RESEARCH CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy / Document Approval Body:	Academic Board
Date Created:	5 June 2019
Policy Custodian:	Dean of Engineering
Policy Contact:	Deputy Dean
File Location:	W:\Data - ALL.Standard\Policies and Procedures\EIT Policies and Procedures
Location on EIT website:	https://www.eit.edu.au/about/policies-procedures/
Review Period:	Three years
Revision No:	4
Date of Revision:	7 September 2022
Date Approved:	21 September 2022
Date Commenced:	14 October 2022

1.0 Purpose

This policy outlines the expectations of EIT students and staff with regard to the code of conduct for integrity in research. The framework for handling allegations of research misconduct is outlined in the Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all EIT's higher education students and staff involved in research.

3.0 Objectives

The objective of this policy is to prescribe standards of responsible and ethical research conduct expected of all staff and students involved in research at EIT. EIT uses the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* as a basis for its research framework. Specifically, that research conducted at or by EIT students or staff will adhere to the principles of:

- **Honesty** in the development, reporting and undertaking of research

- **Rigour** in the development, reporting and undertaking of research

- **Transparency** in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings

- **Fairness** in the treatment of others

- **Respect** for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment.

- **Recognition** of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them

- **Accountability** for the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- **Promotion** of responsible research practices.

4.0   What is Research?

Research is understood to be the systematic investigation and creation of new knowledge (facts), in order to reach new conclusions, and the innovative use of existing concepts and knowledge to build new concepts and approaches. Research can range from the pure to the applied. Most of the research undertaken at EIT will focus on the latter, where acquired knowledge is applied to practical outcomes.

This research is likely to be applied by students when working on a project, for a maximum of six (6) months at a master level and for up to three (3) years at a professional doctorate level. Students at a bachelor level complete a six (6) month capstone research project.

Activities that support research would include inter alia:

- Professional, paraprofessional, trade, administrative staff and students working in pursuit of new knowledge

- Training of staff and students in research techniques

- Supervision of students engaged in research

Other secondary activities include the maintenance of (research) equipment and routine activities such as administrative, legal and clerical work.

4.1   What is Human Research?

According to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, human research is considered in the following scenarios:

- taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups;

- undergoing psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment;

- being observed by researchers;

- researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials;

- the collection and use of their body organs, tissues or fluids (eg skin, blood, urine, saliva, hair, bones, tumour and other biopsy specimens) or their exhaled breath;

- access to their information (in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form) as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database."

The research proposal incorporating one of the listed scenarios must submit to the EIT Research Committee an application form to the Human Research Ethics Application system.

In accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, EIT may choose to grant ethical review exemption for research that:
   a.   is negligible risk research*; and

b. involves the use of existing collections of data or records that contain only non-identifiable data about human beings.

EIT must recognise that in deciding to exempt research from ethical review, they are determining that the research meets the requirements of this National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and is ethically acceptable.

* *Research is 'negligible risk' where there is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort; and any foreseeable risk is no more than inconvenience. Where the risk, even if unlikely, is more than inconvenience, the research is not negligible risk.*

5.0 Principles

Integrity of research is highly valued at EIT, and as such all staff and students engaged in research are expected to act responsibility within the code of conduct outlined in this policy.

- All staff and students working in research (referred to as researchers) will be committed to high standards of professional conduct which enhances the reputation of the institution and their professions.

- All researchers will maintain the highest ethical standards and only work in the field in which they are competent.

- Freedom of expression and debate on all research work will be encouraged and peer review will be a key part of the process.

- Conflict of interest will be managed so that ambition and personal advantage do not compromise ethical and scholarly considerations.

- Proper practices for safety and security will be followed.

- Confidentiality and the protection of privacy are paramount for companies and individuals. Researchers will seek approval to source information and use it only for the defined purpose of the research. Further use of the information will be granted only if written permission is given by the company or the individual, and is approved by the Dean.

- With the rules of confidentiality in place, free and open access to the research, by academics and the profession-at-large, will be encouraged to ensure results and methodologies are assessed and tested.

- Unless subject to patent or embargoes, the research will be disseminated through the publication of high-quality research papers in respected journals.

- Ensure that research findings are disseminated responsibly, and accept responsibility for their actions when disseminating research findings.

- Conform to policies and procedures adopted by EIT.

- Comply with all Australian legislation relating to research; for research undertaken overseas or involving information from other countries, also comply with all legislations of such countries covering research activities.

- Support EIT in the investigation of research misconduct.

6.0 Research Ethics

In Australia, Research institutes and Universities follow an ethics code called the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. EIT's research ethics are based on the concept of this in an Engineering context.

All Doctorate research projects must be considered by the research committee and approved before a research project can commence. Where collaborative research is to be undertaken with another higher education provider or an organisation, ethics approval must be obtained from both organisations prior to commencement of the research project.

Research projects must be submitted to the EIT Research Committee according to the instructions provided on the *"Procedure for Ethics Approval"* document.

7.0 Joint Research with other Institutions and Organisations

When the research is conducted in collaboration with other parties (including universities, colleges, research institutions and commercial companies), a written agreement between all parties, will be defined at the commencement of the research. It will include:

- Ownership of intellectual property
- Commercialisation, if relevant
- Confidentiality requirements
- Conflict of interesting handling
- Anticipated contributions
- Research management and duration
- Progress reporting structures and requirements
- Ethics and safety approvals
- Publication and authorship
- Contact personnel for all parties

The agreements will be drafted by appropriately qualified legal counsel appointed for all parties involved.

8.0 Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation where an actual, perceived or potential conflict exists. With increasing collaboration in research projects, it is important that staff and students act with integrity and do not misappropriate their position within EIT. Conflicts of interest can be categorised as actual, perceived or potential as follows:

- an **actual conflict** involves a direct conflict between a staff member/student of EIT and their responsibilities to EIT, and a competing interest or obligation, whether personal or involving a third party.

- a **perceived conflict** exists where it could reasonably be perceived, or give the appearance, that a competing interest could improperly influence the performance of a staff member's/student's duties and responsibilities to EIT.
- a **potential conflict of interest** arises where a staff member/student has an interest or obligation, whether personal or involving a third party, that could conflict with the staff member's/student's duties and responsibilities to EIT.

EIT aims to ensure that conflicts of interest will be avoided wherever possible. All staff members and students are expected to disclose any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest to the Dean as follows:

- Full disclosure to the Dean of links (supervisor or researcher) with the subject of the research. The Dean will decide on the veracity of suspected conflicts of interest and on how to proceed.
- Researchers will disclose their connections to, or relationships with organisations involved in, the research they are conducting. These connections may include payments towards the research, the provision of resources and facilities, guidance from professionals at reduced fees, or assistance with conferences/training and the preparation of papers.

If the conflict of interest is deemed likely to impact on the integrity of the research, the researcher may be required to terminate or modify the project. In this instance honest disclosure will be provided to funding agencies, the EIT Academic Board and editors of the journals where the research is to be published.

9.0   Intellectual Property

All staff, research collaborators and students of EIT engaged in research activity must manage intellectual property as set below:

Originated by staff or research collaborators

Except if a separate agreement is in effect, EIT owns all intellectual property originated by staff or research collaborators in the following circumstances:

- in the course of employment by EIT
- special projects undertaken at the request of EIT
- using EIT's resources

Originated by Students

Students own the copyright of their theses and scholarly works, except when:

- there is a specific agreement in place regarding intellectual property rights
- the intellectual property is created based on the background intellectual property owned by EIT
- the student's supervisor or other research collaborators have made significant contribution towards the creation of the intellectual property
- the student is employed by EIT and was paid for the activities related when the intellectual property that was created

10.0 Supervision of Research Students

The *Research Supervision and Academic Progress Policy* sets out the responsibilities of supervisors and students in relation to research supervision.

11.0 Research Data and Records Management

EIT will retain research data for a period of 5 years in accordance with its *Records Management Policy*. Secure storage and disposal methods are also contained in the *Records Management Policy*.

All data relating to the research project will be held in accordance with the *Records Management Policy* and a plan will be designed to manage research data by the research supervisor. It will detail data location/s, confidentiality and security protocols, and how third parties can access confidential data.

The researcher may only hold copies of the research data if compliance with the privacy and confidentiality requirements of all parties is demonstrated.

12.0 Authorship of Papers (and other research outputs)

- Where research is conducted by multiple authors various issues are worth clarifying and noting:
  - Identification, creation and design of the project
  - Analysis and research findings
  - Drafting and editing of the research work (throughout a paper)
- Authorship will be awarded to concerted intellectual input, at the relevant AQF level. It will not be awarded for routine measurements, the setting up of research equipment rigs or for a brief paper critique.
- It is recommended that the contributions of varied collaborating authors be defined (in conjunction with the supervisor) as the project commences and then regularly reviewed. This approach will avoid disputes over authorship.
- A person who qualifies as an author will not be excluded (without his/her agreement).
- A person who qualifies as an author will not be included (without his/her agreement).
- Research authors own the copyright of their thesis (subject to the requirements of supporting organisations).
- Authorship disputes (including principal and co-authorship) will be settled by the Dean in consultation with the research supervisor.
- The paper and/or thesis will not be published until all authorship disputes are settled.
- As a matter of courtesy, all organisations and individuals who have supported the research financially, with advice, with resources or facilities, will be acknowledged in the research papers and final thesis.
- Each author will take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of their own work.

13.0 Publication of Research

- Subject to confidentiality restrictions, and prior to research publication, an independent review will be completed; a key component of assessing and validating the work that has been done.

- If research defects are not detected it will be published and disseminated.

- An author will remain transparent with all publishers about where the research is published.

- All published research will clearly detail:

  o EIT as the originating institution and include the school or department (e.g. Civil, Industrial Automation etc)

  o Any funding body (e.g. company, scholarship or research organisation).

- Unless otherwise agreed, all research will be published by the EIT Academic Resource Department. The research (and research publications) will be made available under the most appropriate Creative Commons licence.

- EIT will encourage open access for all work.

14.0 Research Misconduct

Research misconduct will be treated under the *Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy*.

15.0 Definitions

Please refer to the EIT Glossary that can be found here for all definitions used in this document, not listed below.

16.0 Related Documents

- Academic Freedom and Code of Ethics Policy.DS
- Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure.DS
- Assessment Moderation and Student Progress Policy.HE
- Assessment Moderation and Student Progress Procedure.HE
- Records Management Policy.DS
- Research Supervision and Academic Progress Policy.HE
- Staff Grievance Policy.DS
- Staff Grievance Procedure.DS
- Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy.HE
- Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure.HE

17.0 Related Guides and Resources

The following guides have been released and can be downloaded from the NHMRC's website:

- Authorship
- Management of Data and Information in Research
- Peer Review
- Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest

- Supervision
- Collaborative Research

18.0 Related Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to this policy, however not all are mandatory for education providers:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cwth.)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth.)*
- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cwth.)*

19.0 Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and EIT's community via the website and other publications.