



The Aurum Project Guide to Peer Review

A guide supporting the *Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

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The Aurum Project acknowledges and has adapted *Peer review: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

Source: *National Health and Medical Research Council*.

1. Introduction

This guide supports the *Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (the AP Code), which describes the principles and responsibilities that underpin the responsible conduct of Aurum Project (AP) research.

In particular, this guide is intended to assist researchers to adhere to relevant principles of the AP Code, including:

- Principle 3, 'Transparency in declaring interests ...', which includes the responsibility to disclose interests and manage conflicts of interest.

- Principle 4, 'Fairness in the treatment of others', which requires researchers and others involved in research to be treated fairly and with respect.

2. Peer review

The definition of Peer Review as defined in the AP Code: *Peer review is the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.* Peer review has important roles in research and research management, including:

- The review or assessment of research proposals, grant applications, material for publication and dissemination of research
- Peer review provides expert scrutiny of proposed research or research outputs and helps to ensure that accepted disciplinary standards are met. Peer review may also draw attention to departures from the principles in the AP Code, including by identifying plagiarism, duplicative publication, errors and misleading statements.

3. Responsibilities of The Aurum Project

3.1 Support peer review

The AP should recognise the importance of peer review processes to academic and scientific endeavour by encouraging and supporting the participation of its researchers.

3.2 Provide training for researchers

The AP must provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct and assists all researchers in relevant aspects of peer review processes.

4. Responsibilities of researchers

4.1 Participate in peer review

Participating in peer review processes is an important part of the research endeavour.

To ensure the quality and integrity of peer review processes, researchers should ensure that they have the appropriate expertise to participate in the peer review activity.

4.2 Conduct peer review responsibly

It is important that peer reviewers are fair, rigorous and timely in their review. They must also maintain any required confidentiality of the peer review process.

Researchers must engage in peer review appropriately and respectfully, and must not use the peer review process to disparage other researchers.

Peer reviewers should also be aware that funding agencies and publishers are likely to have their own peer review policies, guidelines and expectations to which they must adhere.

Peer reviewers must:

- inform themselves about the criteria to be applied in the peer review process
- review research objectively, impartially and in accordance with the review criteria
- apply standards equally to all research under review
- give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research
- maintain professionalism in the tone of their comments, ensuring that peer reviews are as constructive as possible, and
- disclose interests and manage conflicts of interest.

Peer reviewers must not:

- contact the author/s or other reviewers unless authorised to do so
- seek to unduly influence the review process
- delegate their responsibilities or ask others to assist with a review, unless authorised to do so
- take into account factors that are not relevant to the review criteria
- permit personal prejudice to influence the process (peer reviewers should be aware of how their own biases (conscious or unconscious) could affect the peer review process, including in relation to gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional employer and research discipline)
- take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, or use information from research projects under review, without permission
- conduct a review for which one lacks appropriate expertise, or intentionally delay the review process.

5. Breaches of the Code

The AP should manage and investigate concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the AP Code in accordance with the *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the AP Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Peer reviewers should familiarise themselves with the processes involved in reporting potential breaches of the AP Code, identified during the peer review process.

Examples of breaches of the AP Code that are related to peer review include, but are not limited to:

- failing to conduct peer review responsibly and fairly
- taking advantage of knowledge obtained through peer review processes
- disclosing the content or outcome of peer review processes
- failing to disclose relevant interests.

Development of The Aurum Project Guide to Peer Review to support the AP Code for the responsible conduct of research

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