Peer Review of Research Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy states the University's requirements and expectations for peer review of research.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all undertaking research under the auspices of the University of Canberra, including staff, affiliates (academic, professional, honorary appointments), and research students.

(3) For the purposes of this Policy, peer review is defined as the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.

Section 3 - Principles

(4) Peer review of research involves impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field. It has several important roles in research and research management, including:

a. assessment of research proposals and grant applications;
b. assessment and selection of material for publication and dissemination;
c. assessment of the research of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates;
d. assessment of research quality, engagement and impact by government bodies; and
e. other reviews or assessments of research conducted by individual researchers, teams, academic units and institutions.

(5) The University is committed to encouraging participation in peer review, through formal and informal mechanisms, as a means of obtaining expert scrutiny of a project, maintaining high standards, and encouraging accurate, thorough and credible research reporting.

(6) Peer review plays an important role within the University in supporting colleagues in a range of research activities including developing project ideas, developing research funding applications and developing outputs for research dissemination. The University expects that Research Centres/Institutes and Faculty research groups will have informal peer-review processes for these purposes. Peer review also plays an important part in the detection of deviations from the principles contained within the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code) and the University's Research Conduct and Governance Policy.

(7) In accordance with the Code and Peer Review - A Guide to Supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018, the University is committed to ensuring that the responsibilities of peer reviewers and the responsibilities of researchers are upheld, including commitment to the following principles:

a. Excellence in research, scholarship and teaching;
b. Integrity and respect of all involved in the peer review relationship;

c. Accountability and commitment to outstanding research results that benefit students, staff and affiliates of the University and meet community expectations;
d. A willingness to improve to achieve the highest possible standards in research.
e. Peer review must be conducted responsibly. It is important that participants in peer review:
    i. are fair, rigorous and timely in their review;
    ii. act in confidence and do not disclose the content or outcome of any process in which they are involved;
    iii. declare all conflicts of interest, do not permit personal prejudice to influence the peer review process, and do not introduce considerations that are not relevant to the review criteria;
    iv. do not take undue or calculated advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process;
    v. ensure that they are informed about, and comply with, the criteria to be applied;
    vi. do not agree to participate in peer review outside their area of expertise, and
f. Give proper consideration to research that challenges, or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research. It is similarly important that researchers commit to the following:
    i. Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review must not seek to influence the process or outcomes of the review process, and
    ii. Researchers in receipt of public funding have a responsibility to participate in peer review processes.
g. Researchers supervising higher degree by research candidates have a responsibility to assist candidates in developing the necessary skills for peer review and understanding their obligation to participate. The University is committed to ensuring the satisfaction of student eligibility requirements for students for research review activities and that this responsibility is shared between all parties.
h. The University is committed to compliance with relevant laws and standards, including to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011.
i. The University ensures actions that may affect the candidature and rights of international students studying in Australia are compliant with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019, which includes requirements for the promotion of quality education and consumer protection for international students. These laws, together with the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, are known as the ESOS Framework.

Section 4 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Peer review	Impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018	The Code constitutes the national guidelines for institutions and researchers in responsible research practices and was jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. This Code provides the basis for the University of Canberra Research Conduct and Governance Policy. The University policies in this area are designed to ensure compliance with the Code, and with the conditions of public funding bodies.
Research	The concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative
Researcher	Person (or persons) who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.

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