your-funding/nhmrc-funding/funding-agreement; “Grant Guidelines | Australian Research Council,” accessed March 19, 2026, https://www.arc.gov.au/manage-your-grant/funding-rulesgrant-guidelines.