

# 'Indigenous Research Review Panel' - Membership and Terms of Reference

## Section 1 - Establishment

### Background

(1) The Indigenous Research Review Panel (the panel) is established to ensure appropriate review and approval for all Indigenous Research (excluding Indigenous health research) conducted under the auspices of Charles Sturt University in accordance with the requirements set out in the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research 2020 \(AIATSIS Code\)](#).

(2) The panel reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) and, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), to the Audit and Risk Committee of the University Council.

### Purpose

(3) With the exception of health research, the panel provides an assurance function for the University in relation to Indigenous research by overseeing institutional compliance with the [AIATSIS Code](#).

(4) The panel reviews all Indigenous research against the scope and principles outlined in the [AIATSIS Code](#).

(5) Where the research does not include human research, the panel issues an approval for the conduct of the research and maintains governance oversight of the project.

(6) Where the research includes human research, the panel endorses the proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee for further consideration against the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research.

(7) A review by the panel is considered sufficient to demonstrate appropriate Indigenous research methodologies will be used in the study.

### Out of Scope

The panel does not review Indigenous health research. Health research is reviewed by the relevant jurisdictional HREC (i.e. Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council for NSW) with expertise in the application of the AIATSIS Code and accompanying NHMRC guidelines and therefore does not require review by this panel.

## Section 2 - Membership

### Panel membership

(8) The University seeks to ensure representation on the panel from Indigenous and indigenist representatives of the breadth of Indigenous-related research across the University. Members are appointed for their cultural understanding, knowledge of cultural safety, connection to community and/or Indigenous research experience.

(9) The panel has up to six members, made up of:

- a. One to two First Nations representative staff members appointed to the Human Research Ethics Committee
- b. Up to one First Nations representative external member of the Human Research Ethics Committee
- c. At least two Indigenous or indigenist staff members: research experience is highly desirable, but not mandatory.

(10) As far as possible there should be at least one representative of each school or area that undertakes Indigenous-related research.

(11) As far as possible the panel should have gender balance.

## **Term of office**

(12) The term of appointment for members of the panel shall be three years.

(13) Members of the panel are encouraged to provide three months notice of their intention to resign.

(14) Appointment to the panel may be terminated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) following advice from the chair, or in the case of the chair, on the advice of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance).

(15) Members may be appointed to consecutive terms.

## **Appointment of members**

(16) Appointments to the panel will be managed by the Research Integrity Unit.

(17) All panel members are appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), ideally with endorsement from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Strategy).

- a. Initial appointment shall be via a merit-based recruitment process.
- b. Reappointment shall be on the recommendation of the chair, or in the case of the chair, on the recommendation of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance).

(18) For members of staff seeking appointment to the panel, the recruitment process shall include confirmation of the support of the member's line management to take up, or continue, the member's participation on the panel.

(19) All members of the panel are appointed as individuals for their knowledge, qualities and experience, and not as representatives of any organisation, group or opinion.

## **Induction program**

(20) All members of the panel are provided with a formal notice of appointment and may not review any applications until they have completed an induction program.

(21) The initial induction program includes:

- a. for University members of staff, completion within the last three years of the University's eLearning modules for research integrity, human research ethics and, where applicable, animal ethics.
- b. an induction session with the chair and, in the case of a new chair not previously a panel member, an induction session with a Human Research Ethics Committee First Nations representative
- c. provision of, and an opportunity for, familiarisation with:

- i. the [AIATSIS Code](#)
- ii. these terms of reference.

(22) It is expected that over time these induction requirements will expand to include some formal form of cultural competency training and/or completion of formal training relating to the [AIATSIS Code](#).

## **Panel chair**

(23) The chair is selected from the panel and is appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), ideally with endorsement from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Strategy).

(24) To manage cultural and review workload, selection of a chair who is not a member of the HREC is encouraged.

(25) A person holding adjunct status with the University is not eligible for consideration as panel chair or deputy chair.

(26) A person holding adjunct status may be appointed as a staff member with an appropriate position.

(27) The chair shall be appointed for a term of three years. An appointment from the panel shall extend that member's term by the full three year period.

(28) The chair shall have a mature understanding of the requirements of the [AIATSIS Code](#) and the conduct of Indigenous-related research.

(29) A deputy chair will be drawn from the panel to act in the role of chair in the absence of the chair.

(30) An alternate deputy chair may also be drawn from the panel to act in the role of chair or deputy chair.

## **Panel executive**

(31) Not applicable

## **Rights of audience and debate**

(32) The following position holders have right of audience and debate at meetings of the panel:

- a. Panel support staff, particularly in relation to providing advice on procedural matters and corporate knowledge.
- b. Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance)
- c. Research Integrity Manager
- d. Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Strategy)
- e. Any other member of staff with the approval of the chair.

(33) Persons with rights of audience and debate have no decision-making authority in relation to the business of the panel.

(34) Persons with rights of audience and debate are not required to be inducted to the panel but are bound by the conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions that apply to all members.

## **Section 3 - Functions and responsibilities**

(35) The Indigenous Research Review Panel shall, either directly or by delegation:

- a. Consider Indigenous research proposals submitted to the panel, by any University student or staff member, and determine whether the proposed projects are acceptable

- b. review each proposal according to the principles articulated in the [AIATSIS Code](#):
  - i. Indigenous self-determination: including recognition and respect, engagement and collaboration, informed consent, and cultural capability and learning
  - ii. Indigenous leadership: including Indigenous led research, Indigenous perspectives and participation, and Indigenous knowledge and data
  - iii. impact and value: including benefit and reciprocity, impact and risk
  - iv. sustainability and accountability: including Indigenous lands and waters, ongoing Indigenous governance, and reporting and compliance.
- c. base its comments and requests for clarification or further information on the requirements of the AIATSIS Code
- d. where a proposal does not include human research, review and approve the research according to the scope of the AIATSIS Code
- e. where a proposal includes human research, refer the proposal for further consideration and approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee under the requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025](#)
- f. receive and consider annual reports, variations, extensions and end of project reports for non-human Indigenous research so that the panel may be satisfied that the conduct of research continues to conform with the approved proposal
- g. receive and refer to the Research Integrity Unit complaints and issues of non-compliance raised by any person in relation to research that has been considered and approved by the panel
- h. submit a quarterly compliance report to the Audit and Risk Committee, via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)
  - i. review and note decisions made by the chair (or their nominee) between meetings
  - j. at the discretion of the chair, provide education, information and assistance to University academics, researchers, students and other stakeholders.

## **Executive responsibilities**

(36) Not applicable

## **Member responsibilities**

(37) Members shall:

- a. thoroughly prepare for meetings by reading applications, reports and documentation provided in meeting agendas
- b. attend scheduled meetings to deliberate on the acceptability of agenda items for approval
- c. actively engage in informed and thorough discussion of matters before the panel
- d. in a timely manner complete actions assigned to them arising from matters before the panel
- e. complete training appropriate to the member's position.

## **Chair responsibilities**

(38) The chair shall impartially guide the operation of the panel, resolve conflicts of interest related to the business of the panel and represent the panel in any negotiations with the management of the university.

(39) Responsibilities of the chair include, but are not limited to:

- a. ensuring the panel operates in accordance with the relevant policies of the University and the agreed panel operational procedures

- b. adequate expertise applied to every application considered by the panel
- c. timely, accurate and consistent feedback provided to all applicants
- d. overseeing all requirements of panel reporting and reviewing
- e. advising the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) regarding the level of resourcing required by the panel
- f. meeting with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) or other senior management representatives as required to report on the operations of the committee and raise any issues.

(40) Nothing in these statements of responsibilities should exclude a person from referring a matter to the panel for full consideration.

## **Non-attendance**

(41) Members must attend 75% of scheduled meetings on an annual basis, subject to mitigating circumstances. Where members cannot attend meetings, apologies must be made in advance to the Research Integrity Unit.

(42) Members who have continued absences from scheduled meetings may be approached by the chair, or nominee, to discuss continuation of membership. If the member opts to remain on the panel but continues to be absent from the meetings, they may be asked to end their term.

(43) Members who are unable to attend meetings are required to submit their comments on applications prior to the meeting, for consideration during the meeting. While not ideal, and if appropriate to the application being considered, comments from absent members may be obtained after the meeting.

## **Panel support**

(44) The Research Integrity Unit will provide administrative and secretariat support so that the panel can discharge its obligations. The Research Integrity Unit can also be called upon for protocol and procedural advice.

(45) It is the responsibility of the Research Integrity Manager to allocate tasks to the team members of the Research Integrity Unit. This activity will be undertaken in consultation with the chair.

(46) Research Integrity Unit team members will support the panel in the conduct of its business, including the following responsibilities:

- a. being the first point of contact for applicants wishing to make application or liaise with the panel
- b. providing advice to all stakeholders on governance and administrative matters, including confidentiality and conflicts of interest
- c. ensuring that proposals are provided to the panel for consideration
- d. ensuring that the decisions are conveyed in a timely manner
- e. ensuring that records are maintained and made available for review by the University and authorised external reviewers
- f. ensuring that the University submits the appropriate license or accreditation applications, renewals and reports as required
- g. where requested, assist with arranging audits and inspections
- h. retaining research applications in the form in which they are approved and maintain a record of all proposed projects, so that the following items of information are readily available:
  - i. application identification code or project protocol number
  - ii. project title
  - iii. name and contact details of primary contact, co-investigator(s) and supervisor(s) (if applicable)

- iv. project approval or non-approval, with date
- v. date(s) designated for reporting.

## Section 4 - Meetings

### Quorum

(47) A quorum consists of:

- a. the chair and
- b. at least two other members of the panel with a strong preference that one of those members of also a member of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

(48) Only a quorum can make decisions relevant to the responsibilities and functions of the panel.

### Meetings

(49) The panel will meet monthly from February to December where there is a least one Indigenous research application submitted for review.

(50) A schedule of panel meeting dates will be determined and the agenda close dates will be published as required.

(51) In exceptional circumstances, the schedule of panel meetings may be altered by the chair, in consultation with the relevant staff in the Research Integrity Unit.

(52) Extraordinary meetings of the panel may be convened during peak workload or to review urgent business.

(53) Meetings by flying minute are permissible at the discretion of the chair. Meetings by flying minute would normally be reserved for urgent but uncomplicated decision-making where it is not anticipated that extensive panel discussion and debate will be required. In these cases, proposals and other items of business will be circulated to the panel members who shall consider them asynchronously and, in writing, provide comments on applications or other matters of business.

(54) Only a representative quorum is required to hold an extraordinary meeting or meeting by flying minute.

### Agendas and minutes

(55) Agendas are circulated to the members one week before the meeting.

(56) Minutes of meetings are confirmed in draft by the meeting chair within one week of the meeting.

(57) Outcomes of meeting decisions are advised within one week of the meeting.

(58) Minutes of the meeting are circulated to members at the next panel meeting.

### Related expenses

(59) External members may claim a meeting allowance in accordance with the [Research Integrity Committee - Meeting allowances Schedule](#).

### Conflicts of interest

(60) Where a member has a perceived or actual conflict of interest as described in the University's [Conflict of Interest](#)

[Procedure](#), they must declare this to the chair at the meeting before discussion of the item of business.

(61) The meeting chair will determine if members with a conflict of interest may remain present for the discussion of the item but not take part in a decision, or if the member must withdraw from the meeting for the discussion of matters that relate to that conflict of interest. Once such members have withdrawn, the remaining members must still constitute a quorum.

## **Confidentiality**

(62) Confidential matters relating to the panel include, but are not limited to:

- a. the content and nature of applications before the panel
- b. the deliberations of members during consideration of meeting business
- c. the private information of persons internal and external to the University contained within meeting papers
- d. arrangements involving third parties
- e. information relating to complaints, misconduct or investigations.

(63) Agenda items considered during a meeting and records of specific meeting discussions may be shared by the chair, or by the Research Integrity Manager, with authorised officers of the University who can demonstrate a need to access the relevant information for the performance of their duties.

## **Variations**

(64) Variations to the terms of reference and/or membership of the panel must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research).

# **Section 5 - Glossary**

(65) For the purposes of this document:

- a. Health research means any research regarding the health and well being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities and may include research where:
  - i. the experience of Indigenous people is the explicit focus of all or part of the research
  - ii. data collection targets Indigenous peoples
  - iii. Indigenous peoples are examined in the results
  - iv. the information impacts one or more Indigenous communities
  - v. Indigenous health funds are a source of funding
  - Health research is managed on a jurisdictional basis and the appropriate HREC should be sought. For New South Wales, any Indigenous health research requires approval by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council HREC.
- b. Human Research - means all research involving human participants, their data and/or their tissue.
- c. Indigenist - means a person who supports and promotes Indigenous knowledges and perspectives as legitimate solutions and paradigms in their research and/or general practice.
- d. Indigenous research - means research that impacts on, or is of particular significance to, Indigenous peoples including the planning, collection, analysis and dissemination of information or knowledge that may affect Indigenous peoples or communities. Indigenous research captures investigations outside of human participation where Indigenous knowledges are sought and/or where Indigenous lands and waters are concerned.



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	6th February 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	6th February 2031
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)
<b>Approval Date</b>	6th February 2026
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Unit Head</b>	Elizabeth Harangozo Research Integrity Manager 02 6051 9356
<b>Author</b>	Kirra Larkin Research Integrity Manager
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Research Integrity Unit 02 6933 4322