

Guidelines for the Peer Review of Research

1. The Importance of Peer Review

1.1 Impartial and independent assessment of research by others with expertise in the same or a related field is a vital mechanism for the maintenance of high standards of research excellence and integrity. In addition, it encourages accurate, thorough and credible research reporting;

1.2 Peer review covers a range of activities associated with the scrutiny of research, and can include assessment of proposals for funding, manuscripts submitted for publication, national assessment exercises, ethics applications;

1.3 The University encourages participation in peer review;

1.4 Researchers in receipt of public funding for research have an obligation to take part in peer review processes.

2. Principles for the Conduct of Peer Review

The integrity of the peer review process hinges upon participants' observation of key principles

2.1 Competence and transparency: researchers must not agree to review any research for which they have a conflict of interest or where the research is outside their area of expertise. All conflicts of interest and concerns about professional ability to participate in the assessment exercise must be declared to the party seeking the review;

2.2 Fairness: researchers engaged in peer review must be as objective as possible and ensure bias does not influence their evaluation;

2.3 Promptness: researchers must conduct review in a timely manner, ensuring the stipulated deadlines are met, and recognising that unnecessary delays affect the authors of the outputs or the applicants for funding;

2.4 Rigour: researchers must exercise thoroughness in the conduct of review, ensuring they are informed about, and comply with, the review criteria;

2.5 Confidentiality: reviewers must at all times act in confidence and not disclose the content or outcome of any process in which they are involved. Nor must they use or in any way take advantage of ideas obtained from the review material. Reviewers are also not permitted to contact the author or other reviewers, or reveal her/his role as a reviewer, unless by special arrangement with the journal editor and where exceptional circumstances apply.

3. Other Obligations

3.1 Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not interfere with the peer review process or outcomes;

3.2 Researchers supervising research trainees, including Higher Degree by Research Students and Early Career Researchers, have a responsibility to assist them in developing the necessary skills for peer review and understanding their obligation to participate.