



FNU CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ANIMAL RESEARCH

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1.0 Purpose

This FNU Code of Conduct for Animal Research (FNU CCAR) articulates the broad principles that characterise an ambitious, honest, ethical, and conscientious research culture. The FNU CCARR establishes a framework for responsible research conduct that provides a foundation for high-quality research, credibility, and community trust in the research endeavour.

The FNU CCAR ensures that animal research conducted under the auspices of Fiji National University (FNU) complies with the *Animals (Control of Experiments) Act [Cap 161]* when using live animals for research.

2.0 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide procedure that includes:

- a. College of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry & Veterinary Science (CAFF);
- b. All Higher Degrees by Research candidates undertaking animal research at FNU; and
- c. All internal and external researchers undertaking animal research at FNU.

3.0 Code Statement

3.1 Principles of Responsible Research Conduct

The following principles are the hallmarks of responsible research conduct.

- a. Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
 - Present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting research.
- b. Rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
 - Underpin research by attention to detail and robust methodology, avoiding or acknowledging biases.
- c. Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings:
 - Share and communicate research methodology, data and findings openly, responsibly and accurately;
 - Disclose and manage conflicts of interest.
- d. Fairness in the treatment of others:
 - Treat fellow researchers and others involved in the research fairly and with respect; Appropriately reference and cite the work of others;
 - Give credit, including authorship where appropriate, to those who have contributed to the research.
- e. Accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research:
 - Comply with relevant legislation, policies and guidelines;
 - Ensure good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research;
 - Consider the consequences and outcomes of research prior to its communication.
- f. Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment:
 - Treat human participants and communities that are affected by the research with care and respect, giving appropriate consideration to the needs of minority groups or vulnerable people;
 - Ensure that respect underpins all decisions and actions related to the care and use of animals in research;
 - Minimise adverse effects of the research on the environment.

3.2 Responsibility of FNU

- a. FNU has an obligation to encourage and support responsible research conduct.
- b. FNU is accountable to funding organisations, as well as Fijian and international communities for how research is conducted.
- c. To foster responsible research conduct, FNU will:
 - Establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct.
 - Identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies related to the conduct of research.
 - Develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the FNU CCAR.
 - Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers, supervisors, research trainees, and those in other relevant roles.
 - Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications, training, and resources.
 - Identify and train Research Integrity Advisors who assist in the promotion and fostering of responsible research conduct and provide advice to those with concerns about potential breaches of the FNU CCAR.
 - Support the responsible dissemination of research findings. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.
 - Provide access to facilities for the safe and secure storage and management of research data, records, and primary materials and, where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference in accordance with *FNU Research Data Management Policy and Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, HDR Candidates and Visitors*
- d. Facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the CCAR.
- e. Provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the FNU CCAR and investigate and resolve potential breaches of the Code.
- f. Ensure that the process for managing and investigating concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the FNU CCAR is timely, effective, and in accord with procedural fairness.
- g. Support the welfare of all parties involved in an investigation of a potential breach of the FNU CCAR.
- h. Base findings on the **balance of probabilities** and ensure any actions are commensurate with the seriousness of the breach.

3.3 Responsibilities of Researchers

Researchers will uphold the principles of responsible research conduct in all aspects of their research in accordance with the *Animals (Control of Experiments) Act [Cap 161]*.

Researchers will:

- a. Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.
- b. Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.
- c. Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.
- d. Comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines, and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research.

- e. Ensure that the approval for animal research is obtained from the FNU Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC) before embarking on animal research.
- f. Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of research involving animals, and minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals. Researchers involving vertebrate and higher invertebrate animals must ensure that they obtain approval from the FNU AREC and adhere to the requirements of the *Animals (Control of Experiments) Act [Cap 161]*.
- g. Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results.
- h. Retain clear, accurate, secure, and complete records of all research, including research data and primary materials. Where possible and appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties. During and after completion of the relevant research, researchers must comply with *FNU Research Data Management Policy* and *Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, HDR Candidates and Visitors* for the management of research materials and data, for the publication of findings.
- i. Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the FNU *Conflict of Interest & Commitment Policy: HR-30* which is embedded in the *FNU HR Policy*.
- j. Report suspected breaches of the FNU CCAR in accordance with *FNU HR Policy: HR-29* and *FNU Academic & Student Regulations*.

3.4 Supervisors and Research Trainees

FNU requires that supervisors and research trainees comply with the University's requirements as provided in the FNU Research Policies.

3.5 Collaborative Research Across Institutions

- a. FNU supports and encourages collaborative research within and outside Fiji, where and when it is appropriate, and based on the formal agreement.
- b. For the purposes of the FNU CCAR, collaboration across institutions is not restricted to the Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Health & Production Division and other Higher Education Institutions, and Veterinary Clinics within or outside Fiji.

3.6 Research Breaches, Complaints and Allegations

- a. Failure to observe the code outlined in the FNU CCAR is considered a breach that can occur on a spectrum from minor breaches to those that are more serious. A serious breach is where a researcher's intent or recklessness or negligence is particularly egregious and may be referred to as research misconduct.
- b. Investigation and management of potential breaches will be conducted as per the *FNU HR Policy: HR-29* and *FNU Academic & Student Regulations* to determine any corrective actions.
- c. All breaches, complaints and allegations made in relation to animal ethics, must in the first instance be referred to the Chair of the Animal Research Ethics Committee and the Chair, University Research Committee.

3.7 Code Administration

Substantive amendment or revision of the FNU CCAR must be approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor Research before submitting it to the FNU University Research Council and Senate for endorsement.

4.0 Definitions Specific To This Document

For the purposes of the FNU CCAR document, the following definitions apply:

- a. **3Rs** – The 3Rs are three principles that underpin a systematic framework to achieve the goal of humane experimental techniques. The principles are: Replacement of animals with other methods; Reduction in the number of animals used; and Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals.
- b. **FNU CCAR** – *FNU Code of Conduct for Animal Research*
- c. **FNU AREC**- FNU Animal Research Ethics Committee.
- d. **Balance of probabilities** – The civil standard of proof, which requires that, on the weight of evidence, it is more probable than not that a breach has occurred.
- e. **Breach** – A failure to meet the CCAR. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
- f. **Conflict of interest** – A conflict of interest exists in a situation where an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the professional actions of a person are or may be unduly influenced by other interests. This refers to financial or non-financial interest which may be a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest.
- g. **Peer review** – The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
- h. **Researcher** – person (or persons) who conduct(s), or assists with the conduct of research.
- i. **Research misconduct** – A serious breach of the FNU CCAR which is also intentional or reckless or negligent.

6.0 Approval Agency

FNU Senate

7.0 Revision Log

This table will be used to insert dates of the different versions made on the policy/procedure.

Version	Date of Approval	Comment
1.0	11 December 2019	Approved by Senate
2.0	2 March 2021	Approved by Senate

8.0 Policy Sponsor

Pro Vice Chancellor Research

9.0 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

[EO-PVCR](#)

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