

Research Integrity Advisors - Roles and Responsibilities

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Introduction

The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) (the Code) states that the University must “identify and train Research Integrity Advisors who assist in the promotion and fostering of responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the Code.”

The role of a Research Integrity Advisor (RIA) is described more fully in section 4.1 of the [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#).

Purpose of an RIA

1. The promotion of the responsible conduct, management and reporting of research.
2. The development and promotion of a culture of research ethics and integrity.
3. Providing advice to researchers regarding any aspect of research integrity and responsible research practice.
4. Discussing concerns and complaints regarding potential breaches of the Code.

Role of an RIA regarding Potential Breaches of the Code

1. Staff and HDR students who are concerned that another person has not acted responsibly in accordance with the Code may discuss their concern confidentially with an RIA.
2. The role of the RIA includes informing someone with concerns regarding research conduct about the relevant University processes and available options, including how to make a formal complaint.
3. The RIA must explain the options open to the staff member or student considering, making, or having made a complaint. These options include:
 - a. Referring the matter directly to the person against whom the complaint has been made.
 - b. Not proceeding or withdrawing the complaint if discussion resolves the concerns.
 - c. Referring the complaint to a person in a supervisory capacity for resolution at the School/Division/Centre/Institute level.
 - d. Making a formal complaint of a breach of the Code in writing to the Designated Officer (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, UniSA).
4. The RIA must maintain confidentiality.

Boundaries of the RIA Role

1. An RIA is not to advise on matters where they have a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest.
2. The RIA's role does not extend to assessment or investigation of the complaint, including contacting the person who is the subject of that complaint, or being involved in any subsequent investigation other than as a witness or to provide testimony.
3. Anyone wishing to seek advice about a research integrity issue is not limited to the RIA in their Division. It is important that staff and HDR students feel free to seek advice from an RIA with whom they feel comfortable and who may be from outside their home Division or area.

Confidentiality: Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements

The RIA should keep a written record of all discussions with complainants. Maintaining written records also enables the RIA to identify issues, particularly common or recurring ones. Written records are to be kept confidential to the RIA and are not to be used for the purposes of a preliminary assessment or a subsequent investigation. An important reason for keeping these records is to assist the RIA with recollecting the issues in order to effectively deal with the individual matter and to assist the person who approaches them.

Training and Support for RIAs

Research and Innovation Services, in conjunction with Human Resources, will organise formal induction of new RIAs to this role. They will review areas (in consultation with RIAs) in which additional training and support may be required so that RIAs are kept abreast of developments related to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, relevant legislation, University policies and procedures, and current issues in research integrity.

Referral of the Complainant to Other University Officers or Processes

1. Research disputes are often multifactorial. It is important that other matters are identified early in the discussion between the RIA and the person who approaches them.
2. This may include referral of the complainant to the Human Resources Unit for matters including general misconduct, harassment or discrimination.

RIA Selection Criteria

1. Substantial research experience and evidence of good research practice.
2. An understanding of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and common issues that may be raised concerning research integrity.
3. Appointment at an Academic Level C-E.
4. Wisdom, analytical skills, empathy, excellent interpersonal communication, listening and collaborative skills.
5. Willingness and ability to spend time to hear and advise on concerns about responsible research conduct.
6. A sound knowledge of the University's policies and management structure.