

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH

1. VISION AND PURPOSE

Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is committed to conducting research according to the highest ethical standards as a core part of its mission. This Code of Conduct (the Code) aims to support the University's researchers to achieve the objectives of both exemplary ethical behaviour and world class research and scholarly practices. It applies across all fields of research, diverse knowledge systems and research epistemologies. This Code also promotes public trust in AUT through accountability and transparent standards. Research at AUT is informed by the concept of engagement and by our relationships with our regional, national and international stakeholders.

The Code incorporates the Treaty of Waitangi's principles of partnership, protection and participation. Research integrity and good conduct are crucial aspects of AUT's research culture, given the university values of tika (integrity), pono (respect) and aroha (compassion). The Code is aligned with "AUT's Directions to 2025", with commitments to discovery and the application of knowledge for wellbeing and prosperity by:

- Integrating teaching with research
- Contributing excellent research
- Applying our research
- Advancing by collaborating
- Enhancing student research

AUT expects its employees, students and academic visitors to adhere to this Code. It details AUT's position on research misconduct (whether intentional or unintentional), with reference to the relevant internal processes and sanctions.

This Code has been adopted from the Royal Society Te Apārangi's Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology and the Humanities 2019 (the Royal Society NZ Code). It expresses AUT's collective commitment to the highest ethical standards for research, scholarship and professional activities. Research integrity and good conduct are crucial elements of AUT's commitment to a sustainable, thriving research culture.

This Code sets out the minimal standard to be met. Any breach of the Code or any Research Misconduct may constitute "misconduct" or "serious misconduct" and may be dealt with under the procedures described under the Discipline Statute, the General Academic Statute, and the Employee Discipline Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of AUT's Code, the definition of **Research** incorporates definitions from New Zealand's Performance-Based Research Fund, and includes the following:

- Is original, independent investigation undertaken in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement; the term 'independent' does not exclude collaborative work.
- Typically involves enquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypothesis or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts in a given discipline;
- Includes work of direct relevance to specific needs of iwi, communities, government, industry and commerce;
- In some disciplines, may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances and or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights;
- May include contributions to the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (e.g. dictionaries and scholarly editions); the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved, materials, devices, products, communications or processes; and the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

- Provides access to findings that are open to scrutiny or formal evaluation by experts within the field. This may be achieved through various forms of dissemination including, but not limited to, publication, manufacture, construction, public presentation or presentation of confidential reports.
- Does not include activities that are part of routine standardised practice or do not embody original research. This would exclude: routine testing; data-collection¹; preparation for teaching (where it does not embody original research); the legal and administrative aspects of commercialisation activities; and professional activities that do not meet this definition.

For the purposes of this Code, “**Researcher**” means any member of the University, including anyone who is:

- Employed under an AUT employment agreement or as an independent contractor,
- Appointed to AUT Honorary and Adjunct Appointments,
- Holding an AUT title such as Emeritus Professor,
- Undertaking postgraduate research, and including undergraduate research where appropriate, or
- Undertaking, piloting or supporting research in association or affiliation with AUT, including short term academic visitors.

For the purposes of this Code “**Research misconduct**”² includes, but is not limited, to:

- Fabrication or falsification of data; including changing records or claiming results that have not been obtained;
- Misrepresentation, including presenting material which is deceptive in itself, or where its use or presentation is deceptive;
- Plagiarism, including the direct copying of textual material, the use of other people’s data without acknowledgement, and the deliberate use of published or unpublished ideas without adequate attribution;
- A breach of a duty of confidentiality;
- Failure to comply with any legislative or mandated requirements for research;
- Misleading ascription of authorship, including the listing of authors without their permission, attributing work to persons who have not contributed to the research, and failing to attribute those who have;
- Interference with the research of another, including taking, sequestering or materially damaging research materials;
- Failure to declare a conflict of interest;
- Failure to obtain required regulatory or ethical approvals of research involving human or animal participants;
- Other serious misdemeanours in specific disciplines, including breaches of specific codes of practice or codes of ethics
- Other research practices that may bring the University into disrepute.

Research Misconduct can be at two different levels: misconduct and serious misconduct. Research misconduct may be determined as ‘serious’ by the appropriate disciplinary process when it has the effect of destroying or undermining the relationship of trust and confidence between a Researcher and AUT.

¹ e.g. administrative data collected for the purposes of teaching and learning.

² The definition of “Research Misconduct” has been adapted from a definition provided in The University of Auckland’s Staff Research Misconduct Policy (June 2012 version).

3. Principles and Standards for Research Conduct

(Adopted from the Royal Society Code of Professional Standards)

AUT adheres to the following Values, Principles, Responsibilities and Standards in respect of research undertaken at the University. They reflect the Royal Society Te Apārangi’s Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science,

Technology, and the Humanities (2019) <https://royalsociety.org.nz/who-we-are/our-rules-and-codes/code-of-professional-standards-and-ethics/code-of-professional-standards-and-ethics-in-science-technology-and-the-humanities/>. Researchers who seek clarification of how the Values, Principles, Responsibilities and Standards translate into action in particular research contexts may refer to the Society's supplementary Interpretation <https://royalsociety.org.nz/who-we-are/our-rules-and-codes/code-of-professional-standards-and-ethics/interpretation-code-of-professional-standards-and-ethics-in-science-technology-and-the-humanities/>.

Values and Principles

Within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the ethical and professional values and principles relevant to those who conduct research or scholarly activities are interpreted within a general framework that recognises human and civil rights, the principles of free enquiry and an open society, and the obligations arising from the Treaty of Waitangi. These principles and values represent the ethical sources of both the responsibilities as well as the detailed, specific standards that follow. They share a common ground: respectful and rights-based knowledge discovery between researchers, participants and communities to advance science, technology and the humanities in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Code prioritises neither the established research ethics principles nor the Māori values, and encourages researchers to regard them as working together to guide action appropriate to their specific research context.

Tika ³	Mana	Whakapapa	Manaakitanga
Pūkenga	Kaitiakitanga	Justice	Duty of care
Beneficence	Non-maleficence	Respect	Integrity

Research and scholarly practices that are consistent with these values and principles will:

1. Be conducted with professionalism, integrity, care and diligence by appropriately knowledgeable people;
2. Be undertaken in a manner consistent with accepted standards and codes of practice;
3. Be respectful to other people, including acting with cultural intelligence⁴ and intellectual rigour (pūkenga) while respecting diverse values and communities (manaakitanga);
4. Recognise the potential impacts on communities, including their intergenerational interests;
5. Endeavour to identify and engage with affected communities (whakapapa), recognise their rights (mana) and respect their interests (tika);
6. Ensure that activities with partners and/or participants have potential benefits that outweigh the risks and that the risks and benefits are not distributed inequitably;
7. Take reasonable actions and precautions to protect vulnerable people and prevent harm to participants or others;
8. Make results and findings available as soon as it is appropriate to do so;
9. Support the public interest, including by averting or avoiding unacceptable levels of risk of adverse consequences;

³ Māori words have meanings that are highly context-dependent. In this context tika means acting with integrity and respecting the interests of relevant communities; mana means balancing one's own authority and the rights held by others; whakapapa acknowledges the importance of relationships with relevant communities; manaakitanga means acting with care and respecting diverse values and communities; pūkenga means acting with rigour; and kaitiakitanga means acting with responsibility and ensuring resources are managed appropriately. In this context, beneficence means acting to benefit other people, contributing to broad concepts of well-being, and balancing benefits against risks and costs; non-maleficence means not causing harm intentionally, and ensuring that the risks of harm are not outweighed by the expected benefits, justice requires that people are treated fairly and equitably, including fairly distributing the benefits and burdens of research to individuals and communities; respect for persons means respecting an individual's right to make choices and hold views, and to take actions based on their own values and beliefs; integrity refers to the trustworthiness of research due to the soundness of its methods and the honesty and accuracy of its presentation; duty of care describes the obligations that a reasonable person owes to others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

⁴ Cultural intelligence means the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures.

10. Manage collected data responsibly;
11. Exemplify, require and support respectful and professional conduct amongst colleagues, and across the research community (manaakitanga);
12. Take reasonable precautions to prevent significant avoidable or unjustified degradation of the environment (kaitiakitanga); and
13. Where appropriate, contribute to improving conservation, protection and sustainability (kaitiakitanga).

Responsibilities and Standards

Researchers have responsibilities to behave with professionalism, integrity, care and diligence; responsibilities to the public interest, affected and participating communities, partners and participants in their activities and colleagues; and responsibilities for guardianship of the environment and improving sustainability. Accordingly, researchers are obliged:

1. To behave with honesty, integrity, and professionalism when undertaking their activities;
2. To only claim competence commensurate with their expertise, knowledge and skills, and ensure their practices are consistent with relevant national, Māori¹ and international standards and codes of practice in their discipline or field;
3. To undertake their activities diligently and carefully;
4. To support the public interest by making the results and findings of their activities available as soon as it is appropriate to do so, by presenting those results and findings in an honest, straightforward and unbiased manner, and by being prepared to contribute their knowledge or skills to avert or lessen public crises² when it is appropriate to do so;
5. In undertaking their activities, to endeavour, where practicable, to partner with those communities and mana whenua for whom there are reasonably foreseeable direct impacts, and to meet any obligations arising from the Treaty of Waitangi;
6. To safeguard the health, safety, well-being, rights and interests of people involved in or affected during the conduct of their activities;
7. To ensure that the three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of their activities involving animals, minimise the impacts on animals used in those activities, and in so doing, support the welfare and wellbeing of those animals;
8. To develop, and implement so far as they are reasonably able³, a management plan to ensure the integrity, retention, secure storage, appropriate and transparent use of data and samples gathered or developed during their activities;
9. To demonstrate and encourage ethical behaviour and high professional standards amongst their colleagues;
10. To not harass⁴, bully or knowingly act with malice towards individuals or groups of people; and
11. To take reasonable steps to prevent their activities leading to significant avoidable or unjustified degradation of the environment, and where appropriate, to contribute to improved conservation, protection and sustainability.

¹ As set out, for example, in Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Maori Research Ethics.

² In this context, public crisis means a situation in which there is an unacceptable risk of significant harm to people, or of substantial and widespread damage to property or the environment.

³ This obligation expires when the Researcher is no longer able, in practical terms, to influence the ongoing management of the information, data, samples, materials or derived results gathered or developed during their activities, when AUT or another organisation assumes responsibility on their behalf, or when the data or samples are transferred to a recognised long term data or sample repository which assumes responsibility for their further management.

⁴ Harassment is conduct that unjustifiably disturbs or upsets another. It is characteristically repetitive and may be physically or psychologically harmful to the victim. It is exacerbated when the consequences of not accepting the behaviour may be disadvantageous to the victim. Forms of harassment include but are not limited to: verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination (related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital and family status, disability, physical appearance, body size, culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion or lack thereof, beliefs or socioeconomic status etc.); sexual images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of talks or other events; inappropriate physical contact; unwelcome sexual attention; and advocating for or encouraging any of the above behaviour.