



Role of The Aurum Project Research Integrity Officer

The Aurum Project

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The Aurum Project is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to natural medicine research and is the peak body for homeopathy research in Australia. ABN 45162173707 Registered with the ACNC.

Terms and abbreviations

The Aurum Project (AP)

The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (AP Code)

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

Research Integrity Officer (RIO)

The person with knowledge of AP Code and processes, nominated by The Aurum Project to promote the responsible conduct of research and provide advice to those with concerns or complaints about potential breaches of AP Code.

AP conducts its research activity using Teal Organisation principles and an AP structure called Research Pods (Pods). Please refer to the [The Aurum Project Teal Organisational Theory Statement](#) for more details of Teal organisations and how this applies to AP.

Background to the role of the RIO

Australian and international members of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) community have a core objective that research must be conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity.

The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* published by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has established a framework for responsible research conduct.

The Aurum Project (AP) acknowledges the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and has adapted it for the conduct of research into CAM: *The Aurum Project Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (AP Code).

The primary responsibility for ensuring the integrity of research lies with individual researchers and AP. AP Code sets out principles and responsibilities that both researchers and AP are expected to follow when conducting research.

AP Code provides the Australian CAM community, and those responsible for funding research, with confidence in the integrity of research. The AP Code does not incorporate the laws, regulations and guidelines and other codes of practice that apply to the conduct of research. Those responsible for the conduct of research are expected to be aware of and comply with the laws, regulations and guidelines and other codes of practice that apply to the conduct of research.

A breach of AP Code occurs when there is a failure to meet principles and responsibilities on a spectrum from minor breaches to those that are more serious. A serious breach of AP Code implies one that is carried out with intent, recklessness or negligence and may be referred to as research misconduct.

The *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the AP Code* outlines the methods used to investigate and manage potential breaches and determine any corrective actions to ensure the integrity of the research record.

Compliance with AP Code is a mandatory requirement for inclusion in an AP Research Team; any AP auspiced research activity whether individual or collaborative; or receipt of AP research funding.

The *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the AP Code* provides examples of the range of behaviours that can constitute a breach of AP Code. The

seriousness of a breach is to be determined on a case-by-case basis and requires good judgement, careful deliberation and an appreciation of the context and accepted academic disciplinary norms.

Roles of those involved in the management and investigation of potential breaches of AP Code

Key roles recommended for the investigation and management of potential breaches of AP Code will be adapted and delegated according to the particular circumstances at the time.

Key roles will be drawn, as appropriate, from those filling the positions of Director, Management Committee, Advisory Group, Research Integrity Officer and the Research Coordinator. Some or all members may be external to AP.

The Aurum Project RIO skills and experience

The AP RIO must have the following set of skills and experience:

- Have a degree with subsequent relevant experience in homeopathy, research management, particularly human research ethics and research integrity; or equivalent.
- Analytical skills, empathy, excellent communication skills, and familiarity with accepted practices in research.
- Be fully cognisant with *Aurum Project Research Policies* especially the *Guide to Managing & Investigating Potential Breaches of AP Code* available at <https://aurumproject.org.au/research-policies/>.
- Actively promote and ensure that research undertaken by or through AP demonstrates adherence to AP research policies and guidelines.

The Role of the Research Integrity Officer (RIO)

AP has a RIO to promote the responsible conduct of research and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of AP Code. The role of the RIO includes informing an individual with concerns about research conduct about the relevant AP processes and available options, including how to make a complaint.

Outcomes of the discussion between the RIO and the complainant may include:

- Not proceeding if the complaint is clearly not related to a breach of AP Code
- Proceeding under other institutional processes
- Making a complaint about a potential breach of AP Code in writing to the Director.

The RIO's role does not extend to:

- Investigation or assessment of the complaint, including contacting the person who is the subject of that complaint or being involved in any subsequent investigation other than as witness or to provide testimony
- Advising on matters where they have a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest.

The Role of the AP RIO is to:

- Foster a positive and ethical research culture
- Participate in the promotion of awareness about AP Research Policies
- Assess the need for training of AP members and research team members
- Contribute to the development and delivery of training in research integrity
- Contribute to updates and reviews of AP policies involving research integrity and possible breaches of the code of conduct
- Serve as the first point of contact for research integrity complaints
- Conduct initial assessments of research integrity complaints and make recommendations on appropriate action to the Director or Management Committee
- Complete documentation and records of meetings at every stage of a complaint from initial receipt of a complaint
- Provide advice to stakeholders on matters relating to research ethics and integrity
- Keep abreast of changes to external requirements, such as state and commonwealth legislation
- Ensure that external and internal reporting requirements are met in a timely and accurate manner.

Development of the Role of the AP RIO

(Review frequency - 3 yearly)

Policy Identifier / Version	Developed by the AP Director	Date Review	Date reviewed and accepted by the AP Board	Date inserted into AP Policy and Procedure manual
RoleAPRIO.V1	Linlee Jordan 6/4/2021		9/4/2021	10/4/2021
RoleAPRIO.V2		Celeste Salter 29/04/2024	Accepted by Nyema Hermiston, President, for the board 15/7/2024	Date included on AP website 27/7/2024