



Collaborative research

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

The Aurum Project

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The Aurum Project acknowledges and has adapted *Collaborative Research: 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.

Terms and abbreviations used in this guide

AP - The Aurum Project

AP Code - The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Research Project Leader - Generally, an individual who has primary responsibility for the planning, design, approval and conduct of a research project from its conception through to its finalisation. For collaborative research involving researchers at more than one institution, one researcher from each participating institution may be designated a Research Project Leader.

1. Introduction

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

In particular, this guide is intended to assist AP and researchers to adhere to relevant principles of AP Code when they are engaged in collaborative research with other Australian and/or international researchers and research institutions.

AP Code and this guide apply to all research conducted under the auspices of AP.

2. Collaborative Research

Collaborative research between institutions can take various forms and include research partners in industry, the government and not-for-profit sectors, and researchers from multiple countries.

Collaborative research can pose a range of challenges, including the need to accommodate specific research methodologies and research practices that exist in different research institutions, variations in regulatory and legal systems, institutional funding arrangements and organisational structures, and differing research cultures. These challenges should not be seen as a barrier to collaborative research, but as elements to be managed through normal risk management processes.

While research practices may differ between countries, AP researchers should follow this guide even when conducting research outside Australia.

3. AP Responsibilities

This section provides guidance for AP to ensure responsible research practices throughout collaborative research projects.

3.1 Establish agreements for each collaboration

Collaborative research involves a continuum of activities ranging in scale from simple discussions through to significant long-term partnerships. Researchers should exercise their judgment as to when a collaboration reaches the stage at which agreement to conduct collaborative research should be documented, with recognition of the risks in delaying the development of a formal collaborative agreement.

AP should clarify for researchers when AP should be advised that a collaborative research project is being pursued and the process that researchers should use to provide this notification. When the threshold for notification is reached, it should be ensured that an agreement is reached with all project partners. Such agreements must be consistent with the principles of AP Code, including honesty, transparency, fairness, respect, and accountability.

Agreements should be in writing and may take various forms, including a legal contract, an exchange of letters, or a research management plan agreed by all parties or representatives of all parties. Regardless of the nature of the agreement, each institution remains responsible for ensuring compliance with AP Code, including an obligation to manage and investigate potential breaches of AP Code.

AP should ensure that its researchers are aware of their obligations, including laws, policies, and contractual arrangements.

A number of specific issues need to be addressed prior to the commencement of the project for collaborative research to be effective. This may include undertaking appropriate due diligence inquiries into potential international research partners, informed by foreign interference risks.

When developing collaborative research agreements the following should be considered:

- the expectations of each party in terms of definitions of roles and responsibilities, including the designation of the institution or individuals that will take the lead in reporting to funders, regulatory bodies and in the management of potential breaches of AP Code
- governance of the project, including management of significant changes, such as partners leaving or joining the collaboration
- the use, management, sharing, and ownership of research data, primary materials, and intellectual property (including copyright and pre-existing intellectual property belonging to individual parties that is shared in the course of the collaborative research)
- where practical, the ongoing ownership, stewardship or control of research data and primary materials in the event a researcher or institution leaves the collaboration during the project
- access to other assets or items that are retained at the end of the project
- the requirements for the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest
- the allocation of responsibilities in relation to ethics and governance approval and safety clearances
- the management of confidentiality issues
- the protocols for authorship and acknowledgement of research outputs, including data outputs
- funding arrangements (with funding sources declared transparently)
- any plans to commercialise research outputs and any entitlements to commercial returns
- the designation of which party or parties are entitled to communicate on behalf of the collaboration
- dispute resolution procedures to facilitate the just, efficient, timely and cost effective resolution of any issues in dispute
- the procedures for managing and investigating potential breaches of AP Code, including provisions for the disclosure, where necessary, of researchers' personal information to other collaborative institutions and, where relevant, funders, to facilitate the management and investigation of potential breaches of AP Code.

Agreements should be reviewed periodically to ensure that provisions remain current.

3.2 Comply with applicable laws, policies and regulations

AP should ensure that collaborative research projects comply with all applicable laws, policies and regulations and any identified inconsistencies should be addressed.

4. Responsibilities of researchers

This section provides guidance for researchers to support their efforts in observing responsible research practices throughout the various phases of collaborative research projects.

4.1 Develop and monitor collaborative research agreements

Research project leaders should be engaged in the process of developing and monitoring agreements for their collaborative research projects. Other members of the project team and research administrators should be involved as appropriate.

Research project leaders should ensure that all members of the project team are made aware of the terms of the agreement.

4.2 Comply with multi-institutional agreements and relevant institutional policies

All researchers involved in collaborative research must be aware of, understand, and comply with all policies and written agreements affecting the project, particularly those relating to intellectual property, the publication and dissemination of research and the management of research data and primary materials.

4.3 Conduct research responsibly and report potential breaches of the agreement

All researchers involved in collaborative research projects must observe responsible research practices and report any potential breaches of the agreement in accordance with the procedures that are established or referred to in the project agreement.

5. Breaches of the Code

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

When developing a collaborative research agreement, consideration should be given at the outset to how potential breaches of AP Code will be investigated. AP should consider how preliminary assessments and investigations into potential breaches of AP Code are to be conducted for multi-institutional collaborations on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration issues such as the lead institution, where the complaint was lodged, contractual arrangements, any applicable agreements and where the events occurred. If there is a potential

breach of AP Code, AP should cooperate to ensure that only one investigation is conducted, which may include sharing relevant information. There should be clear communication between all parties throughout the investigation.

Development of The Aurum Project Guide to Collaborative Research to support the AP Code for the responsible conduct of research

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