



Research at ACAP

Introductory Guide

for students and staff

About this Guide

The Australian College of Applied Psychology seeks to foster a vibrant, diverse and supportive research environment. To encourage quality outcomes in the research endeavours of students, staff and research associates of the College and to maintain research excellence, ACAP provides a range of research support services. An introduction to these services and research policies at the College is provided herein.

Research at ACAP

The College's research goals are to:

- Encourage an active higher education research culture,
- Provide research training to academics, professionals and graduate students,
- Raise the public research profile of the College,
- Promote interdisciplinary research groups within the College,
- Assist new researchers to establish a research record,
- Develop research partnerships with other institutions, and
- Increase income from research funding bodies.

The College believes that research and quality of teaching should be complementary, and are distinguishing features of learning cultures in higher education. In this way, the relationship between teaching, scholarship and research can reveal models for independent thought and critical reflection.

Responsible and Ethical Research Practice

The College also believes that all research should be conducted with honesty and integrity, and follow responsible and ethical research practices.

All ACAP students, staff¹ and research partners engaged in research with ACAP are expected to adhere to the standards of ethical conduct prescribed in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007). Developed jointly by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia, the Code has broad relevance across all research disciplines, guiding institutions, researchers and research supervisors in responsible research practices. The Code covers areas such as how long research records must be retained, the requirements to be listed as an author, and the process for disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.

ACAP researchers engaged in research involving human participants must also adhere to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007), developed jointly by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia.

Additionally, researchers at ACAP engaged in research involving indigenous concerns or participants must adhere to the *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research* (2003), developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* (2002), developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

¹ ACAP staff includes all permanent, casual and contracted employees of ACAP.

Commencing researchers should obtain a copy of the Code, Statement and Guidelines mentioned above from the ACAP Research website to familiarise themselves with these requirements.

Research involving Human Participants Approval Requirements

All research undertaken by ACAP students and staff that involves human participants requires ethics approval from the ACAP Human Research Ethics Committee (ACAP HREC) before the research is commenced*. Through this ethics approval process research is assessed for quality, safety, privacy, risk management, financial management and ethical acceptability in accord with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

This process of ethical review and approval reassures researchers that their research project complies with the Code and Standards and related statutory requirements, and has moral validation as well as institutional backing. It also provides researchers with an opportunity to enhance the rigour and quality of their project. Researchers of ACAP HREC approved human research projects are also required to submit an annual progress report to the ACAP HREC.

Research involving humans may include:

- Administering questionnaires and surveys
- Conducting interviews or focus groups
- Investigating or observing human behaviour
- Conducting experiments with human participants
- Analysing records of data already collected from human participants, and/or
- Any other testing involving human participants.

A separate *ACAP HREC Approval & Conduct Guide* is available on the research website that outlines the process for applying for and conducting research involving human participants.

***Research involving Animals, Genetically Modified Organisms or Hazardous Biological Agents, or Pharmaceutical or Medical Devices or other Therapeutic Goods Requirements**

ACAP does not provide approval for research that involves animals, genetically modified organisms or hazardous biological agents, or pharmaceutical or medical devices or other therapeutic goods that are subject to regulation by the Therapeutic Goods Act (TGA). Researchers considering undertaking such research should discuss their research plans with their research supervisor² or Head of School, as appropriate.

Supervision of Students Undertaking Research

Supervision of students undertaking research is carried out in accordance with the requirements set down by the College and relevant Head of School.

Seminars and Professional Development

ACAP is committed to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct and ethical behaviour in research, cooperation between researchers, an open exchange of ideas between peers, and a respect for freedom of expression and inquiry.

To support this, the College provides a suite of documents that set out clearly the College's research policies and procedures for research students, staff and partners.

² For students, research supervisor means your primary research supervisor who must be an ACAP staff member.

The College also conducts information seminars and workshops for researchers. This includes induction workshops for early career researchers. These sessions cover areas such as research methods, ethics, records retention and data storage, confidentiality, as well as relevant regulatory and policy matters. ACAP also provides training and continuing education opportunities for staff engaged in research and research supervision. Opportunities are also provided for researchers to participate in and be supported by peer review processes. These professional development activities are scheduled throughout the year to coincide with new research student enrolments and other research focused events at ACAP.

Information about upcoming seminars and development programs are advertised in the *my.acap* web portal and on the Research website at www.acap.edu.au/research.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property (IP) represents the property of your mind or intellect: your knowledge, creations and discoveries. IP takes many forms, including trade secrets, reports, publications, literary works, patents, designs, trademarks or the practical application of a good idea.

The College owns all IP (other than 'scholarly works') that is created by students working on projects unless it is specifically agreed otherwise, irrespective of whether or not the student is in receipt of full or partial funding by an outside party. The College makes no claim on the IP of 'scholarly works' created solely by students that is not the subject of a specific agreement.

Research supervisors have an obligation to inform a student as to whether or not the student's proposed project is part of or in any other way affected by a specific agreement.

Students working on team-based projects, on collaborative projects with their research supervisor or on on-going research programs need to be aware of the IP rights and responsibilities of all those involved.

This includes recognising the 'moral rights' of all creators of the IP. 'Moral rights' automatically belong to the creator in the absence of an agreement to the contrary. This 'moral right' includes the right to be recognised as the creator of the IP, and for such attribution to be reflected, where appropriate, in publications and any form of registered IP such as patents; and the right not to have their work falsely attributed to others.

For further information about intellectual property refer to the Australian Government's, IP Australia website at <http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/ip/introduction.shtml>.

Queries concerning IP at ACAP should be directed to your research supervisor or the ACAP Business Manager.

Research Data and Records

In the initial research project stages, researchers need to put in place a proper strategy to manage and store their research data and records (e.g., notes, research proposal, research approvals, questionnaires, participant consent forms, electronic files, photographs, recordings).

Five years is the minimum recommended time this material must be securely retained so that it can be retrieved later. However, in any particular case, the period for which data should be retained should be determined by the specific type of research. For example:

- For short-term research projects that are for assessment purposes only, such as research projects completed by students, and not intended for publication or reference by other researchers and interested parties, retaining research data for 12 months after the completion of the project may be sufficient; or
- If the work has community or heritage value, research data should be kept permanently at this stage, preferably within a national collection.

Retention of records is required in order to be able to validate or replicate your research, or to prove ownership of your intellectual property.

Confidentiality

Researchers with access to confidential information must maintain that confidentiality and ensure the appropriate security arrangement for all confidential materials. Confidential material must only be used for the purpose for which it was collected. Particular care must be exercised when confidential material is made available for discussion. Confidential research data, records and materials must be stored securely, for example in a lockable cabinet or a lockable room, or if stored electronically protected by a secure password. Researchers working with confidential material should discuss appropriate storage arrangements with their research supervisor.

Conflicts of Interest

It is not unusual for researchers to experience a conflict of interest. Researchers should therefore be ready to acknowledge the conflict and make disclosures as appropriate.

A conflict of interest can arise at any stage in the research project including during the proposal stage, the collection, analysis and interpretation of the research data stages, or in the publication stage. Circumstances that can give rise to conflicts of interest include but are not limited to research, business, financial or other invested interests between the researcher and another party, including a research sponsor, research supervisor, research participant or a decision maker.

Some fictitious scenarios that would constitute a conflict of interest include:

- A researcher accepts substantial [non token] 'gifts' from a major supplier of goods whose business might be affected by the findings of the research.
- A researcher proposes that the human research participants be colleagues in a company where s/he works.
- A researcher proposes to investigate the efficacy of a new educational test developed and sold by the company where s/he works.

Full disclosure of the conflict of interest must be made by the individual to the appropriate person (for students this is their research supervisor, for staff this is their line manager (Head of School or Dean)) and a procedure discussed, developed, agreed, documented and monitored by the researcher.

Authorship

Researchers should discuss authorship intentions as early as possible in the research process with all those who are contributing to the research and review authorship decisions periodically.

The author listing in the research publication should honestly inform the reader who did the research and ensure that the right people get the credit and take responsibility for the research.

For a person to be recorded as an author, the person is required to have had a direct involvement in the creation of the research publication by:

- (i) conceiving it, analysing or interpreting the data on which it is based;
- (ii) writing or reviewing the intellectual context; and/or
- (iii) giving final approval of the research to be published.

The right to authorship is not tied to position or profession. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding, or the collection of data, or general supervision of the research is not sufficient for a person to be attributed as an author of a publication. Ghost, gift or honorary authorship is also unacceptable.

Research Misconduct

Research misconduct is constituted by a failure to comply with The Code, ethical standards, or College policy.

It includes but is not limited to:

- (i) The fabrication or falsification of data or results;
- (ii) Plagiarism - the use of another person's ideas, work or data without appropriate acknowledgement;
- (iii) Deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research;
- (iv) Misleading ascription of authorship, including the listing of authors without their permission, attributing work to people who are not in fact contributors to the publications, or the lack of appropriate acknowledgment of work primarily produced by a research student or an associate;
- (v) The wilful concealment or facilitation of research misconduct by others;
- (vi) Failure to declare or manage a serious conflict of interest where a conflict of interest might reasonably be perceived to exist;
- (vii) Seriously deviating from accepted standards within the scientific and scholarly community for proposing, conducting or reporting research; and
- (viii) Changing the research protocol/procedures without informing and seeking approval to do so from the ACAP HREC.

Research misconduct does not include honest differences in judgment in management of the research project, and may not include honest errors that are minor or unintentional.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research by students are set out in the College's *Academic Misconduct Policy*.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct in research by staff are set out in the Navitas Workforce's *Disciplinary Policy & Procedure for Staff*.

Reporting Research Output

ACAP staff engaged in research or supervising research need to advise their School of their own research outputs and their supervised research outputs. This includes books (and chapters), journal articles, referenced works, conference publications, reports/working papers, patents (e.g., for research instruments or e-learning tools).

The reporting of this information is important as College research outputs must be reported by the College to State and Commonwealth regulatory authorities and various professional associations. This information quantifies the College's reputation and relative standing as a research institution.

Publishing Research Output

ACAP promotes an environment of honesty, integrity, accuracy and responsibility in the dissemination of research findings and there are rules surrounding the publishing of Academic Research outputs, such as an author who submits substantially similar work to more than one publisher must discuss this with the publishers at the time of submission.

For details on opportunities provided by ACAP for publishing research outputs and associated regulations contact the ACAP Publications Manager.

Research Partners

Organisations, associations or individuals seeking to conduct research in collaboration with ACAP should contact the College Dean or relevant Head of School.

Resources for Researchers

Key ACAP Resources for Researchers

Resources can be accessed from the ACAP Research website at

<http://www.acap.edu.au/research.html>

- Research at ACAP Introductory Guide
- ACAP Human Research Approval & Conduct Guide*
- National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) Quick Reference Guide*
- ACAP HREC Application for Approval Coversheet - Template*
- Research Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form - Template*
- Research Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for Guardians - Template*
- Approved Human Research Annual Progress Report – Template*

([Login to my.acap required](#))

Selection of Key ACAP Policy for Researchers

ACAP policy can be accessed from the ACAP Current Students website at

<http://currentstudents.acap.edu.au/managing-my-course/a-z-policies/>

- Academic Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedure
- Principles of Procedural Fairness
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Cultural Awareness Policy

Useful External Links

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm>
- Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e52syn.htm>
- Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies
<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical.html>
- Guidelines under Section 95 of the Privacy Act 1988 (2000)
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e26syn.htm>
- Guidelines under Section 95A of the Privacy Act 1988 (2001)
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e43syn.htm>
- Therapeutic Goods Act (TPA)
<http://www.tga.gov.au/legis/index.htm>
- Intellectual Property
<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/ip/introduction.shtml>
- Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)
<http://www.apac.psychology.org.au/>
- Psychotherapy and Counselling Association of Australia (PACFA)
<http://www.pacfa.org.au/>

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