

	<b>12.01 Guidelines for the conduct of research at the College</b>		<b>Date of issue:</b> Dec 2002
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**Intent:** That research undertaken at the College is conducted in accordance with national standards for:

- Ethical conduct in human research, and
- Compliance with responsible research practice.

### Policy statement

The College supports the principles of responsible research practice as outlined in the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997) – currently under review<sup>1</sup>. Central to these principles are the maintenance of high ethical standards, the appropriate management of accurate and valid data and the reporting and publication of research findings. The following guidelines and principles outline the responsibility of researchers to the public and to themselves in the conduct of research approved by the College.

### Approach

#### 1. General

- 1.1 The Ethics Committee of the Board of the College will consider all relevant requests for projects seeking to access staff, students and/or members of the College. The response to such requests will be made to the nominated applicant in writing (refer P&P 12.02 Access to archival & historical material, staff, students or members and 12.03 Standard Conditions for Grants and Scholarships awarded by the College).
- 1.2 Project proposals considered to be of ‘negligible’ or ‘low’ ethical risk (as defined in Section 2.1.6 & 2.1.7 of the National Health and Medical Research Council *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*<sup>2</sup>) may be considered by the Executive or the Education Management Committee (Section 5.1.8 – 5.1.23 of the *National Statement*).

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC/AVCC. *Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice*, Australian Government, Canberra, 1997. Available URL: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/policy/researchprac.htm> <accessed June 2007.

<sup>2</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007.

- 1.3 Any research project deemed to involve ‘more than low risk’ (Section 5.1.24 of the National Statement) and conducted as the result of a scholarship or grant funding awarded by the College must be ratified by the Ethics Committee of the Board. This process would include sighting a copy of the ethical approval issued by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the institution at which the research is to be conducted and in most instances, an application to the College Ethics Committee. Refer P&P 12.03 Standard Conditions for Grants and Scholarships awarded by the College.
- 1.4 Where scientific review of the project is outside the expertise of the College Ethics Committee (e.g. a multi-site clinical trial) the Committee may refer the trial according to NSW Health Policy Directive PD2007\_035 *Human Research Ethics Committees: Standards for Scientific Review of Clinical Trials*.
- 1.5 Applications for access to archival and historical material and/or staff, students or members for research purposes will only be considered when made on the approved forms. These forms are found in S:\\$ Templates & Forms.
- FM - Research proposal information summary;
  - FM - Request for access to College Archives;
  - FM - Archival access conditions;
  - FM - Access to Staff, Students or Members of the College;
  - FM - Nursing research grant application;
  - FM - Assessment research proposal grant application;
  - FM - CN Ethics application
- 1.6 Where necessary, a Project Steering Committee will be convened by the Board (refer S:\\$ Terms of Reference\CN Research Project Steering Committee 2007).
- 1.7 In considering requests for access, funding or approval to conduct research at the College the following issues will be considered:
- 1.7.1 the merit of the study
  - 1.7.2 the method proposed is comprehensive, feasible and practical and conforms to any time restraints outlined in the proposal
  - 1.7.3 the capability and capacity of the researcher(s) to conduct the project
  - 1.7.4 experience of the researcher(s) with the management of data and privacy
  - 1.7.5 compliance with ethics (*National Statement*) and safety guidelines and standards
  - 1.7.6 resources required for the project have been identified and are available to the researcher(s).

## **2. Security and access to the College**

- 2.1 When using any premises or facilities of the College, the researcher(s) must comply with all safety, security and office regulations in effect at these premises.
- 2.2 The researcher(s) will, at all times in the conduct of projects, observe all workplace policies, practices and standards in place at The College of Nursing.

## **3. Publication and authorship**

- 3.1 Where research has been conducted by a staff member(s) in College time and/or utilising College resources, the final report must appropriately acknowledge the College for that assistance.
- 3.2 Where the subject matter of the research concerns the affairs of the College, its staff, students and/or members, the Board reserves the right to consult with the author(s) as to the substantive content of the report(s) prior to publication. In certain circumstances, the Board may enter into an agreement with the researcher(s) as to the procedures to be followed in relation to publication.
- 3.3 Where there is more than one author of a publication, one author (by agreement among the authors) should formally accept overall responsibility for that publication.
- 3.4 A person is listed as an author of a publication only when they have participated in a substantial way to the conception, execution or interpretation of at least part of the work described in the research report.

## **4. Ethical approval**

- 4.1 In general, ethical approval is required for projects that involve:
  - 4.1.1 the use of surveys, questionnaires or interview;
  - 4.1.2 access to medical or other personal details;
  - 4.1.3 investigation of human behaviour;
  - 4.1.4 testing of human subjects;
  - 4.1.5 the administration of drugs;
  - 4.1.6 any type of experimentation on a human subject.
- 4.2 For projects requiring the approval of institution-based Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs), evidence of this approval must be given prior to the disbursement of any grants or research funds by the College.
- 4.3 Where a student or researcher requires ethical approval to access staff, students or members of The College of Nursing, application should be made using the form *FM - CN Ethics application* (S:\\$ Templates & Forms).

- 4.4 The College has convened an Ethics Committee to consider the ethical conduct of research undertaken at the College and the ethics of projects funded by the College. This committee is constituted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)<sup>3</sup> and consists of the Chief Executive and at least six other members. The Board has the responsibility to co-opt members from outside the College to ensure that representation on the Ethics Committee conforms to processes of research governance and ethical review as outlined in the National Statement.
- 4.5 The College supports the Australian Health Ethics Committee Guidelines on ethical conduct in human research, including guidelines for the ethical conduct of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research. These guidelines can be accessed online at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/ethics/human/ahec/guidelines/index>. All researchers working in the province of the College are expected to adhere to these guidelines. College students are also referred to the General Course Regulations, particularly regulations 6.1-6.4 Research component.
- 4.6 Where research is funded by the College, progress reports must contain information on progress and outcomes, compliance with the approved protocol, the maintenance and security of data and the protection of participant privacy (refer P&P 12.03 Standard conditions for Grants and Scholarships awarded by the College).
- 4.7 Any adverse events associated with the project must be reported **immediately** to the Chief Executive of the College.

## 5. Data storage and retention

- 5.1 Wherever possible, original data should be retained in the department in which they were generated. The College has a procedure for the retention of data at the College. Individual researchers should keep copies of data for their own use.
- 5.2 Data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form and should comply with relevant privacy protocols. In general, it is recommended that data be held for a minimum period of 5 years from the date of publication.

## 6. Supervision

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<sup>3</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government; Canberra 2007.

- 6.1 Any research proposal must show evidence that a suitably qualified person has been consulted and/or is prepared to supervise the project. Such a person may be from another institution, from the Board or be a suitably experienced staff member.
- 6.2 Evidence of appropriate supervision must be provided for students conducting research as part of their coursework or when access is required as part of a Masters or Doctoral project.

## **7. Conflict of interest**

- 7.1 Researchers have an obligation to disclose any conflict of interest that has the potential to influence a grant application, the research and investigations, or publications.

## **8. Resources**

- 8.1 Researchers must have sufficient resources (time, personnel, funding) to be able to conduct the project as described in the application.
- 8.2 Individuals seeking to conduct a research project involving an educational activity within the College may seek funding from a budget line established for this purpose. Larger projects may require external funding support.
- 8.3 The Board of the College of Nursing reserves the right to insert any special terms or conditions associated with the approval, payment, supervision or conduct of research projects or the disbursement of funds.
- 8.4 Where The College of Nursing allocates funds, the Board will request brief progress reports at intervals determined by the total length of the project. These reports should contain information about the progress of the study and the expenditure of grant monies. The Board requests a copy of the final project report, which should be of suitable quality for placement in the College Library (refer P&P 12.03 Standard conditions for Grants and Scholarships awarded by the College).
- 8.5 Expenditure of funds allocated by The College of Nursing must be in accordance with the terms of reference of the grant and comply with any special terms to which the approval is subject.
- 8.6 Unless otherwise stipulated, funds can generally be expended on personnel; equipment and materials; data processing / computing / analysis; travel and accommodation; stationery, photocopying, postage; production of final reports and findings; and miscellaneous items.

## **9. Ownership of intellectual property**

- 9.1 Intellectual Property** (refer P&P 17.10 Intellectual property) refers to the property of the mind or intellect. Students of the College own any intellectual property they create pursuant to their studies, unless they sign an agreement relinquishing such ownership.
- 9.2** In general, the College retains ownership of all intellectual property created by academic or general staff in the course of their employment.
- 9.3** Unrestricted license is given to the researcher(s) and their institution to deal non-commercially in the intellectual property.
- 9.4** The College of Nursing, the researcher(s) and other sponsors of the research may enter into a confidential agreement to protect intellectual property rights at the commencement of a research project. In general, the College will claim a share in intellectual property (created by way of research) that is in proportion to the College's financial or resource support of the research.
- 9.5** Where the possibility of financial gain exists, the College requires investigators to take all necessary actions to protect intellectual property from commercial exploitation by those who have not contributed to its creation. The College reserves the right to negotiate with any other financial partners over its share of the rights in the property.
- 10. Responsible research practice**
- 10.1 Research Misconduct** refers to fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic and scientific community for proposing, conducting or reporting research. Forms of 'misconduct' include the misleading ascription of authorship including listing authors without their permission, attributing work to others who have not in fact contributed to the research and lack of appropriate acknowledgment of work primarily produced by a student, trainee or associate. It does not include honest errors or differences in interpretation of data (refer to the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997) – currently under review<sup>4</sup>.)
- 10.2** If a case for research misconduct is found, a written statement will be provided to the researcher(s) against whom the allegations are made by the Chief Executive of the College. Researcher(s) will be given the opportunity to respond (in writing and in confidence) to such allegations. If research misconduct is found to have occurred,

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<sup>4</sup> NHMRC/AVCC. *Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice*, Australian Government, Canberra, 1997. Available URL: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/policy/researchprac.htm> <accessed June 2007.

these findings will be reported to any funding agency or sponsor involved in the work, the researcher(s) institution or employee and any journals or any other media through which the research in question has been reported.

- 10.3** The College reserves the right to terminate a contract with a researcher(s) at any time or to reduce or vary its contribution. The College will give the researcher(s) written notice of their intentions.

## **11. Applications by staff**

- 11.1** The Board of The College of Nursing is keen to support research initiatives from staff and will consider any research proposal that complies with these guidelines. Each proposal will be considered on its merits. The Board will ensure that in-house researchers receive sound guidance in the development, preparation and conduct of research projects. All research conducted by staff members will be listed in the Annual Report of the Education Directorate and/or The College of Nursing. It is expected that the contribution of the College in providing assistance, resources and/or staff be appropriately acknowledged by the researcher(s).

## **12. Externally funded research**

- 12.1** The nominated Research Officer of The College of Nursing will provide advice on the development of applications to external bodies for research grants, sponsorships, research and development funds and consultancy agreements.