

Research Project Approval Policy

Purpose The purpose of this document is to set out the College’s policy on approval of projects proposing research, innovation, pilot, data analysis and evaluation projects (Research Projects).

Applicability This policy applies to all College full-time, part-time and casual staff, independent contractors and external collaborators involved in Research Projects other than for the Center for Legal Innovation.

Aims This policy ensures a structured and transparent process for the approval and management of Research Projects, promoting best practice and ethical compliance.

This policy aims to ensure that all Research Projects:

- a) Align with the College’s strategic goals;
 - b) Adhere to ethical standards; and
 - c) Utilise resources efficiently.
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Definitions “Research” means 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, inventions and understandings.¹

“Innovation” means the process of translating ideas into a new way of doing things, a change that improves administrative or scholarly performance, or a transformed experience based on a new way of thinking.²

“Pilot” means a small-scale preliminary study conducted to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, risk and adverse events.³

¹ ‘Definition of Research’, *Australian Research Council* (2015)

< https://www.arc.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4551/ERA2015/intro-3_define-research.html >

² S P Taylor, ‘What is Innovation? A Study of Definitions, Academic Models and Applicability of Innovation to an Example of Social Housing in England’ (2017) 5 *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 128

< <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=80628> >

³ ‘What is the Difference Between a Trial and a Pilot?’, *Association for Project Management* (2024) < <https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/what-is-the-difference-between-a-trial-and-a-pilot/> >

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“Data analysis” means processes or activities which are designed to obtain and evaluate data to extract useful information.⁴

“Evaluation” means the systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation or results of a project for the purpose of continuous improvement and decision-making.⁵

Researchers Any full-time, part-time or casual employee or academic independent contractor of the College can put forward a Research Project proposal.

Scope All Research Projects must undergo a formal approval process before initiation.

Approval process

Step 1: Initial Research Project proposal submission

- a) Proposals must be submitted to the Academic Secretary for consideration by the Research and Scholarship Committee.
- b) The proposal should include:
 - i) Project title and objectives;
 - ii) Principal investigator and team members;
 - iii) Project description including methodology;
 - iv) Stakeholder identification and consultation;
 - v) Expected outcomes and impact;
 - vi) Identification of impacted business units;
 - vii) Existing scholarship relevant to the project;
 - viii) Budget and resources;
 - ix) Timeline and milestones;
 - x) Ethical considerations;
 - xi) If there are staff overseeing the research, their qualifications, research experience and skills relevant to the type of research undertaken; and
 - xii) Confirmation of in principle support for the project from the Researcher’s manager, including time to be allocated for the Research to complete the research project

Step 2: Research and Scholarship Committee review

- a) The Research and Scholarship Committee reviews the proposal for academic rigor, feasibility and alignment with College goals.
- b) The Research and Scholarship Committee will either:
 - i) Provisionally approve a Research Project, with or without conditions such as obtaining ethics approval or a requirement for research training or oversight; or

⁴ ‘Guide to Data Analytics and the Australian Privacy Principles’, *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner* (2018) < <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-guidance-for-organisations-and-government-agencies/more-guidance/guide-to-data-analytics-and-the-australian-privacy-principles>>

⁵ ‘Commonwealth Evaluation Toolkit’, *Australian Centre for Evaluation* < <https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/toolkit/commonwealth-evaluation-toolkit>>

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- ii) Refuse a Research Project proposal providing reasons and recommendations for any related Research Project proposal.

Step 3: Final approval

- a) The Chief Academic Officer will discuss resourcing for a Research Project with the researcher’s manager or other relevant stakeholders.
- b) Final approval is to be granted by the Chief Academic Officer communicating the terms of approval including any conditions to the researcher.
- c) If the Chief Academic Officer does not grant final approval, the Chief Academic Officer will communicate the reasons and recommendations for any related Research Project proposal.

Step 4: Ethics approval

- a) Research projects involving human subjects or personal information must apply for ethics approval in accordance with the Human Research Ethics Approval Policy.

Changing an approved Research Project

Any significant changes to an approved Research Project’s scope, timeline or budget require pre-approval of the Research and Scholarship Committee.

Reporting

Researchers must submit quarterly progress reports for approved Research Projects to the Research and Scholarship Committee as well as a final report.

The Research and Scholarship Committee may make further recommendations or changes to the Research Project’s scope or timeline based on progress reports.

The Research and Scholarship Committee will report on Research Projects to the Academic Board.

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Researcher obligations

Upon approval of a Research Project, the Researcher agrees that:

1. They will comply with the guiding principles and responsibilities of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) (Code) and all state, national and international legislation and standards, as well as College policies relevant to their Research Project.
2. They will obtain approvals for any research partnerships.
3. They will submit any written research partnership agreements to the Research and Scholarship Committee for approval and consideration of any broader ethical, funding or conflicts of interest issues that may be attached to the proposed research.
4. They will ensure that all authors who meet the criteria for authorship under the Code:
 - a) Are prepared to take responsibility for their contribution; or
 - b) Are not excluded without their express permission in writing; and
 - c) Have reviewed the version of the research to be submitted for publication, and have provided their consent to the publication in writing, and that consent is forwarded to the Chair of the Research and Scholarship Committee.
5. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Principal, the College asserts rights to the ownership of intellectual property created in the course of undertaking the Research Project and for use in the normal business of the College.
6. The Researcher will retain confidential research data and records securely and in line with Records and Document Management Policy and Records and Document Management Procedure and/or Student Records Retention Policy.
7. The Researcher will record research outputs in the Scholarship Record.

Misconduct allegations

Allegations of misconduct in research will be investigated and resolved in accordance with the Code of Conduct for workplace participants.

The occurrence and nature of research misconduct and breaches of research integrity will be recorded and monitored by the Research and Scholarship Committee. The committee will use data on breaches of research integrity to inform improvements to research practice and the committee will take appropriate action to address any underlying causes of misconduct that are identified. The data and current best practice will inform the regular review of this Policy and the related Procedure.

Related policies

[Human Research Ethics Approval Policy](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Records and Document Management Policy](#)
[Records and Document Management Procedure](#)
[Student Records Retention Policy](#)

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