

# Recommendations from the Research Integrity Subcommittee of Faculty of Medicine. 2004

## Introduction

The subcommittee was commissioned by the Faculty Standing Committee to develop a series of recommendations that would establish ways of dealing with grievances and research misconduct as well as more preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of such events.

The subcommittee comprises:

Professor Mark Harris (Chair), Professor Robert Graham, A/Professor David de Carle, Professor Terry Campbell, Professor Denis Wakefield, Professor Richard Henry, Professor Jeremy Wilson

## 1. Promotion of the revised Code of Conduct for Responsible Practice of Research.

With the approval by Academic Board of a code of conduct for the responsible practice of research (Appendix 1), the Subcommittee has focused on issues of structure and implementation rather than attempting to develop policies or additional codes of practice.

### *Recommendations:*

- 1.1 That the new Code of Conduct be distributed in paper form to all academic (including conjoint) staff, research students and research staff in the Faculty and posted on the Faculty Website.
- 1.2 That all academic staff, research students, supervisors, and research staff (funded under research grants) be required to sign a form stating that they have read the code and that they undertake to comply with it. In implementing this all Heads of Schools or Directors of Research Centres or Institutes be required to provide a report to FSC on the proportion of staff that have signed the form by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

## 2. Induction processes for new staff and students.

The subcommittee was of the opinion that there needed to be induction processes for all students and staff involved in research which provided an introduction to the research integrity issues laid out in the Code of Practice, in particular:-

- recording of data, data storage and handling, retention and security
- confidentiality
- authorship and publication
- supervision of students or research trainees
- conflict of interest
- research misconduct

As well as procedures for handling grievances and conflicts within research teams.

### *Recommendations:*

- 2.1 That the Faculty develop a common template for induction of staff in the code of practice and procedures for handling grievances and conflicts within research teams (see Appendix 2).
- 2.2 That discussion of the research integrity issues be incorporated into induction procedures for all research students and new supervisors.
- 2.3 That each School or Research Centre develop or modify their induction procedures for new academic and research staff to include discussion of the code of conduct and procedures for handling grievance and conflicts within research teams.

### **3. Handling of Grievances**

The Subcommittee was of the opinion that procedures for handling grievances needed to be strengthened and clarified. In particular, those handling such grievances need to be readily accessible to researchers and students at all levels as well as providing an effective response to the problem. The Subcommittee also felt that greater clarification was needed in relation to the procedures for handling grievances relating to interpersonal issues, as distinct to grievances relating to the conduct of research per se.

#### *Recommendations*

- 3.1 That the Faculty develop general guidelines for dealing with grievances relating to research. This should include procedures for dealing with concerns about research conduct, workplace harassment or bullying, as well as the procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct or fraud and when to institute procedures under the "Whistleblower" legislation.
- 3.2 That, all students and staff engaged in research be informed that, in addition to the ombudsman within Schools, Centres or Units, they may approach the HOS or PG Student Coordinator with any grievance relating to the conduct of research.
- 3.3 That all students and staff engaged in research, be informed that, in addition to intra school mechanisms, they can approach the Deputy Dean and Associate Deans for Research and Research Students and their associated administrative staff with grievances or concerns related to research.

### **4. Training of research leaders**

The subcommittee felt that there needed to be training available to and expected of staff who provided leadership of research teams, Centres or Schools in the management of research teams and resolution of conflict.

#### *Recommendation*

- 4.1 That UNSW Staff Development be requested to develop a short training package for research leaders on the management of research teams, mechanisms to ensure research integrity and resolution of conflict.
- 4.2 That all HOS, Directors of Centres and Institutes and research team leaders be required to attend training on research team management.

### **5. Quality improvement**

The subcommittee was of the opinion that above and beyond grant and publication peer-review, there needed to be mechanisms to provide external review of research teams work. This needed to be formative with the aim to improve performance in relation to the code of conduct for research. However, it also needed to have sufficient authority to be taken seriously by research teams as has already occurred in relation to animal ethics for example. The subcommittee felt that this needed to be developed carefully and in consultation with researchers over the next few years.

#### *Recommendations*

- 5.1 That panels of review teams be established by the Faculty drawn from researchers within the Faculty. A time table for visits to research teams, centres or units should be drawn up over a three year period. These review teams should visit and review procedures including compliance with the code of conduct and make recommendations about ways in which the teams or units could improve their performance.
- 5.2 A report should be made every 6 months to FSC on the progress of this including the number of research units or teams.
- 5.3 The process should be evaluated after 3 years to determine its effectiveness and how it can be improved.