



**AUSTRALIS
BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the standards for ethical and responsible research conduct at the Australian School of Business Pty Ltd, trading as Australis Business School (Australis), in alignment with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*. It ensures that all research conducted at Australis upholds the highest ethical standards, promoting integrity and safeguarding the dignity, safety, and rights of research participants.

This policy supports the following national guidelines:

- The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*.
- *Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders (2018)*.

By promoting responsible and ethical research practices, this policy reinforces Australis' commitment to research excellence, integrity, and accountability.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved in research at Australis, including staff, HDR supervisors, research students, visiting academics, and external collaborators. It must be read in conjunction with other relevant Australis policies, such as the *Research Training Induction Policy*.

3. DEFINITIONS

See the Australis *Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Australis is committed to upholding the highest standards of research integrity, fostering ethical conduct and best practices across all research activities. In line with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*, researchers at Australis are required to act honestly, responsibly, and ethically to maintain the trust of the academic community and the public.

4.1. Commitment to Research Excellence

Australis promotes research that advances knowledge and adheres to rigorous ethical standards. Researchers are expected to:

- a. Uphold the principles of honesty, rigour, transparency, fairness, respect, accountability, and promotion, as outlined in the Section 4 of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*.
- b. Recognise, respect, and value the rights of diverse groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, individuals with disabilities, those of different faiths, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities, in all aspects of research, including the planning, design, conduct, and dissemination of research outcomes.
- c. Adhere to Australis policies that support responsible research conduct and ensure the highest standards of integrity.

4.2. Policy Principles

Research at Australis is governed by the following principles:

- a. **Integrity:** Research must be conducted with honesty and transparency, ensuring that outputs are reliable and ethically sound, in accordance with Section 4 of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)* and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*.
- b. **Ethical Oversight:** Australis' Research and Ethics Committee (REC) oversees all research involving human participants, ensuring compliance with ethical frameworks, institutional policies, and relevant legislation. No animal research will be conducted at Australis and there are no plans to do so.
- c. **Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:** Researchers must respect the rights and cultural sensitivities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, following the *Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities guidelines (2018)*.
- d. **Collaboration and Transparency:** All collaborative research must be based on clear agreements regarding roles, responsibilities, and intellectual property, with transparency in data management, authorship, and reporting.
- e. **Research Misconduct and Accountability:** Allegations of research misconduct will be addressed according to Australis policies, ensuring procedural fairness and the integrity of the research process.

5. POLICY DETAILS

5.1. Australis Responsibilities

Australis is committed to:

- a. Provide governance and oversight to promote responsible research practices, as outlined in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*.

- b. Ensure ongoing training and support for researchers and HDR supervisors on ethical conduct and research integrity and best practices in research, as outlined in the *Research Training and Induction Policy*.
- c. Establish and maintain secure systems for the storage, management, and sharing of research data, ensuring compliance with privacy and data protection laws, and national guidelines on intellectual property (IP) management.
- d. Offer clear guidelines for ethics approval, ensuring that all research involving human participants, including pilot studies, receives ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) before commencing.
- e. Provide mechanisms to prevent, identify, and investigate breaches of research integrity, ensuring procedural fairness during investigations and taking timely corrective actions where necessary.

5.2. Research and Ethics Committee (REC)

The REC has the following responsibilities (refer to the *Governance Charter and Delegations Framework* for details):

- a. Review and approve all research proposals involving human subjects, ensuring compliance with Australis' institutional ethical standards, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, and relevant legal and external regulations.
- b. REC is the final determinant of the risk level for accepting or rejecting a research proposal submitted for approval.
- c. Ensure that all research conducted at Australis is consistent with the standards outlined in the *Threshold Standards 2021*, particularly those related to ethics, integrity, and responsible research practices.
- d. Identify and address potential ethical risks related to research activities, including risks to the physical, psychological, or community welfare, and develop appropriate strategies for risk mitigation.
- e. Oversee adherence to guidelines on intellectual property, authorship, and the prevention of plagiarism or misconduct specifically in research projects. Ensure that all research output upholds the highest standards of research integrity.
- f. Manage allegations of research misconduct within research projects, ensuring that breaches are investigated, recorded, and rectified in accordance with institutional policies. Report serious breaches to the Academic Board.
- g. Develop, implement, and periodically review Australis' *Higher Degree Research Policy and Procedure* and associated guidelines to ensure they align with national and international standards for ethical research and integrity.
- h. Oversee ethical standards in research collaborations with external parties, including third-party research training and partnerships, ensuring compliance with Australis' ethical requirements and external regulatory frameworks.

- i. Maintain comprehensive records of all approved research projects and instances of research misconduct, along with corrective action plans, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- j. REC is accountable to the Academic Board although managed from the Office of the HDR Director. REC provide regular updates and an annual report to the AB on the ethical conduct of research within Australis, including summaries of approved projects, breaches of research integrity, and actions taken.
- k. Facilitate ongoing training and education in research ethics for Australis staff and students, promoting a strong culture of ethical research and ensuring all researchers understand their ethical responsibilities under the *Threshold Standards 2021*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*, and related guidelines.
- l. Ensure that research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is conducted with appropriate cultural sensitivity, respect for cultural knowledge, and a focus on safeguarding community welfare.
- m. Ensure that Australis is registered with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023* before Australis incorporates research and research training within the institution and courses that it delivers.

5.3. HDR Supervisors

With regard to research ethics, HDR Supervisors at Australis are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that HDR candidates are aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the required ethical standards throughout their research projects.
- b. Assisting students in obtaining ethics approval where applicable and ensuring ongoing compliance. This includes guiding students through the risk assessment process as outlined in *Section 6.1(b)* to categorise and assess risk levels. Supervisors should ensure that the risk analysis is properly documented and incorporated into the student's research conduct, with all records maintained according to Australis' *Records and Information Management Policy*.
- c. Regularly monitoring students' research progress to ensure compliance with national standards for ethical research.

5.4. HDR Student Responsibilities

HDR students at Australis must:

- a. Comply with all Australis policies, including obtaining ethics approval before initiating research involving human subjects. As part of the ethics approval process, HDR students must conduct a risk assessment, discuss it with their supervisor, and ensure it is submitted to the REC for assessment and approval before any contact with research participants or data collection is commenced.
- b. Uphold the principles of honesty, integrity, and transparency in conducting research, data management, and reporting.

- c. Disclose any conflicts of interest during their research and report potential breaches of research integrity.

6. PROCEDURES

The following procedures outline the processes that guide ethical research conduct and ensure the integrity of all research activities at Australis.

6.1. Research Ethics Approval Process

- a. **Application for Human Ethics Approval:** All research involving human subjects, or collection of any sensitive data, either directly or indirectly must receive approval from the REC before commencing.
 - i. Researchers must submit a detailed research proposal, including where applicable, the study design, participant consent forms, data collection methods, data reporting protocol and a risk assessment with respect to harm, discomfort and foreseeable burden.
 - ii. HDR supervisors are responsible for ensuring that HDR students submit applications for research ethics approval, irrespective of their perceived risk assessment and adhere to approved protocols.
- b. **Risk Assessment:** Research proposals will be classified based on the level of risk to participants using the scale below (in alignment with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)* Chapter 2).

Figure 1: Risk profiles of research

Lower risk		Higher risk (Individual, group, community, societal or global)	
Minimal	Low	Greater than low	High
No risk of harm or discomfort; potential for minor burden or inconvenience*	No risk of harm; risk of discomfort (+/- foreseeable burden)	Risk of harm (+/- foreseeable burden)	Risk of significant harm (+/- foreseeable burden)

Review Process: The Chair of the REC will first review proposals assessed by student and supervisors as being of minimal or low risk. Where the Chair agrees with these assessments no further processing will be required and the Chair may approve the research to proceed. Where the Chair does not agree with the self-assessment as being of “lower risk” (as per figure 1 above) the proposal will be forwarded for assessment by the REC along with all of the projects self-assessed as being of “higher risk” (as per figure 1 above). The REC will consider each application with respect to the projects compliance with the National ethical principles outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of*

Research (2018). The assessment process will therefore pay due regard to the impact of research on participants and consider the burdens, inconveniences as well as the potential benefits. The REC can make recommendations that minimise, mitigate or manage the risks and benefits to participants before approval to proceed will be granted. Where such recommendations are made, the proposal must be re-submitted detailing how the mitigations, management and minimisation strategies will be accommodated within the research protocol. The Chair, on receipt of a revised proposal may approve where he or she is satisfied that the proposal meets the standards or the proposal may be referred back to the student where he or she is not satisfied with the amendments. Should this occur, the proposal will automatically go to the REC for further consideration. The REC will also ensure that research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must follow culturally appropriate guidelines. REC decisions will be communicated in writing, including the length of approval, conditions for monitoring, and any required amendments.

6.2. Management of Research Data and Intellectual Property

All researchers must maintain accurate and comprehensive records of their research, ensuring that data is stored securely and compliant with privacy and ethical standards. Researchers must retain data for the statutory period of five years and ensure that data related to publications is available for independent verification. Refer to the *Records and Information Management Policy* for further details.

Researchers must adhere to Australis' intellectual property policies, ensuring proper attribution and management of data and research materials, including collaborative projects.

6.3. Management of Research Misconduct and Breaches

a. Reporting Breaches

- i. All individuals involved in research, including staff, HDR supervisors, and students, must report any suspected breaches of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*.
- ii. Potential breaches include plagiarism, data fabrication or falsification, failure to obtain ethics approval or knowingly go beyond what was approved, and improper data management.
- iii. Reports of misconduct should be made to the REC.

b. Preliminary Assessment: Upon receiving a report of a potential breach, the REC will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine if the report has merit. This assessment will involve:

- i. A review of the evidence provided.
- ii. An initial inquiry to confirm whether a full investigation is warranted.

- iii. Ensuring that the respondent is given notice of the allegation and an opportunity to provide an initial response.
 - iv. The REC may decide to:
 - Dismiss the matter if the allegation is found to be without merit.
 - Refer the matter for further investigation if a breach is suspected.
- c. Formal Investigation:** If the preliminary assessment suggests a breach, the REC will initiate a formal investigation, conducted by an independent panel. The investigation process will include:
- i. An independent panel will be appointed to ensure impartiality. Panel members must have relevant expertise with respect to the research domain, be free from conflicts of interest. Panel members should not hold direct supervisory roles over the parties involved. This aligns with the principles outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* to maintain procedural fairness.
 - ii. The panel will review all relevant documentation, interview involved parties and may request written statements. Both complainant and respondent may present evidence and have a support person present during interviews.
 - iii. All proceedings will be conducted with strict confidentiality. The respondent will be informed of the allegations and provided an opportunity to respond.
 - iv. The panel will compile findings and recommendations, reporting to the REC for final review. The REC will communicate the final decision and any corrective actions in writing to all parties.
- d. Outcomes and Sanctions:** Following an investigation, the panel will provide recommendations to the REC. Potential outcomes include:
- i. Retraction or correction of published research if integrity has been compromised.
 - ii. Corrective actions, such as training or mentoring, for minor breaches.
 - iii. Disciplinary actions, including suspension or dismissal, for serious breaches or repeated violations.
 - iv. All outcomes will prioritise the preservation of research integrity and ensure compliance with ethical standards. Sanctions may also be reported to external bodies, including research funding agencies, ethics committees, or publishers.
- e. Appeals and Reviews:** Respondents may appeal the decision of the investigation panel on the grounds of procedural unfairness. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the REC within ten (10) working days of the decision notification.

7. MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

7.1. Regular Review of Policies

- a. Australis is committed to maintaining the highest standards of research ethics and integrity by ensuring that all research policies, including this *Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and Procedure*, are regularly reviewed and updated.

- b. The Research and Ethics Committee (REC), in conjunction with the Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC), will conduct an annual review of this policy and associated procedures. This review will ensure compliance with the latest external standards, including the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)* and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*.
- c. As part of the annual review, updates will be reported to the HDRC and, in turn, presented to the Academic Board (AB) to maintain transparency and ensure ongoing compliance with TEQSA's guidance on research integrity and responsible conduct.

7.2. Continuous Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms

- a. Australis fosters a culture of continuous improvement in research ethics and integrity through feedback and evaluation.
- b. Feedback will be sought from researchers, HDR students, supervisors, and examiners regarding the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation.
- c. Periodic surveys will be conducted annually among HDR candidates, supervisors, and REC members to gather insights on research training, ethical approval processes, and the management of misconduct, supporting Australis' commitment to quality improvement.
- d. Regular audits of research practices, including data management, IP, and compliance with ethical standards, will be undertaken every three years to ensure adherence to the policy.

7.3. Reporting and Accountability

- a. The REC will provide annual reports to the Academic Board (AB) summarising key activities, including:
 - i. Ethical approvals granted, breaches of research integrity, and the outcomes of any investigations.
 - ii. Recommendations for policy amendments based on feedback and audit results.

7.4. Professional Development

- a. Australis will ensure that all researchers, HDR students, and supervisors are provided with ongoing training and professional development opportunities.
- b. Annual workshops will include:
 - i. **Induction Workshops:** Mandatory for all new researchers, HDR students, and supervisors to cover foundational knowledge on research ethics and integrity.
 - ii. **Refresher Workshops:** Designed for continuing researchers, covering updates to the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and other relevant topics.

- c. Additional training sessions will be held on an 'as-needed' basis to address significant changes or updates in policy or standards.
- d. HDR supervisors must complete training focused on research supervision, ethics, and the management of IP and research data.

7.5. Policy Review Cycle

This policy will undergo a formal review at least every five years, or sooner if required, to incorporate changes in national guidelines, institutional practices, and feedback from stakeholders.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS, EXTERNAL REFERENCES AND VERSION CONTROL

8.1. Related/Referenced documents

- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Governance Charter and Delegations Framework*
- *Graduation and Awards Policy and Procedure*
- *HDR Assessment and Examination Policy and Procedure*
- *HDR Assessor Guidelines and Engagement Protocols*
- *HDR Assessor Selection/Engagement Templates*
- *HDR Candidate Progress Procedure*
- *HDR Examiner Guidelines*
- *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*
- *Records and Information Management Policy*
- *Research Training and Induction Policy*
- *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*
- *Student/Supervisor Agreement*
- *Governance Charter and Delegations Framework*

8.2. Related legislation and external references

- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*
- *Australian Privacy Act*
- *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)*
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*
- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*
- *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Revised 2023)*
- *TEQSA Guidance Note: Research and Research Training (Version 2.0, September 2022)*
- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011*
- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (and supporting guide, Management of Data and Information in Research)*

8.3. Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewed/approved by	Key notes/changes
1.3	31/07/25	Academic Board (AB)	Reviewed and approved at the AB 31/07/25 meeting.
1.4	05/08/25	BoD	Reviewed and approved at the BoD 05/08/25 meeting.

8.4. Document Review

To be reviewed at least every five (5) years from the date of final approval