

**WORLD INDIGENOUS NATIONS  
HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM**

**WINHEC Research Standards (draft) 2009**



**Background** WINHEC is committed to research activities which gathers and documents information and knowledge to generate solutions and recommendations locally, regionally, nationally and internationally raised questions for Indigenous outcomes while honouring, affirming and advancing knowledge through Indigenous scholarship.

*Indigenous knowledge systems form part of a living heritage. Indigenous knowledge systems contain a wealth of information including traditional arts, crafts, dance and cultural expressions, belief systems, customary laws, environmental knowledge of plants and animals and kinship systems. As mentioned above, these systems have been handed down through the generations, mostly in oral form. They are not protected by copyright and consent to write or research on a knowledge system is not required. However, under Indigenous laws, knowledge may be held by one person, a family or community, and the right to share or disseminate that knowledge is subject to a complex system of consents. There is also a cultural obligation to pass on knowledge, and to guard its cultural integrity<sup>1</sup>.*

Research is central to the education, livelihood, culture and well being of Indigenous Peoples and their communities. The embedding of Indigenous protocols and principles must be integral to the ethical processes which underpin all research undertaken by and with Indigenous People from within the context of our knowledge.

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**Indigenous  
Research**

- (a) respects local Indigenous authority
- (b) recognises knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future and reinforces this in research approach;
- (c) uses the local language respectfully as a foundation for interpretation and meaning;
- (d) fosters a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems
- (e) acknowledges multi-ownership and levels of knowledge
- (f) addresses community ownership of knowledge

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**Individual  
Researchers**

- (a) able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve success;
- (b) able to engage responsibly and effectively in research activities that are grown from/based on Indigenous ways of knowing; and,

- (c) demonstrate awareness and appreciation of the relationships, connections and processes of interaction of all elements in the world
  - (d) self awareness and ability to situate one's self and define ones purpose for undertaking research
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**Research  
Process and  
Practice**

- (a) incorporates Indigenous ways of knowing and practicing in its work linking what is being researched to everyday lives;
  - (b) incorporate all requirements including funding into grant applications;
  - (c) works closely with individuals and communities to achieve a high level of complementary research outcomes and expectations; and,
  - (d) recognises the potential of individuals and communities and provides the training as necessary for them to participate powerfully in research
  - (e) all participants in the research process accepts responsibility to protect secret/sacred information
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**Organisational  
Practice**

- (a) has high level of involvement of Indigenous staff and Elders;
  - (b) fosters on-going participation, communication and interaction between researchers, programs and community researchers and personnel
  - (c) recognises ownership of intellectual knowledge – ownership of data needs to sit with the Indigenous community
  - (d) provides remuneration for time and other costs and, dispersal of publication profits to community
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**Community  
Practice**

- (a) takes an active authoritative role in research while nurturing family responsibility, sense of belonging and cultural identity;
  - (b) assists new members in learning and utilising knowledge and information generated through research; and,
  - (c) contributes to all aspects of research design, implementation and outcomes for local advantage
  - (d) ensures secret/sacred knowledge is protected
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<sup>i</sup> Janke Terri, Our culture: our future – Report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, Michael Frankel and Company, written and published under commission by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Sydney 1999.