

# Procedure: Peer review

## Purpose

To outline the requirements and responsibilities of persons undertaking peer review activities at, or in the name of, the Australian National University. The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) and [Peer Review – A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2019\)](#) is read in conjunction with this procedure.

## Definitions

**Conflict of Interest** occurs when the private interest of a staff member may influence or compromise the conduct of that staff member in the conduct of their activities at the University, including when making decisions, determining research directions or unduly influencing relationships between that person, their colleagues and students. Apparent or perceived conflicts may undermine trust and be as damaging as an actual conflict. For further information, refer to [Disclosure of Interest Policy](#).

**Higher degree by research supervision** refers to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the [Procedure: Higher degree by research – supervision](#).

**Peer review** refers to the 'impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field'. Please see the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#). It may include:

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

**Peer reviewer** refers to the ANU researcher or research trainee engaged in peer review.

## Procedure

1. ANU staff are encouraged and supported to participate in peer review in a fair, rigorous and timely manner, maintaining confidentiality of the content and in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) (the Code).
2. Peer reviewers:
  - \* possess knowledge and expertise in the relevant research field;
  - \* exercise impartiality – research outputs will be assessed fairly, on their merit and free of bias;
  - \* maintain confidentiality – the content of any material under review or the outcome of any review process are not disclosed by peer reviewers to any third party;
  - \* apply standards equally to all research under review;
  - \* give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research;
  - \* maintain professionalism in the tone of their comments, ensuring that peer reviews are as constructive as possible; and
  - \* declare and manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the [Disclosure of Interest Policy](#).
3. Peer reviewers do not:
  - a. contact the author(s) or other reviewers unless authorised to do so;
  - b. seek to unduly influence the review process;
  - c. delegate their responsibilities or ask others to assist with a review, unless authorised to do so;
  - d. take into account factors that are not relevant to the review criteria;
  - e. permit personal prejudice to influence the process (peer reviewers are aware of how their own biases – conscious or unconscious – could affect the peer review process, including in relation to gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional employer and research discipline);
  - f. take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, or use information from research projects under review, without permission; and
  - g. intentionally delay the review process.
4. Researchers whose work is undergoing peer review do not seek to influence the process or outcomes.

5. ANU staff are aware of their obligations and commitments to peer review as required by funding contracts or relevant funds provider policies.
6. Higher Degree Research supervisors have a responsibility to assist their students to develop the skills necessary to conduct peer review responsibly effectively.

## Document information

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