

CODES OF PRACTICE FOR QUALITY IN RESEARCH



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Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU)
Horizon Campus

CODES OF PRACTISE FOR QUALITY IN RESEARCH

1. Scope and Purpose

This Code of Good Practice in Research sets out the standards of performance and conduct expected of all those engaged in research in the Horizon Campus. The Campus and its researchers have a responsibility to ensure that research is undertaken in conformity with the law and in accordance with best practice. To these ends, the Campus will provide an environment where good research practice is encouraged throughout its research activities.

The Research Code applies to everyone (Campus employees, students, and visiting researchers conducting research within, or on behalf of, the Campus).

The quality of the research itself is assured primarily by external peer-review of the research outputs. In contrast, assurance of the quality of the research processes is achieved by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit.

2. Professional Standards

(i) Honesty

At the heart of all research is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions and in their responses to the actions of others. This applies to the whole range of work encompassed within the research process from the initial formulation of concepts and hypotheses, through methodological and/or experimental design, through analysis of data or ideas, to the publication of results and the acknowledgement of the contributions of others. All researchers must refrain from plagiarism, infringement of intellectual property rights, and the fabrication of results.

(ii) Openness

While recognising the need for researchers to protect their own research interests in the process of planning and executing their research, and the interests of research funding bodies, the Campus encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and the public. Once results have been published, researchers should make available relevant data and materials to others on request for appropriate purposes. Researchers should contact Research Committee for advice about protecting intellectual property rights and their potential exploitation before the release of results by public disclosure.

(iii) Accountability

Researchers must ensure that the research they undertake is consistent with the terms and conditions as defined by the funding body and/or covered by agreements between the Campus and the funding body. This includes the need to ensure that the research is carried out as defined in the original proposal to the funding body unless amendments have been agreed in writing; that finance is used solely for the purposes for which it was intended unless permission for alternative use has been granted; that reports are both timely and accurate; and that conditions relating to publication and the ownership of intellectual property are met.

(iv) Conflict of Interest

Researchers must be honest about conflict of interest issues whether real, potential or perceived, throughout the research process or when research is sponsored by an organisation that might have a vested interest. This is especially important when reviewing the work of others such as in the assessment of research proposals and in the refereeing and reviewing of papers, articles and books.

(v) Responsibilities

Senior Academic Staff in the Campus are ultimately responsible for the overall quality of research conducted in the Campus, including compliance with the organization's research and management policies. The Research Committee of the Campus, under the Chairmanship of the committee is the primary body where issues related to Research Governance, including this Code, are considered. Faculties have a responsibility to ensure a climate of good research practice in research centers, groups or teams, including the development of appropriate research skills.

All staff and students should have defined responsibilities in relation to the particular project they are engaged on and be aware of those responsibilities. The Strategy for Research and management structure for research in the Campus should be drawn by the Research Committee.

(vi) Principles of Good Research Practice

For its part, the Campus promotes an organisational culture in which high standards of personal conduct and integrity are expected, academic misconduct and fraud are forbidden, and appropriate steps are taken to deal fairly and firmly when misconduct is alleged or suspected. In return, the Campus requires that all those engaged in research will follow this Code which is an important element of the Campus's framework for Research Governance.

Good research practice includes the following:-

- The clear organisation of, and understanding of the responsibilities for, the overall quality of research throughout the Campus with Research Committee Members, Academic Senate and Governing Council carrying the ultimate responsibility.
- Competence in those carrying out the research and supervision of those being trained to the required competences in order that their contribution is not compromised by inexperience.
- Awareness of and compliance with relevant Health and Safety regulatory requirements.
- Maintenance of professional standards; ensuring ethical approvals are obtained and guidelines followed; questioning one's own results and conclusions; acknowledging and attributing appropriately the work of others.
- The careful planning of research programmes, rigorous analysis and interpretation of results including statistical methods where appropriate.
- The documented operation, maintenance and calibration of equipment used in the research.
- The appropriate use of document control procedures.
- The preparation and regular updating of standard operating procedures, methods and protocols.
- The identification, storage and documentation of samples and research materials.
- The maintenance, storage and appropriate archiving of samples and other research materials the authorization, securing and storing of primary data and results.
- Openness in the dissemination of work and the making available to others the data and materials where appropriate.

(vii) Appropriateness of Research Funders

The Campus reserves the right to withhold permission for its staff to engage in research Contracts with certain funding bodies. In certain cases, permission may need to be obtained from the Vice Chancellor.

(viii) Ethical Approval

Ethical approval must be obtained for all research that falls within the scope of the Ethics and Research Committee. The Chairman of the Research Committee is responsible for ensuring that they have procedures in place and that all projects undergo ethical scrutiny.

(ix) Misconduct

The Campus has specifically identified research misconduct as a disciplinary offence under its general disciplinary procedures as they apply to staff and students, and it

will act accordingly in respect of such misconduct under those procedures. Research misconduct which is misconduct arising in the course of research or its reporting includes:

- Fabrication or falsification of results
- Plagiarism, misquotation or misappropriation of the work of others including the unethical use of material provided for review or assessment.
- Research misconduct also includes any misconduct which brings the name of the Campus into disrepute.

Any member of the Campus wishing to initiate disciplinary action on the grounds of research misconduct is advised to consult the Chairman of the Research Committee in the first instance on the appropriate procedures in the circumstances of the particular case.

3. Guidelines for Approval of Research:

The Chairman of the Research Committee and in consultation with the Dean of the respective faculty shall give guidance on the following:-

- The quality of management systems in research;
- The evaluation of researchers their standing within a discipline;
- The evaluation of research proposals, projects and output;
- The extent to which research programmes develop capacity human resources;
- The extent to which resources are mobilized to contribute to the quality of life of people;
- The extent to which resources are mobilized to contribute to generation of wealth in the community;
- The extent to which research programmes strive for excellence.

4. Guidelines for Evaluation of Research

The evaluation of researchers and their output is very much a matter of peer review. Guidelines for reviewers need to be drawn up but the following issues should be taken into account:

- How the individual stands in a field of study;
- The impact of the work done;
- The impact factor of the journal/s in which research is published;
- The quality of researchers output; normally the volume of output does not reflect quality or value of output;
- Output in the dramatic and performing arts cannot be assessed in the same manner as that in more formal disciplines; and
- Notions of quality, value and relevance of research are context derived.