

MAAS

Code of good practice in research

Draft procedure for comment:
Date Approved:
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1. Purpose

The *MAAS Code of good practice in research* (Code of Practice) sets out standards of performance and conduct expected of all staff and contracted personnel engaged in research at the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (MAAS). It is designed to ensure that research carried out at MAAS is conducted in accordance with the highest standards of integrity. It aims to ensure the delivery of high quality research, to safeguard all stakeholders, to meet the requirements of relevant funding bodies and to manage risk in relation to research misconduct. The Code of Practice draws on a number of key international and Australian frameworks:

- *International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums*
- *Museums Australia Code of Ethics*
- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

In addition, codes of practice in research from leading museums with similar collections, such as the Victoria & Albert Museum in the UK, were used as a reference point in developing this Code of Practice.

2. Scope

All MAAS staff and those contracted to undertake research for MAAS must familiarize themselves with this Code of Practice and ensure that its provisions are observed. Project managers have a responsibility to ensure compliance by staff working on research projects. Those new to a research project or to researching in the context of MAAS will have access to the Code of Practice in addition to relevant MAAS policies including the *MAAS Code of Conduct*, *MAAS Research Policy*, *MAAS Research Strategy*, *MAAS Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol*, *MAAS Third Party Copyright Policy*, and the *MAAS Publications Strategy*.

3. Definition of research

The Australian Research Council (ARC) defines research as:

“the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.” (ARC, 2008, p. 1) ¹

This definition is used to guide our understanding of research at MAAS and may include:

- Scholarship: the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information.
- Pure Research: work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without a particular application in view.
- Strategic Research: work which is carried out to discover new knowledge which might provide for an envisioned future application.
- Applied Research: work which is undertaken to discover new applications of existing or new knowledge.
- Action Research: the development of new knowledge through engagement in practice.

4. Research principles

The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)* identifies the following principles of responsible research. As a general rule, MAAS staff and related research personnel are expected to adhere to these principles in all aspects of their research.

Responsibilities of institutions:

- Promote the responsible conduct of research
- Establish good governance and management practices
- Train staff
- Promote mentoring
- Ensure a safe research environment

Responsibilities of researchers:

- Maintain high standards of responsible research
- Report research responsibly
- Respect research participants
- Respect animals used in research

¹ Australian Research Council (2008). *ERA Indicator Descriptors*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

- Respect the environment
- Report research misconduct

All parties have social responsibilities with respect to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Consumer and community participation in research

In particular, MAAS staff involved in research should:

- demonstrate integrity and professionalism;
- observe fairness and equity;
- avoid, and/or declare, conflicts of interest;
- ensure the safety and well-being of those associated with the research;
- observe all relevant legal and ethical requirements;
- be open to scrutiny and debate.
- be guided by the MAAS Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the MAAS Australian Indigenous Intellectual Property Protocol.

Good research practice should also include:

- securing and storing primary data appropriately;
- documenting results clearly and accurately;
- attributing and acknowledging the contributions of others;
- co-operating with other researchers;
- taking special account of the needs of young or inexperienced researchers.

5. Purchasing and expenditure for research

Purchasing and other expenditure of funds should take place in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Museum's financial regulations, the *MAAS Ethical Conduct of Purchasing Officers Policy & Procedures*, the *MAAS Code of Conduct*, and of any grant or contract held for research.

6. Professional standards

Researchers should observe the standards of practice set out in this code and take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with sponsor, institutional, legal, ethical and moral obligations in managing research projects. This applies to the whole range of research work including methodological planning, generating and analysing data, publishing results and acknowledging the contribution of others.

7. Research participants

Research may involve members of the public as subjects or participants. Researchers must ensure that all participants in a research project understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be disseminated and used. Participation should be based on the freely given, informed consent of those studied and participants should be made aware of their right to refuse participation for any reason. Researchers should always strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy.

8. Training and leadership

Experienced researchers and project managers should create an environment of mutual cooperation in which all researchers are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open exchange of ideas is fostered. They must also ensure that appropriate direction of research and its supervision are provided through normal project management procedures, mentoring and the MAAS workload planning process.

9. Data

Research data must be recorded in a durable and auditable form, in accordance with the *MAAS Archives Policy*, *MAAS Records and Information Management Policy* and *MAAS Privacy Management Plan*, so that it can readily be discovered. It must be retained intact for a period of at least five years. It is the duty of the project manager/lead researcher to comply with the *Data Protection Act* and the *State Records Act*, and to ensure that copyright is not breached.

10. Confidentiality

In general, research requires openness, but restrictions relating to publication and dissemination may apply in circumstances where MAAS or its partners have made or given confidentiality undertakings to third parties or confidentiality is required to protect intellectual property rights. It is the duty of the researcher to enquire of the project manager or MAAS Research Manager as to whether confidentiality provisions apply and of the project manager and/or Research Manager to inform researchers of their obligations with respect to these provisions.

11. Publications

For the purposes of this Code of Practice, 'publication' can be taken to mean book, article, lecture, web content, or exhibition output. All publications must report research accurately, reference work included honestly and carefully according to academic standards, and acknowledge all contributors.

12. Conflicts of Interest

A researcher must make full disclosure of any potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest in research in accordance with the *MAAS Conflict of Interest Policy*. Conflict of interest includes personal or familial affiliation to or financial involvement with, any organisation sponsoring or providing financial support for a project undertaken by a researcher. Financial involvement includes direct personal financial interest, receipt of personal benefits (including travel and accommodation) and receipt of material or facilities for personal use. All conflicts of interest, potential, perceived or actual should be discussed with the researcher's supervisor with reference to the Research Manager and the Governance, Planning and Reporting Team. Conflicts of interest should be recorded on the *MAAS Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form* and registered with the Governance Team.

13. Submitting Grant Applications

All research grant applications will be coordinated through the MAAS Research Manager and require approval by the MAAS Director before submission. For projects where MAAS is leading the research, or is the sole institution involved, the member of staff assigned to the research should take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy of information contained in applications for funding (with support from the MAAS Research Manager). For projects where MAAS is approached to be a partner institution (for example, in the development of an Australian Research Council project grant proposal), the member of staff assigned to the research will work with the leading institution and the rest of the project research team to ensure the accuracy of information contained in applications for funding (with support from the MAAS Research Manager).

14. Misconduct in Research

Misconduct in research is defined as non-compliance with the *MAAS Code of Good Practice in Research* and includes, but is not restricted to:

- Plagiarism - the copying or use of ideas, data or text without permission or acknowledgement.
- Fraud - deliberate deception, involving the invention of data or the fabrication of results.
- Collusion - aiding or attempting to aid, or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another person in an examination, and aiding in the concealment of research misconduct by others.
- Interference - intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another.
- Non-compliance - the deliberate failure to comply with obligations to MAAS, a sponsor, a funding body, a professional body or partner, including accounting requirements, ethics, and health and safety regulations.

Staff and those contracted to undertake research for MAAS are also bound by the *MAAS Code of Conduct* and the *MAAS Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy* and are required to report research misconduct, where they have good cause to believe it is occurring. Reporting should be made to the relevant project manager, with reference to the MAAS Research Manager and the Governance, Planning and Reporting Team. MAAS will investigate allegations or complaints about misconduct in research in accordance with the *MAAS Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy* and the *MAAS Public Interest Disclosures Policy*.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Research Manager: The Research Manager is responsible for the oversight of research at MAAS including the review, update and implementation of this Code of Practice.

5. Definitions

N/A

6. Related Museum plans, policies and/or procedures

MAAS Archives Policy

MAAS Code of Conduct

MAAS Conflict of Interest Policy.

MAAS Ethical Conduct of Purchasing Officers Policy & Procedures

MAAS Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy

MAAS Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol

MAAS Privacy Management Plan

MAAS Public Interest Disclosures Policy.

MAAS Publications Strategy

MAAS Records and Information Management Policy

MAAS Research Policy

MAAS Research Strategy

MAAS Third Party Copyright Policy

7. Relevant legislation and external context

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Data Protection Act

International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums

Museums Australia Code of Ethics

State Records Act

8. Responsible Officer, Unit & Team

Research Manager

9. Amendment history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	<i>dd/mm/yyyy</i>	<i>List changes since last version</i>	<i>Role title</i>

(Remove italicised guide notes prior to finalising document)