CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE OF RESEARCH POLICY (PART A)

PREAMBLE

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007, **the Australian Code**) was jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia and replaces the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997). The Australian Code has relevance across all research disciplines and provides a basic reference for the development of appropriate policies and procedures to uphold the standards expected of researchers. It is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with other laws, guidelines and codes of practice that apply to the conduct of research in Australia.

The Telethon Kids Institute gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the Research Services Office at the University of Western Australia in the preparation of the Institute Code and its associated documentation.

PURPOSE

The broad principles that guide research have long been established and central to these are the maintenance of high ethical standards, and validity and accuracy in the collection and reporting of data.

This policy provides a framework for sound research practice and for the protection of individual research workers, including staff and postgraduate research students, as well as contracted agents, from possible misunderstandings.

All queries regarding the observance of this policy must be directed to the Research Strategy Leader for Research Excellence (RSL-RE).

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all staff employed by the Institute or any controlled entity, including Adjunct, Clinical and Honorary staff;
- all former staff of the Institute or any controlled entity, where the activities undertaken during their employment with the Institute or any controlled entity is the subject of an allegation of research misconduct;

- any persons engaged in research under the auspices of, or in the name of, the Institute or any controlled entity; and
- all students of the Institute who engage in research, including past students where the activities undertaken during their candidature is the subject of an allegation of research misconduct.

DEFINITIONS

General definitions can be found on the Policy Library website here.

Term	Definition
The Institute	Telethon Kids Institute
RSL-RE	Research Strategy Leader for Research Excellence
COO	Chief Operating Officer of the Institute

PRINCIPLES

1 General principles

1.1 It is a basic assumption of the Institute that academic and research staff, and postgraduate research students, are committed to high standards of professional conduct.

1.2 Researchers have a duty to ensure that their work enhances the good name of the Institute and the profession to which they belong.

1.3 Researchers must only participate in work which conforms to accepted ethical standards and which they are competent to perform. When in doubt they must seek assistance with their research from their colleagues or peers.

1.4 Debate on, and criticism of, research work are essential parts of the research process.

1.5 The Institute and its researchers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all those associated with the research.

1.6 It is essential that the design of the research project takes into account any relevant ethical guidelines and legislative requirements. Where research procedures are of a kind requiring approval by a human or animal experimentation ethics committee, a biosafety committee, or by other validly constituted regulatory committees, research must not proceed without such approval.

1.7 Researchers at the Institute will ensure research findings are disseminated responsibly and in accordance with the guidelines set out in sections 5 and 6 of this Policy.

1.8 Research at the Institute must comply with established guidelines of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) as well as the applicable Telethon Kids policies on research involving human participants.

1.9 Researchers at the Institute using animals for their research must respect such animals and comply with the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition (2013) as well as the applicable polices on research involving animals.

1.10The Institute is a strong advocate of respect for the environment. Research must comply with relevant legislation including the Gene Technology Act 2000 and Regulations 2001, Federal and State Quarantine Acts and the National Health Security Act 2007 and Regulations 2008.

1.11 Institute research staff must report research misconduct in a timely manner and in accordance with the Telethon Kids policy as set out in part B of the code.

1.12 It is acknowledged that research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples spans many methodologies and disciplines.

1. 12.1 There are a wide variety of ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities or groups are involved in, or affected by, research. Such research must comply with Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003) and the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies (2000).

1.13 Appropriate consumer involvement in research is encouraged and must comply with the Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research (2002).

2 Management of research data and primary materials

2.1 Data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form. Data management must comply with relevant privacy protocols, such as Australian Privacy Principles (**APPs**) contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (**Privacy Act**).

2.2 Data must be held for sufficient time to allow reference. For data that is published this may be for as long as interest and discussion persists following publication.

2.3 It is recommended that the minimum period for retention of data is at least five years from the date of publication but for specific types of research, such as clinical research, 15 years may be more appropriate.

2.4 Wherever possible, original data must be retained in the research centre in which they were generated.

2.5 Individual researchers are able to hold copies of the data for their own use. However, retention solely by the individual researcher provides little protection to the researcher or the Institute in the event of an allegation of falsification of data.

2.6 When the data is obtained from limited access databases, or via a contractual arrangement, the location of the original data must be identified, or key information regarding the database from which it was collected must be retained by the researcher or the Institute.

2.7 In all cases, researchers must keep a record of where the research data is located.

2.8 Data related to publications must be available for discussion with other researchers.

2.9 If data of a confidential nature is obtained, for example from the individual patient records or from certain questionnaires, confidentiality must be observed and researchers must not use this information for their own personal advantage or that of a third party.

2.10 Confidentiality may be necessary for a limited period in the case of contracted research or of non-contractual research which is under consideration for patent protection. In general, however, research results and methods must be open to scrutiny by colleagues within the institution and, through appropriate publication, by the profession at large.

2.11 Where confidentiality provisions apply (for example, where the researchers or the Institute have given undertakings to third parties, such as the subjects of the research), it is desirable for data to be kept in a way that reference to them by third parties can occur without breaching such confidentiality.

2.12 Confidentiality agreements have been developed to protect intellectual property rights (Telethon Kids Intellectual Property Policy) belonging to the Institute, or to pass on obligations of confidence to others in relation to confidential information received by the Institute. Where such agreements limit free publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly agreed.

2.13 It is the obligation of the researcher to enquire whether confidentiality agreements apply and of the Head of the research group to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.

2.14 All confidentiality agreements must be made known at an early stage to the Head of Research Development.

2.15 Researchers are responsible for ensuring appropriate security of any confidential material, including that held in electronic media.

2.16 Where computing systems are accessible through networks, particular attention to security of confidential data is required.

2.17 Security and confidentiality must be assured in a way that copes with multiple researchers and the departure of individual researchers.

3 Supervision of research students/trainees[1]

3.1 The Head of the research group must ensure that supervision of each research student/trainee (including Honours, Masters and Doctoral students, and early career postdoctoral staff) is assigned to specific, responsible and appropriately qualified senior research worker(s), and that the ratio of research students/trainees to supervisors is low enough to assure effective intellectual interaction and effective oversight of the research at all times.

3.2 Supervisors or Heads of research group must provide each research student/trainee with access to material on applicable Federal and State legislation and institutional guidelines for the conduct of research, including those covering ethical requirements for studies on humans and animals, hazardous materials including biohazards, requirements for confidentiality, and occupational safety and health matters.

3.3 Supervisors must provide guidance in all matters of good research practice. This includes discussing with the student, at the outset, relevant issues of research conduct and ethics, and intellectual property, and referring any problems/queries to the Head of the research group for consideration.

3.4 Supervisors must ensure, as far as possible, the validity of research data obtained by a student under his/her supervision.

4 Publication and dissemination of research findings

4.1 The Institute recognises the importance of research being communicated to other researchers, professional practitioners and the wider community. Ideally this would occur after peer appraisal. Where research is reported in the public media prior to peer review, the reporting must be based on the research data and findings.

4.2 Peer assessment of research outcomes is important in the validation of research.

4.3 Wherever possible, researchers must submit their research for peer review.

[1] Please refer to the Telethon Kids Post Graduate Student handbook

4.4 Publication of multiple papers based on the same set(s) or subset(s) of data is not acceptable, except where there is full cross-referencing within the papers (for example, in a series of closely related work, or where a complete work grew out of a preliminary publication and this is fully acknowledged).

4.5 An author who submits substantially similar work to more than one publisher must disclose this to the publishers at the time of submission.

4.6 Publications must include information on the sources of financial support for the research. Financial sponsorship that carries an embargo on such naming of a sponsor must be avoided.

4.7 Publications involving a student based at the Institute or an Institute staff member must acknowledge the work was carried out at the Institute by using the Institute by-line.

4.8 Deliberate inclusion of inaccurate or misleading information relating to research activity in curriculum vitae, grant applications, job applications or public statements, or the failure to provide relevant information, is a form of research misconduct. Accuracy is essential in describing the state of publication (in preparation, submitted, accepted), research funding (applied for, granted, funding period), and awards conferred, and where any of these relate to more than one researcher.

4.9 All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that published reports, statistics and public statements about research activities and performance are complete, accurate and unambiguous.

5 Authorship [2]

5.1 The minimum requirement for authorship must accord with the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. Authorship is substantial participation, where all the following conditions are met:

- conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data
- drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- final approval of the version to be published.

5.2 Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. General supervision of the research group is not sufficient for authorship. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusion must be the responsibility of at least one author. An author's role in a research output must be sufficient for that person to take responsibility for at least that part of the output in that person's area of

[2] Please refer to the Telethon Kids Policy of Determining Authorship and Resolving Disputes between authors.

expertise. No person who is an author, consistent with this definition, must be excluded as an author without their permission in writing.

5.3 Research students can be authors and own the copyright of their thesis, in accordance with Telethon Kids Intellectual Property Policy

5.4 Authorship of a research output is a matter that must be discussed between researchers at an early stage in a research project, and reviewed whenever there are changes in participation. If there are conflicts arising through disputes about authorship, the COO must be notified. The COO will determine the appropriate course of action.

5.5 When there is more than one co-author of a research output, one co- author (by agreement amongst the authors) must be nominated as executive author for the whole research output, and must take responsibility for record-keeping regarding the research output.

5.6 Where the research is published, including electronically, one author must be given principal status with the responsibility for signing a Statement of Authorship form ensuring that all co-authors are in agreement with their inclusion and that no person entitled to authorship as defined in clause 5.1 above has been excluded. Authors of web-based publications must be able to take responsibility for the publication's content and must be clearly identified in the publication.

5.7 The authors must ensure that others who have contributed to the work are recognised in the research output. Courtesy demands that individuals and organisations providing facilities must also be acknowledged.

6 Peer review

6.1 The Institute encourages all researchers to participate in peer review as this provides expert scrutiny of a project, helps to maintain high standards and encourage accurate, thorough and credible research reporting.

6.2 Participants in peer review must act fairly and in a timely manner, must keep confidential and not disclose the content or outcome of any process in which they are involved, must declare conflicts of interest, must ensure that they are informed, and must comply with the criteria to be applied.

6.3 Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not seek to influence the process or outcomes.

6.4 Supervising researchers have a responsibility to assist trainee researchers, including students, in developing the necessary skills for peer review and understanding their obligation to participate.

7 Conflicts of interest

7.1 Disclosure of any potential conflict of interest is essential for the responsible conduct of research.

7.2 Researchers have an obligation to disclose any affiliation with, or financial involvement in, any organisation or entity with a direct interest in the subject matter or materials of researchers.

7.3 A conflict of interest may also arise if any organisation or entity with a direct interest in the subject matter provides direct benefits to the researchers such as sponsorship of the investigation, or indirect benefits such as the provision of materials or facilities or the support of individuals such as provision of travel or accommodation expenses to attend conferences.

7.4 Other examples of conflict of interest include where a researcher (or their spouse or dependent) has a financial interest (equity, directorship, consultant) in the funding agency or in an agency being paid from the grant funds, or where the terms of a new grant from a funding agency require disclosure of project data from a related project and the terms of the related project grant prevent that disclosure.

7.5 When a conflict of interest arises at the time of reporting or proposing research, and this conflict of interest has the potential to influence research and investigations, publication and media reports, grant applications, and applications for appointment and promotion, the researcher must disclose the details "in confidence" to the COO who will decide whether a conflict of interest exists and, if so, what further action should be taken.

7.6 The action taken by the COO in the case that a conflict of interest is identified will include consultation with the researcher and may also involve consultation with the funding agency or other parties to ensure that the conflict of interest does not compromise the research, or the Institute's interests.

7.7 In some circumstances, it may be necessary to reject or terminate a research project, or to disclose the conflict of interest to the editors of journals or the readers of published work arising from the research.

8 Collaborative research across institutions

8.1 Where the Institute is involved in a joint research project, including overseas institutions, an agreement must be reached in writing with the collaborating organisations detailing issues to do with intellectual property, confidentiality and copyright, sharing commercial returns, responsibility for ethics and safety clearances, and reporting to appropriate agencies.

8.2 The collaborating parties must identify a person in the management of research data, primary materials and other items to be retained at the end of the project.

SCHEDULES

Nil

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Internal Documents

Policy: Managing Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research and Allegations of Research Misconduct

External Documents

Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)
Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (8th edition, 2013)
Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003)
Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies (2000)
Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research (2005)
IAP Statement on Biosecurity, InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (2005)
Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Gene Technology Act 2000 and Regulations 2001
Quarantine Act 1908
National Health Security Act 2007
Privacy Act 1988

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this policy can be obtained by contacting the Manager Research Governance and Design.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date	Sections Modified	Owner	Implementation Officer	Author
1.0	Operations Committee	18/11/14	18/11/17	New Policy	Institute Director	Manager Research Governance & Design	The Code working group
1.1	Institute Management Committee	18/05/2015	18/11/17	Positions and committees updated	Institute Director	Manager Research Governance & Design	