CODE:	CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN RESEARCH (vers.2020: Second Iteration)

FIRST DRAFT:	ET 2020
SECOND DRAFT:	ET 2020

ADOPTED:	UR

AMENDMENTS:	

FOR REVIEW:	EVERY THREE YEARS OR AS REQUIRED

1.0	**CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE STATEMENT**
1.1	In accordance with its Mission Statement and its Strategic Plan 2023 - *A Flourishing Learning Community* - Mary Immaculate College (MIC) supports a research community of scholars of theory and practice in a range of disciplines in contemporary higher education. Research is premised on critical and inquiring approaches to the acquisition and publication of new knowledge and frames of understanding across many research fields and professional and public constituencies. Research is a central part of the professional identity of the academic staff. As an institute of higher education, MIC is a community of learning, where the best teaching is underpinned by research and critical inquiry. Staff research activity reinforces a culture of investigation, examination, and reflection on every aspect of their disciplines, which makes teaching and learning a vital, responsive process. The College values teaching *of* research and teaching *for* research, recognizing the critical interdependence between the teaching and research functions of the institution. MIC strongly encourages all academic staff members to be research active and to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in their field. This Code of Good Practice in Research aligns with the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) as well as the [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#). It incorporates the February 2020 letter from the HEA introducing the *HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions* (Appendix 1 and 2). It applies to research in all scholarly fields and is a charter for research within MIC that is wholly committed to the advancement of high-quality academic research while ensuring that all research activities undertaken at / by MIC, or on MIC premises, that involve human participants or personal data are undertaken in a way that safeguards the dignity, rights, health, safety, and privacy of those involved. This commitment extends to all researchers (staff and students), participants, and third parties.

2.0	**SCOPE & APPLICATION**
2.1	This Code addresses the issues involved in the proper conduct of research, and provides guidance on the standards expected of MIC researchers. Its purpose is to underwrite standards of good practice for all researchers in MIC. This embraces research involving human participants, and most especially includes research involving children and vulnerable persons.
2.2	In keeping with the EU Code, this Code of Good Practice in Research adopts four basic principles that researchers must observe in their own research, and in dealing with research partners. These are: ***Reliability and quality*** of research (reflected in design, methodology, analysis and use of resources). ***Honesty*** to develop, undertake, review, report and communicate research transparently without bias. ***Respect*** for colleagues, research participants, society, culture, heritage and the environment. ***Accountability*** from research idea to publication (management, organisation, supervision, mentoring and for the wider impacts of the research venture). Researchers have a responsibility to make themselves aware that research at MIC must be consistent with these principles and with Irish law and policy, including this Code of Good Practice in Research

	and related MIC policies, practices and procedures. These include, but may not be limited to, the following:
	MIC Research Integrity Policy
	MIC Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and Safeguarding Statement
	MIC Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy
	MIC Code of Conduct for Staff MIC Academic Integrity Policy
	MIC Grievance Policy
	MIC Disciplinary Policy
	MIC Data Protection Policy
	MIC Research Ethics Committee - MIREC
	MIC staff members who are subject to ethical guidance from their professional bodies or external agencies must familiarise themselves with those requirements and ensure their compliance with them.
2.3	MIC requires the highest standards of integrity in all research activities conducted by its researchers while taking account of the law and the public interest, including: • research competence and integrity; • respect for the rights and dignity of research participants; • responsibility, honesty & openness; • leadership & cooperation; • supervision & training; • guidance from professional bodies; • best practice in managing research, including resources and personnel; • compliance with standards and procedures for research reproducibility; • resolutions of conflicts of interest; • appropriate data management / documenting research results and storing primary data; • good practice in dissemination and publication.
2.4	This Code applies to all members of the MIC research community, including, but not limited to, the following: • Researchers (including academic staff, research assistants, postdoctoral researchers, research fellows, senior research fellows, research professors, academic-related staff / visiting researchers) and other staff involved in the research process (including technical, clerical, and administrative staff) employed by MIC, whether in the College, or while at another institution; • Supervisors of postgraduate and undergraduate research; • Postgraduate and undergraduate students; • Persons with honorary visiting, emeritus or adjunct positions or otherwise involved in research within, or on behalf of or accommodated within, MIC; • Collaborators and sub-contractors from other institutions, government bodies and industry, whether working within MIC or not; and

	• All persons engaged in the setting of research priorities and the assessment of research.
2.5	This Code of Good Practice in Research is approved by the MIC Research Ethics Committee (MIREC), by the MIC Executive Team and by the MIC Údarás Rialaithe (MIC Governing Authority). This policy should be read in conjunction with the MIC Research Integrity Policy, MIC Data Protection Policy, MIC Safeguarding Policies and other relevant MIC policies, as appropriate (see Section 2.2 above).
2.6	Appeals relating to any aspect of this Code will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the MIC Grievance Procedure. Information on this may be requested from the MIC HR Office.

3.0	**DEFINITIONS**
3.1	**MIREC / Research Ethics** MIC Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) has responsibility for all aspects of research ethics insofar as they relate to research projects carried out by MIC staff and MIC research postgraduates where the projects involve human participants. MIREC will support staff researchers and postgraduate supervisors in ensuring that all research is carried out to the highest possible standards, with regard for the welfare of human participants and in accordance with recognised legal, professional and ethical standards. All research involving human participants conducted by a member of staff and/or research postgraduate student as part of his/her professional activity / course of study requires prior approval by MIREC. Research involving human participants includes the physical participation of people in research projects and/or their involvement through provision of, or access to, personal data not already in the public domain. This includes all research involving children and vulnerable persons.
3.2	**Research Integrity** Research integrity requires truthful professional standards. It demands that professional research is conducted according to established disciplinary rules, regulations, guidelines and professional codes. The researcher must (i) investigate questions that are designed to contribute to knowledge, (ii) be committed to the pursuit and protection of truth, and (iii) rely on research methods which are appropriate to the discipline and to the training and experience of the researcher ([National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)*.

4.0	**ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**
4.1	**Human Participants in Research** MIC requires that all researchers adhere to MIREC guidelines for research with human participants. In addition, the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, justice and competence are defined as follows for the purpose of this MIC Code of Good Practice in Research: Nuremberg Code (1947): adopted internationally in 1949, this provides the basic principles of respect for the voluntary nature of human participation in research, true informed consent, and ethical

responsibilities of the researcher to ensure human welfare. It stipulates that research should involve minimal risk and harm, that the benefits should outweigh the risks, that only researchers who are scientifically qualified should conduct research, and that subjects should be free to withdraw from the research at any time. Subsequent codes have incorporated these principles.

Declaration of Helsinki (1964): The World Medical Association made recommendations similar to those in the Nuremberg Code and established the International Code of Medical Ethics. This Declaration emphasizes that the needs of research are secondary to the care and well-being of participants, and distinguishes between therapeutic and non-therapeutic research.

The Belmont Report (1979): The basic ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, justice and competence are clearly defined in The Belmont Report, published in the United States in April 1979, by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research.

4.2	**Respect for Persons**
	Individuals must be treated as autonomous agents and persons with diminished autonomy (such as, for example children and vulnerable persons) must be protected. Human dignity and individual rights must be treated with respect which is underwritten by the informed consent process including a detailed discussion of the research project between the researcher and potential participants. Subjects must be provided with full and comprehensible information about the research along with clear written assurance that participation is voluntary. Agreement to participate is indicated by a signature on a consent form.
4.3	**Beneficence and Non-maleficence**
	These concern the protection and well-being of research participants, whereby the researcher is obliged to ensure that the possible benefits to the participants will be maximized and possible harm minimized. Harm includes physical discomfort, psychological or emotional distress, and social and economic disadvantages. Researchers must assess the potential for risks and the possibility of benefits to the participants and be sensitive to their rights and interests. In addition, researchers should reflect on the social and cultural implications of their research. In the end, the benefits to the individual or the importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh the risks.
4.4	**Justice**
	This involves fairness in distribution of the research benefits and burdens. The participant selection process must be conducted in a manner consistent with the reasons directly related to the problem being investigated (and not, for example, availability or manipulability). Particular care must be taken in research involving children and vulnerable persons.
4.5	**Competence**
	Researchers are qualified by education, training and/or experience, and should not engage in research work for which they do not have specific expertise. Researchers must employ ethical awareness, recognize the potential for risk to research participants, and terminate research activity when/if it is likely or possible that the activity may be harmful. Researchers must maintain and develop

	competence through continuing education, training and/or experience in research knowledge, methods and techniques.
5.0	**RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**
5.1	**Allegations of Misconduct** MIC takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has written procedures for investigating and resolving such allegations in its Research Integrity Policy. Good practice in research includes reporting concerns about the conduct of research. Anyone in the MIC staff / student community who believes that research misconduct has occurred or is occurring should notify the Vice President for Research.
5.2	**Failure to comply** Failure to conduct research ethically, lawfully, and in compliance with this Code may be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action including dismissal. Researchers are required to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable risk or harm to human participants and must ensure that correct procedures are followed for the collection and retention of data gathered during research.
6.0	**ACADEMIC FREEDOM**
6.1	In keeping with the expressed commitment in the College Mission Statement to "excellence in teaching, learning, and research" and to "the intellectual freedom of staff and students", academic staff are free to engage in research / postgraduate work within their area of professional expertise. MIC embraces the principles of academic freedom recognising that members of the academic and research community shall have, within the law, the freedom to question and test received knowledge, to advance new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions. The freedom of academic staff to engage in and disseminate research is also recognised through this Code.
7.0	**IMPLEMENTATION**

7.1	Should a researcher have any doubt concerning the applicability of a clause(s) of this Code they should consult with their Head of Department, the Chair of MIREC, the Research Integrity Officer, or the MIC Research Office /Vice President for Research, as appropriate.
7.2	The operation of this Code will be overseen by the Vice President for Research (or nominee) on behalf of the Executive Team.
7.3	The Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee will advise and assist the Vice President for Research (or nominee) in these functions.
8.0	**REVIEW**
8.1	This Code will be reviewed at 3-year intervals, except where compliance provisions or other regulatory measures introduced externally or by the College require review and amendment to take place sooner.
9.0	**EQUALITY STATEMENT**
9.1	The operation of this policy and linked protocols will reflect the College's commitment to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion and will be fully compliant with the provisions of prevailing equality legislation, including gender equality.
10.0	**DISCLAIMER**
10.1	The procedures set out in this Code - do not replace or prejudice any working relationships, reporting mechanisms or standard custom and practice at Departmental, Faculty or College level or elsewhere within MIC. do not replace or prejudice the academic regulations of the University of Limerick or MIC.
10.2	At MIC, research data are managed in compliance with the provisions of GDPR (2018) and linked MIC policies and protocols.

Appendix 1

Cover Letter 21st February 2020	**HEA** | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions

Dear Vice President / Director of Research,

I would like to draw your attention to the HEA's latest research policy initiative, which outlines its recommended principles of good practice in research within Irish higher education institutions (copy enclosed). As higher education research is essential to our national development and international standing, it is important to have a set of guiding principles to support good research practice. These were created with input from relevant stakeholders and reflect international policy in this area. They aim to add value to existing policies and procedures currently in place here in Ireland.

They comprise seven elements, ranging from areas such as open research to dignity and respect. The purpose of them are to promote good practice in research conduct by bringing together the main elements of good practice in research undertaken within higher education, articulating high-level principles within each of these, and signposting to more detailed policies where available. They are not prescriptive in nature, but rather offer guiding principles which institutions can incorporate into their specific research environments.

In order to ensure continued research excellence, all institutions are asked to highlight the importance of adherence to these elements amongst its researchers.

The HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions will be referenced in this year's draft Annual Governance Statements (AGS) and your institution will have an opportunity to provide feedback on its inclusion as part of the annual consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alan Wall

Chief Executive

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas | 3 Áras Síol mBrain | Ascaill Crampton | Bóthar Shíol Bhroin | Baile Átha Cliath 4
Teil: +353 1 231 7100 | Facs: +353 1 231 7172 | IosGhlo: 1890 200 637 | R-phoist: info@hea.ie | Gréasán: www.hea.ie
The Higher Education Authority | 3 Shelbourne Buildings | Crampton Avenue | Shelbourne Road | Dublin 4
Tel: +353 1 231 7100 | Fax: +353 1 231 7172 | LoCall: 1890 200 637 | E-mail: info@hea.ie | Web: www.hea.ie
@HEA_irl   Higher Education Authority

Appendix 2

Higher Education Authority 2020	**HEA** | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions	

Purpose

Research, which creates new knowledge and enables the application of knowledge in innovative ways, is a core part and purpose of the Irish higher education system. It1 ranges from fundamental to applied research activity and this is undertaken to varying degrees across all institutions and across all disciplines. It enriches undergraduate formation, trains a skilled postgraduate and postdoctoral community, and contributes to societal as well as enterprise development across Ireland. Research within Irish higher education institutions support the realisation of a range of other public policy objectives, including those concerning health, the environment and culture. Globally, it contributes to Ireland's reputation and supports institutional performance in international rankings. Excellence in the practice of research in our higher education system is therefore essential to our national development and international standing. It is undertaken in a global context where knowledge and people are increasingly mobile.

The principles outlined in this document are focused at institutional level and intend to promote good practice in research conduct by:
• Bringing together the main elements of good practice in higher education research,
• Articulating high-level principles within each of these, and
• Signposting to more detailed policies where available.

It does not prescribe how to put these policies into operation: this is a matter for each institution in keeping with its own research activities and wider environment. It is, nevertheless, the responsibility of each institution to ensure researcher awareness of all relevant policies and to prioritise their adherence to these. Senior leadership on the good and proper conduct of research is vital to its embeddedness and effectiveness in each higher education institution.

There are seven elements of good practice in research conduct which institutions are encouraged to follow:
i. Excellence in research and academic freedom;
ii. Research integrity and ethics;
iii. Open research;
iv. Intellectual property and knowledge transfer;
v. Researcher development;
vi. Research project and programme management;
vii. Dignity and respect.

i.   Excellence in Research and Academic Freedom

The institution promotes excellence in how research is conducted at all career stages and across all disciplines.

It embraces the fundamental principles of academic freedom and recognises that its researchers shall have the freedom, within the law, to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state unpopular opinions.

ii.   Research Integrity and Ethics

Research integrity provides the foundation for all good practice in research in Irish higher education institutions. This document complements the updated National Policy on Research Integrity that has been developed through the National Research Integrity Forum and supports the national commitments contained therein.

_____
[1] The internationally recognised OECD Frascati Manual considers three areas of research: basic, applied and experimental.

The institution upholds the fundamental principles of honesty, accuracy, objectivity and methodological rigour in the conduct of research. It recognises the need to actively foster a culture of research integrity at all levels of the institution, and the importance of senior leadership in this regard.

Policies and procedures for research misconduct including but not limited to fabrication, falsification and plagiarism, are in place, clearly communicated and explicitly enforced.

Training on research integrity is provided to support the translation of policy into practice and to ensure that all researchers fully understand their obligations and responsibilities at all stages of the research process.

Where there are human or animal participants, approval is secured from the appropriate ethics committee and other appropriate regulatory bodies. The institutional duty of care for vulnerable participants is fully considered and acted upon.

Policies for institutional conflicts of interest are in place, fully up-to-date and enforced.

iii.   Open Research

In keeping with developments at EU level, Open Research is a priority for the Irish higher education system. This is illustrated in the work of the National Open Research Forum and recognised in the principles articulated in Ireland's National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment.

The institution is engaging with the advancement of the evolving Open Research agenda and is working towards its principles, including that:

- Scholarly publications and research data developed are as open as possible and only as closed as necessary (while fully respecting appropriate data privacy responsibilities and disciplinary needs);
- Research data produced at the institution reflect the FAIR principles: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable;
- Data produced is properly managed, stored and retained;
- Researchers are supported in their engagement with the developing Open Research agenda.

iv. Intellectual Property and Knowledge Transfer

The Higher Education Authority, through its governance oversight of the higher education system and its work with Knowledge Transfer Ireland, has supported institutional oversight of intellectual property (IP) management.

The institution is fully committed to the management and use of IP, in keeping with the 2019 National IP Protocol.

Fully respecting this, the institution seeks to maximise the dissemination of its research outputs in recognition of their public importance and the Exchequer investment in them.

Where there is external collaboration, for example with enterprise or internationally, the institution works with these partners to ensure appropriate conduct of collaborative research in all its forms, including projects, programmes and placements.

v.   Researcher Development

The institution supports the professional development of its researchers, at all career stages. This includes supporting them to maintain their knowledge of, and skills in, good research practice throughout their careers. Cognisance is also

taken of the evolution of good practice in this area. This is illustrated nationally, for instance, in the Researcher Career Framework whose development is being led by the Irish Universities Association and in the report recommendations arising from the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions and from the subsequent Gender Equality Taskforce in their Gender Action Plan. It is manifested internationally through initiatives such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

This institutional duty of care applies at all researcher career stages, including:
- Doctoral students, as outlined in the National Framework for Doctoral Education and Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes;
- Those being supervised and their supervisors, with particular regard to those researchers who are becoming supervisors for the first time;
- Early-career researchers;
- Established and leading researchers.

The institution is also committed to the professional development of its research support staff.

vi.   Research Project and Programme Management

The institution ensures clear lines of accountability for the organisation and management of research taking place under its auspices. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with and adherence to relevant:
- Laws, regulations and standards;
- Financial policies including procurement, as well as funder terms and conditions;
- Health and safety procedures;
- Quality assurance procedures;
- Policies in relation to recruitment and remuneration of research personnel;
- Insurance and indemnity requirements;
- Institutional risk identification and management procedures.

vii.   Dignity and Respect
The institution prioritises dignity and respect for:

- Its researchers and associated staff, covering but not limited to:
- Recognition of good practice in the conduct of research and of research support;
- Freedom from bullying and harassment, with clear countermeasures in place;
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- All others participating in research being undertaken under its auspices, covering but not limited to:
- Care for vulnerable participants;
- Appropriate regard for moral and cultural values;
- Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and data protection;
- Due respect for animal subjects.
- The citizen in terms of:
- The return on public research investment through various forms of impact, including its role in human capital development, as well as its economic, societal, cultural and intellectual objectives;
- Value-for-money and accountability;
- Dissemination of, and public engagement with, publicly funded research.

_____ENDS_____