

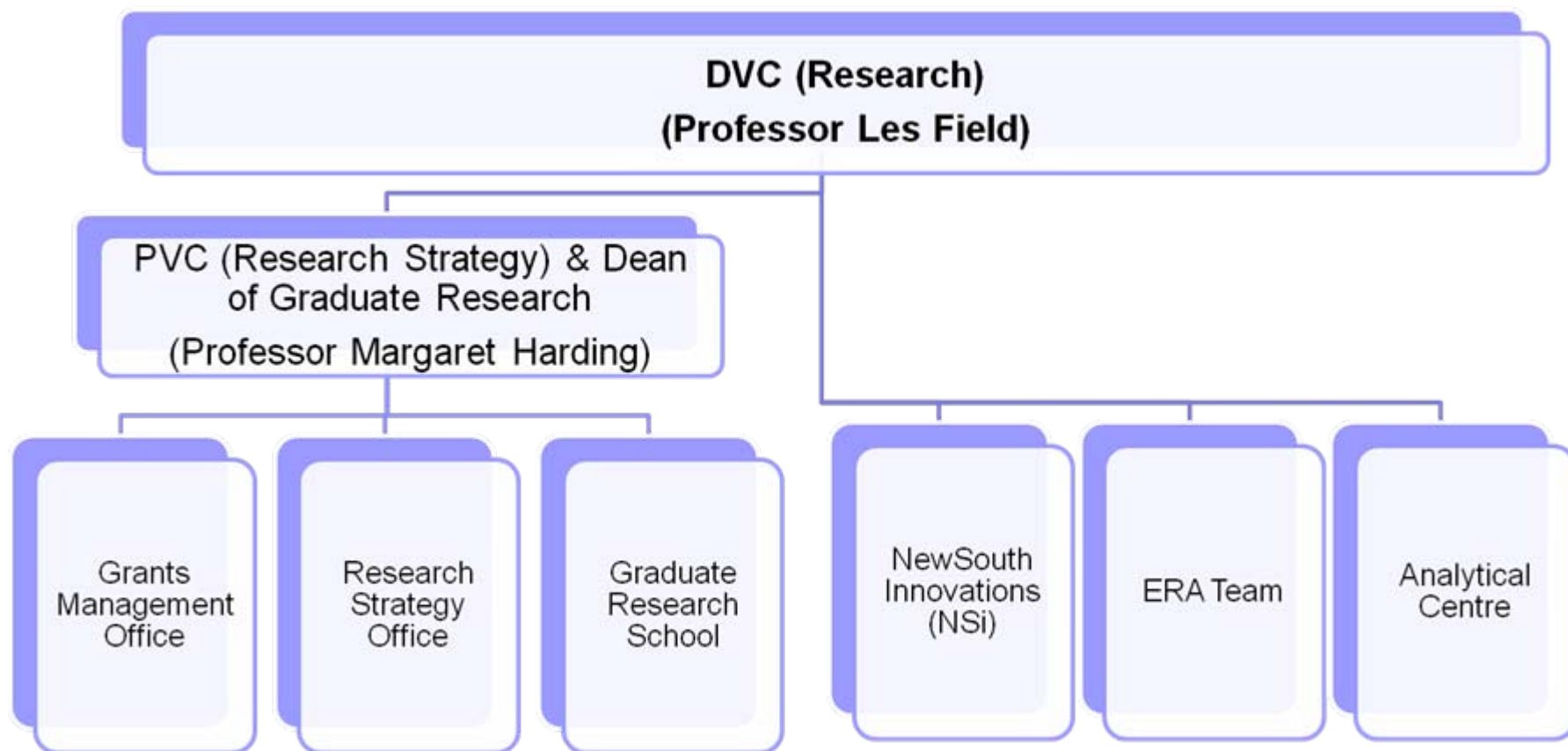
The Responsible Practice of Research

Professor Les Field

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)



Division of Research





UNSW Policies

■ Some of the Relevant UNSW Policies

- Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research
 - Sets out code of conduct for all UNSW researchers and guidelines for how to deal with research misconduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Declaration and management of real, perceived and potential Conflicts of Interest
- Privacy Management Plan
 - Covers the collection, use, and retention of personal information
- Intellectual Property Policy
 - Covers ownership of IP by staff & students, exploitation of IP, moral rights, resolution of disagreements over IP ownership



UNSW Policies

■ Some of the Relevant UNSW Policies

- Policy on Higher Degree Research Supervision
 - Best practice for the roles of supervisor, co-supervisor, candidate and the School Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator
- Grievance Procedures for Postgraduate Research Students
 - Raising and resolving grievances in a fair and equitable manner for staff and research students
- Occupational Health & Safety
 - Sets out the practices and processes for a safe and healthy research environment
- Animal & Human Ethics
 - Code of conduct for research involving animals or humans



National Policies

■ Relevant National Policies

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
 - Newly revised Code (*just released*)
 - Covers maintenance of high ethical standards, and validity and accuracy in the collection and reporting of data, and procedures for handling allegations of research misconduct
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans
 - Covers the protection of the welfare and the rights of human participants in research
- Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes
 - Encompasses all aspects of the care and use of, or interaction with, animals for scientific purposes



Researcher Expectations

■ UNSW Researchers are expected to

- Be committed to high standards of professional conduct and intellectual honesty
- Conduct research in accord with the standards set down by external funding bodies
- Ensure that their work strengthens and safeguards the reputation of UNSW
- Only undertake research which conforms to accepted ethical standards
- Ensure the safety of all those associated with the research (managing risks, emergency procedures etc)



Responsible Research Practice

■ Responsible research practice encompasses

- Ensuring the appropriate OH&S environment
 - If you are unsure what OH&S requirements are relevant to your area, you should speak with your supervisor
- Managing (real and perceived) Conflicts of Interest
- Responsible authorship and publication practices
- Storing, managing, sharing and retaining original data
- Human subject and animal welfare
 - Ethical research involving humans and animals
- Compliance with relevant national and state legislation
- Maintaining confidentiality where necessary
- Responsible peer review
- Responsibly managing collaborative research



Conflicts of Interest

- **UNSW researchers have an obligation to avoid real or perceived Conflicts of Interest (CoI)**
 - Any CoI that has the potential to influence research, research outcomes or the publication of research
 - **Actual** – involves direct conflict between university research and private interests
 - **Perceived** – where it appears that private interests could influence the university research
 - **Potential** – where private interests could conflict with university duties or activities
- **Test for Conflict of Interest**
 - *If* there is the possibility that an individual could be influenced (or appear to be influenced) by a private interest in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.....*then we have a Conflict of Interest*



Conflicts of Interest

■ Managing Conflicts of Interest

1. *Disclose*

- Disclosure is made on a confidential basis
- Supervisor, Head of School, Postgraduate Coordinator

2. *Report*

- Report on Confidential Disclosure Statement
- Report to Disclosure Review Committee

3. *Manage*

- Put in place processes to manage the Col



Data Storage and Retention

■ Original Data must be kept

- For sufficient time to allow reference
 - As long as interest and discussion persists
- At least 5 years from the date of publication
 - could be as long as 25 years for some data
 - Forever!!!! for a limited number of some kinds of data

■ Where possible data must be kept in the School or Unit in which they are generated

- HoS has responsibility for storing data
- Varies from discipline to discipline
- If the original data is retained by an individual, the HoS must be formally advised of the location and security of the original data
 - Provides a lesser protection to the researcher



Data Storage and Retention

■ Accessibility and Confidentiality

- Data must be in a durable and appropriately referenced form
 - Available for discussion
- Where there are confidentiality provisions
 - Data must be stored in a fashion that doesn't compromise confidentiality
- Check with your supervisor the data storage and retention requirements for your research



Authorship and Publication

■ Authorship

- Criteria and conventions vary from discipline to discipline

■ Minimum requirements

- Substantial contribution to conception and design, data acquisition and interpretation; *AND*
- Drafting/Reviewing the article and intellectual content; *AND*
- Final approval of the version to be published
 - The new Code will change the minimum requirements once implemented at UNSW

■ All authors take public responsibility for appropriate parts of the work

- No person who fulfils the above criteria should be excluded as an author without their permission



Authorship and Publication

- **Order of authors, identified senior/corresponding author, executive author**
 - Conventions vary from discipline to discipline
 - Agree at an early stage in the research project
 - Be able to provide a reason for the order of authors
- **Documentation**
 - *Statement of authorship form* on the Grants Management Office Website (under “Forms”)
 - *Signed by all authors*
 - *On file within the School* or Centre when the publication is lodged



Authorship and Publication

- **Cannot publish the same material more than once!**
 - Except with full cross referencing to the original work (eg. a review) and full disclosure to the publisher
- **Disclosure of unpublished work**
 - In general avoid media release before publication or discussion with a research audience of experts
 - “Unpublished” status must be fully acknowledged
- **Misleading information**
 - Deliberate publication of misleading or inaccurate information is ***SERIOUS RESEARCH MISCONDUCT***



Research Misconduct

■ Misappropriation

- *Plagiarism* - the presentation of words or ideas of another person without appropriate attribution
- Making inappropriate use of any confidential information
- Omitting reference to the relevant published work of others

■ Interference

- Intentionally taking or damaging any research-related property of another
 - eg. reagents, biological materials, writings, data, hardware, software, or any other substance or device used or produced in the conduct of research



Research Misconduct

■ Misrepresentation

- Intentionally deceive, or recklessly disregard the truth
- Intentionally lying or (omitting/disguising the truth) so that what is stated is incorrect
 - Misleading ascription of authorship
 - Inappropriate inclusion or omission of authors
 - Attributing work to others who have not in fact contributed to the research
 - Lack of appropriate acknowledgment of work

- **NOTE: misrepresentation does not include genuine errors or differences in interpretation or judgments of data**



Other Types of Research Misconduct

- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Plagiarism
- Other practices that are not commonly accepted within the scientific/academic community



Dealing with Research Misconduct

- **When research misconduct is suspected or alleged**
 - Talk to your supervisor and/or Postgraduate Coordinator
 - If you cannot discuss the matter with your supervisor, and/or need further advice on whether to proceed with an allegation contact
 - The Associate Dean (Research) in your Faculty, or
 - The Dean in your Faculty, or
 - The Dean of Graduate Research
 - Make sure that the “allegation” is not based on frustration as a result of poor communication, misunderstanding, or harassment
 - Separate university grievance procedures apply in these instances
- **Important**
 - Allegation(s) of research misconduct can irreparably damage the reputation of the academic within their discipline, even when proved to be baseless
 - UNSW will take action expeditiously and confidentially to identify whether or not a case of research misconduct may exist



Dealing with Research Misconduct

■ Making an allegation

- An allegation of research misconduct is treated ***very seriously*** by UNSW
- All formal allegations should be made in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
 - After first seeking advice to ensure that there is substance to the allegation
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will conduct an initial investigation to determine whether a *prima facie* case exists and warrants further investigation



Dealing with Research Misconduct

■ Where *prima facie* case exists

- The complainant, Head of School/Dean and the person against whom the allegation has been made will be notified
- Action as appropriate
 - From advice, counselling and remedial training
 - To termination of candidature or employment depending on the seriousness of the case

■ Protection of interested parties

- All parties are protected during the process
 - Ensures confidentiality, natural justice
 - Protects the person making the allegation in good faith
 - Protects the person against whom the allegation is made, where no substance is found



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Case Study – positive (Potential Col)

- Student enrolled in PhD project in a School
- Uncle is a member of Staff in that School
- Staff member and student declare the potential conflict of interest to the HoS
- Staff member takes no part in any formal assessment or review of the student
 - Declares this Col in any instance where there could be a perceived conflict
- Col managed - Everybody happy 😊



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Case Study – negative (perceived Col)

- Student formally requests re-consideration of an assessable piece of work
 - Formal and robust system in place for re-assessing the work
- Student discusses this situation with a relative who is a senior member of staff in another School
 - Relative talks to a member of the re-assessment panel
- Perception of “undue influence” in the re-assessment
- School in disrepute, HoS disciplined, student disciplined
- Bad publicity in the public press
 - Reputation of the University and the School damaged
- Student unhappy 😞, Everybody else unhappy 😞



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Hypothetical Case Study – positive

- Student involved in a multi-part project team
- Good communication within team
 - Team members understand their roles before projects commence
- Student writes up a paper on one part of the project with only some team members as authors
 - Authorship issues discussed at onset
 - All expectations met

- Student happy 😊 , Everybody else happy 😊



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Case Study – negative

- Student works on project and submits PhD
- One examiner notes that slabs of text are taken directly from somebody else's published work
- Examiner identifies this as plagiarism and recommends “fail or resubmission of the thesis”
 - Student counselled on correct attribution and acknowledgement of the work of others
 - Complete revision and resubmission of the thesis for examination
- Thesis passed 2nd time through
 - Delay of more than 12 months from initial submission
- Student unhappy 😞 initially, happy eventually 😊



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Case Study – negative

- Student involved in “ecological” project – small furry animals
- Appropriate ethics clearances – to trap and study furry animals
- Clearly identifies student and supervisor to conduct the study – defined area, defined scope and scale
- “Local” interest group – student’s activities under close scrutiny
- Mistreatment of animals alleged
- University alerted, authorities notified - escalating media attention
- Supervisor disciplined (not supervising appropriately, breaching the approved ethics protocols)
 - Student/Supervisor banned from doing work with animals again
 - Student disciplined – unable to continue this line of research
 - Potential prosecution
 - Damage to reputation of individuals, University and the relationship with the community
- Nobody happy 😞



HYPOTHETICALS

■ Case Study – positive

- Student and supervisor publish important research paper – “hot, cutting edge” controversial area
- 3 years after student has completed, data in the paper is questioned by an overseas researcher
- Student’s original notes and data are on file and stored in the School
 - Copy of original data faxed to overseas researcher
 - Accuracy of data verified in the public domain
- Reputation of student, supervisor and University intact (and enhanced) in the face of critical review
- Everybody happy 😊



The Responsible Practice of Research

- **UNSW is a Go8 research-intensive university**
 - Our reputation is built on the responsible practice of research
 - Research students play a vital part in our research effort
 - We treat the responsible practice of research very seriously
 - We treat all allegations of research misconduct seriously

- **If you have any questions regarding the responsible practice of research talk to**
 - Your supervisor
 - Postgraduate Coordinator
 - Associate Dean (Research)
 - Dean of the Faculty
 - Dean of Graduate Research
 - The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)