

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

Indigenous Education
Research and Development Plan
2006-2010

November 2005

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 VISION

This strategic plan reflects ACER's commitment to research and development aimed at closing the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. It provides information on the broad direction of Indigenous education research and development at ACER, 2006-2010.

ACER aims to be a national leader in promoting research and development that focuses on key issues related to the improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

This aim relates to ACER's broader mission, which is to create and disseminate research-based knowledge products, and services that can be used to improve learning. In pursuing this mission, ACER undertakes a wide range of research and development activities, and provides services and materials in support of educational policy-making and improved professional practice.

Through research, development, and dissemination ACER aims to contribute to:

- better understandings of the conditions for *successful learning*;
- better understandings of, and improved procedures for supporting, *quality teaching*;
- more *informative assessments* of individual readiness, aptitude, attainment and progress;
- better understandings of student pathways and of factors influencing *successful transitions*;
- richer and more usable information for the *purposeful monitoring* of educational performances; and
- improved access to research-based information to support *evidence-based practice*.

1.2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

ACER's program of research in Indigenous education has developed over many years and is informed by its Standing Committee on Indigenous Education, chaired by Professor Paul Hughes AM, and comprising prominent Indigenous educationists and academics from the States and Territories. (See Appendix 1 for list of current members)

The Standing Committee exists to provide members of the Board and senior management with expert advice on strategic directions for educational research and on ways of enhancing the value and impact of ACER's research. Specifically, the Standing Committee provides members of the Board and senior management with expert advice on:

- the areas of Indigenous education most in need of research;
- ways in which ACER expertise can be put to best use in these areas;
- emerging research opportunities;

- groups of individuals with whom it may be useful to make contact or collaborate in research;
- possible sources of research funding to achieve these objectives;
- ways of enhancing the organisation's research capabilities—including suggestions for strategic research partnerships; and
- how ACER research findings might best be disseminated to have greatest impact.

1.3 ACER'S RESEARCH IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

In the last decade, ACER has conducted qualitative and quantitative research in a range of areas related to Indigenous issues. Detailed reports of this research are available on ACER's Indigenous education research website

http://www.acer.edu.au/research/special_topics/IndigenousResearch.html

Research reports include:

- An annotated bibliography on Indigenous education issues
- Australia's Indigenous students in PISA 2000: Results from an international study
- Diversity and learning in the early years of school
- Engaging Indigenous students at school: An evaluation of the *Deadly Vibe* magazine
- English literacy skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: A review of the literature and case studies in primary schools
- Evaluation of the University of Canberra programme for advanced literacy development: *Scaffolding Literacy* programme with Indigenous children in school
- 15-up and counting, reading, writing, reasoning...how literate are Australia's students?
- Messages for minority groups in Australia from international studies
- Numeracy learning and Indigenous students in Victorian Catholic schools
- Resources and teaching strategies to support Aboriginal children's numeracy learning. Report for the NSW Board of Studies.
- Research into the numeracy development of Aboriginal students: Implications for the NSW K-10 mathematics syllabus. Report for the NSW Board of Studies.
- Supporting English literacy and numeracy learning for Indigenous students in the early years
- The case for change: A review of contemporary research on Indigenous education outcomes
- The school to work transition of Indigenous Australians: A review of the literature and statistical analysis

The focus of much of ACER's Indigenous education research has been on understanding the factors that influence the outcomes of schooling for Indigenous students, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Research has been undertaken in response to specific

requests from State and Territory education authorities, as the result of competitive tender, and as part of ACER's core funded program of research.

2 INDIGENOUS RESEARCH ETHICS, METHODOLOGIES AND PRINCIPLES

2.1 EXISTING ACER PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

ACER routinely collects sensitive test, evaluation and other data and has well established and tested procedures for protecting sensitive materials. ACER has an established *Code of Ethics for Research* (see Appendix 2) which defines institutional policy for staff. An Ethics Committee reviews projects as required.

2.2 INDIGENOUS SPECIFIC RESEARCH ISSUES RELATING TO ETHICS AND METHODOLOGIES

In addition to principles espoused in the *Code of Ethics for Research*, ACER's research involving Indigenous participants is guided by the following publications:

- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2000) *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*.
<www.aiatsis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicsGuideA4.pdf>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (1999) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
<<http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/pdf/e35.pdf>>

The AIATSIS principles are founded on the need to establish a shared understanding of research with the Indigenous people and communities involved; and to ensure that communities are able to participate in the research and be informed of the results in appropriate, useful and meaningful ways. The principles, in summary, are:

A Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding

- Consultation, negotiation and free and informed consent are the foundations for research with or about Indigenous people.
- The responsibility for consultation and negotiation is ongoing.
- Consultation and negotiation should achieve mutual understanding about the proposed research.

B Respect, recognition and involvement

- Indigenous knowledge systems and processes must be respected.
- There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of people as well as of individuals.
- The intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous people must be respected and preserved.

- Indigenous researchers, individuals and communities should be involved in research as collaborators.

C Benefits, outcomes and agreement

- The use of, and access to, research results should be agreed.
- A researched community should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, the research project.
- The negotiation of outcomes should include results specific to the needs of the researched community.
- Negotiation should result in a formal agreement for the conduct of a research project, based on good faith and free and informed consent.

The NHMRC guidelines provide guidance to researchers in the conception, design, and conduct of research, and are focussed around six core values:

- Spirit and Integrity
- Reciprocity
- Respect
- Equality
- Survival and Protection
- Responsibility

3 NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

3.1 BACKGROUND

The 21 goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) have guided Australia's national policy on Indigenous education since their endorsement by all Australian governments when the policy was launched in 1989. The 21 long-term goals of the AEP are listed in Appendix 3.

The 21 goals of the AEP have formed the basis of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Training (MCEETYA) eight priority areas for Indigenous education and training. The eight priority areas are:

- improving Indigenous literacy;
- improving Indigenous numeracy;
- increasing the employment of Indigenous Australians in education and training;
- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students;
- increasing Indigenous enrolments;
- increasing the involvement of Indigenous parents/community members in educational decision making;

- increasing professional development for staff involved in Indigenous education; and
- expanding culturally inclusive curricula.

These eight priority areas are at the heart of the Indigenous Education Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The framework allows quantitative tracking of national progress towards the goals of the AEP.

3.2 CURRENT CONTEXT

The need to reduce to a manageable number the strategic priorities for Indigenous education so that firm action can be taken was noted at the 2005 MCEETYA Indigenous Education Forum. Suggested priority areas for consideration by a working party of senior MCEETYA officials include:

- early intervention programs;
- retention strategies;
- mentoring;
- teacher preparation strategies; and
- local Indigenous community involvement.

4 ACER INDIGENOUS EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

4.1 RESEARCH

The challenge for ACER is to respond to national Indigenous education priorities in ways that build on its own qualitative and quantitative research capabilities and current programs of research. To meet this challenge, three directions for ACER's Indigenous education research are proposed:

- Broad-based contract research as opportunities arise
- Core focus area – engagement and participation in education and training
- Promotion of Indigenous aspect to other ACER research projects as appropriate

4.1.1 Broad-based contract research

ACER will continue to seek contract research projects let by various agencies on specific issues relating to the improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Depending on the nature of the tender brief, ACER will, as appropriate, seek partners from the field to develop and submit joint proposals to these agencies. It is anticipated that many requests for research from Australian education authorities will be around MCEETYA and DEST priority areas, and to this end ACER is well placed to respond because of its breadth of research expertise and experience.

4.1.2 Strategic focus research

In addition to seeking contract research projects let by various agencies, it is proposed that ACER assumes a leading role in Indigenous research by developing one major research project around a central theme. This project will replace the *Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Survey for Indigenous Students*, which has been ongoing since 2000 and is due to be completed in 2006. The results of the first three years of this project were reported in the publication *Supporting English Literacy and Numeracy Learning for Indigenous Students in the Early Years* (Frigo, et al., 2003). The final report detailing the development of literacy and numeracy skills in a sample of Indigenous students drawn from schools across Australia will be published at the completion of the project.

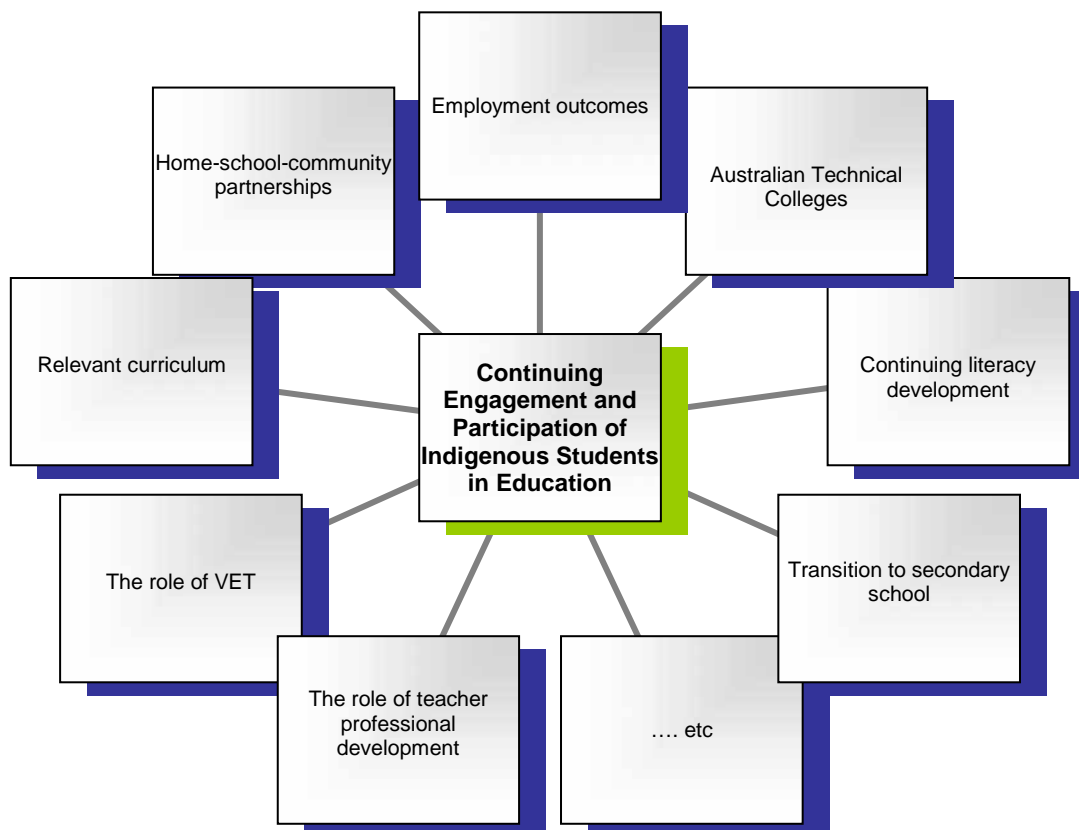
Given initial work by ACER in the area of engagement strategies for Indigenous students (e.g., see *Teacher*, May 2005), the Standing Committee recommends that at the completion of the current major longitudinal literacy and numeracy project, continuing MCEETYA funding be sought for another longitudinal study that focuses on the continuing engagement and participation of Indigenous students in education and training. This research focus fits with the second of the five recently proposed priority areas (*retention*) for consideration by the MCEETYA officials' working party. The Standing Committee proposes that use of the term *engagement and participation* suggests a more positive and inclusive focus than the term *retention*. In addition to obtaining continuing MCEETYA funding for this longitudinal study, ACER may seek funding from other external sources.

It is envisaged that this theme will provide opportunity to explore the interrelationships between a range of factors likely to influence Indigenous students' continuing engagement and participation in education. Figure 1 portrays a possible organisational framework for such an investigation.

Specific details of the research are to be worked out in conjunction with members of the Standing Committee on Indigenous Education, and in consultation with appropriate personnel from MCEETYA and DEST.

It is proposed that ACER commences work on the project in 2006 with a core grant from the ACER Board. Ongoing funds for a six-year longitudinal study (to encompass the secondary years of schooling and the first year of post-secondary school) will be sought from MCEETYA (to replace funding currently received for the *Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Surveys for Indigenous Students*).

Figure 1: Organising Framework for Research into Participation and Engagement of Indigenous Students in Education



4.1.3 Promotion of Indigenous aspect to other ACER research projects

It is desirable that not all research with Indigenous students is carried out in isolation from general education research that targets issues of importance for all students. Where possible, and appropriate, ACER will build into other research projects the capacity to analyse data from subsamples of Indigenous students. For instance, analysis of data and reporting of results for Indigenous research participants currently occurs in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

4.2 DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities exist at ACER to further extend and develop the Indigenous education program in areas other than research. By drawing on the expertise that currently exists in the Professional Resources Division, there is the potential to inform, expand and develop resources that serve the needs of Indigenous students, teachers and communities.

ACER Professional Resources Division provides high-quality, research-based materials and services to support the professional learning and professional work of practitioners. Much of the work is designed to support the staff of educational institutions (teachers, counsellors, selection officers, school principals), but resources also are provided for a range of other practitioners. With the backing of ACER's research programs, Professional Resources is uniquely positioned

to provide products and services that are firmly grounded in research evidence and international best practice.

Where appropriate, ACER will seek to develop resources in Indigenous education through the work of:

- ACER Press (e.g., publication of books, kits)
- Assessment services (e.g., test development)
- Cunningham Library (e.g., ongoing development of its Indigenous education collection)
- Centre for Professional Learning (e.g., workshops, seminars, conferences)
- Australian Principal's Centre (e.g., seminars in leadership in Indigenous education)

5 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In order to undertake high quality research and development in Indigenous education, ACER will work to resource such work in the best possible way. In particular, it will seek to build capacity in the following areas.

5.1 *Indigenous participants in ACER research*

Capacity building of Indigenous participants in ACER research will occur through recognition and acknowledgement of the contribution they have made to a research project, through authorship or through formal recognition in the completed publication.

5.2 *Research training*

The possibility of ACER establishing a research fellowship to provide financial assistance to Indigenous post-graduate student/s should be explored. This could be done in partnership with another funding agency. The fellowship might include a commitment to offer recipients opportunities to work on educational research projects currently being undertaken at ACER, providing them with an opportunity to develop their research experience and skills with an established research organisation.

Other opportunities for training could be provided through short-term work experience programs and short research training courses on specific topics (e.g., conducting interviews for research, managing large data-sets, interpreting research findings).

5.3 *Employment*

Currently ACER employs one Indigenous Research Fellow. Within the next five years, ACER aims to explore other employment opportunities for Indigenous people, including in both research and non-research positions, with the aim of employing at least one more Indigenous person before 2010. In addition, ACER will employ Indigenous people on short term contracts to assist with research projects where appropriate.

5.4 Research conference

ACER will explore opportunities to host a research conference or forum that highlights its own Indigenous research and provides a forum for dissemination of quality research being conducted by researchers in other institutions and agencies. The conference could be jointly sponsored by ACER and another agency, and/or held back-to-back with other events attended by people likely to be interested in Indigenous education research.

5.5 Research dissemination

In addition to the reports commissioned by the various agencies for whom ACER conducts research, ACER will explore ways of making the findings of its research more widely available, particularly to Indigenous communities. Possibilities include continued development and publicising of its Indigenous research website, continued publication of articles in professional magazines and newsletters (e.g., *Teacher*, *Professional Educator*, *Curriculum Leadership*, *Ed LiveWire*), and reporting of research findings in Indigenous media outlets (e.g., *Koori Mail*, *National Indigenous Times*, the network of Indigenous radio broadcasters). Contact will be made with the Australian Principals Centre to explore ways in which this organisation can assist in the dissemination of research information.

5.6 New sources of external funding

A list will be developed of potential philanthropic organisations (e.g., Potter Foundation, Van Leer Foundation, Telstra Foundation) to approach for funding for Indigenous education research at ACER. Such organisations will be formally approached by the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of the Standing Committee on Indigenous Education.

5.7 Research-based products

The Professional Resources Division will seek to develop, as appropriate, a range of research-based products to support the professional learning and professional work of practitioners in Indigenous education.

6 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 - 2010

Focus	Action
1 Research projects in Indigenous education	1a Conduct broad-based contract research projects
	1b Develop core strategic project: Continuing engagement and participation of Indigenous students in education and training.
	1c Promote Indigenous aspect to other ACER research projects
2 Capacity building	2a Acknowledge contribution of Indigenous participants in ACER research
	2b Provide research training: traineeship, workshops
	2c Increase by at least one the number of Indigenous people being employed at ACER by 2010
	2d Organise Indigenous research conference or forum
	2e Consolidate current research dissemination strategies (e.g., website) and seek new outlets (e.g., Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Australian Principals Centre)
	2f Seek new sources for external research funding
	2g Develop research-based products through ACER's Professional Resources Division (ACER Press, Assessment Services, Centre for Professional Learning, Australian Principal's Centre)

APPENDIX 1**INDIGENOUS STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

(as of November 2005)

Professor Paul Hughes AM Chair FACE, DLitt (Hon), MEd, AdvDipTeach, DipTeach	University of South Australia
Ms Isabelle Adams Dip Teach, BA, B.Ed, M.Ed, CertIV SBD	Vision Network Pty Ltd, WA
Ms Clair Andersen DipTeach, BEd, GradDipMan	University of Tasmania
Ms Sharon Larkins Dip Teach	Department of Education and Training, NT
Mr Wayne Muir MEd, GradCertEd, GradCertVET, AdvDipMgt, DipVET, Dip FMI, CertIV AWPT	The University of Melbourne
Dr Chris Sarra DipTeach, BEd, MEd, PhD (Psych)	Indigenous Education Leadership Institute
Ms Susan Smith	Department of Education, Science & Training

APPENDIX 2

ACER CODE OF ETHICS FOR RESEARCH

PREAMBLE

Purpose of Code of Ethics for Research

A code of ethics is a system of moral principles or values intended to serve as a guide in the identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas.

In educational research the basic ethical question is 'how can one observe and intervene in the lives of others without inflicting harm?' (Sieber, 1982, p.4) and there are three fundamental ethical principles to be applied (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1978):

- *beneficence*: the avoidance of unnecessary harm and the maximisation of positive outcomes;
- *respect*: a concern that the research does not infringe the individual autonomy of the subjects;
- *justice*: the equitable distribution of social benefits and costs among the subjects.

The purpose of this document is to provide a code of ethics for the conduct of research by the Australian Council for Educational Research. It defines institutional policy and offers a set of guidelines for staff. It is to be read in conjunction with the *ACER Research Projects Ethics Checklist* which is to be completed by Project Directors for all research and development projects proposed to be conducted by ACER staff.

Regulation of research projects

Many institutions have developed Ethics Committees with elaborate regulatory mechanisms to judge the ethics of particular pieces of research and to determine whether particular projects may proceed. This is particularly important in research in which human subjects classified may be seen to be a 'high-risk' such as in biomedical research. Since educational research is usually 'low-risk', much of the formality can be dispensed with at no risk or cost to the participants or the profession.

Tropp (1982,p.395) identifies the following classes of social science research as being low-risk and not in need of formal regulation:

Secondary analyses of data ... observational studies of public behaviour ... standardised and criterion-referenced educational achievement and aptitude tests ... changes in instructional

techniques and curriculum design ... surveys – whether by mail, telephone, or visiting interviewer ... linguistics, oral history ... standardised psychological laboratory exercises which do not involve deception ... demonstration programs on systems of service delivery.

Since this list captures the range of research in which ACER is involved, it is concluded that ACER engages in low-risk research and does not need the kind of formal regulatory mechanism under which all projects are referred to an Ethics Committee to obtain approval to proceed.

This is not to deny the need for ACER to have a clear code of ethics for its research. It is only to say that elaborate regulatory mechanisms can be avoided.

Developing a Code of Ethics

Since educational research is multidisciplinary, educational researchers face ethical dilemmas similar to those faced by researchers in psychology, sociology, statistics, economics and anthropology, the foundation disciplines for education. For this reason, codes of ethics for research in these disciplines have been drawn on in the development of ACER's code.

In preparing the ACER Code of Ethics for Research set out in this document, use was made of the published codes of the appropriate professional associations in Australia and the United States, together with statements from the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the University of Melbourne and, with regard to the matters of privacy and confidentiality, the statement from the Commonwealth Privacy Commission. Drafts were reviewed and the final version approved by the ACER Council in October 1995.

Disclaimer

The Code outlined below is intended as a guide to the ethical behaviour of ACER staff when engaged in research. The Code is not intended to be a basis for legal or disciplinary proceedings. Further, the absence of any prohibition in the code need not imply that ACER condones the behaviour or procedure in question.

This Code of Ethics for Research should not be regarded as complete. Conceivably, it will never be complete, in the sense that changing circumstance and experience will dictate additions and revisions. In cases where this code does not offer guidance on a particular ethical issue, reference to other similar codes of ethics would be appropriate in the first instance.

ACER CODE OF ETHICS

Research involving human participants

Benefits of research

A paramount consideration is the potential benefits of the research, though the benefits need not be to the participants in the research themselves.

- Staff must be able to identify the groups of individuals who could benefit from the findings of the proposed research.
- The potential benefits to others not participating in the research must be sufficient to justify the time and effort required of participants.

Respect for human subjects

Researchers conduct research within a broad array of settings and institutions. It is of paramount importance that educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs.

- Staff must be mindful of cultural, religious, gender and other significant differences within the research population in the planning, conduct and reporting of their research.
- It is important to be sensitive to the integrity of ongoing institutional activities and alert appropriate institutional representatives to possible disturbances in such activities which may result from the conduct of the research.
- Staff must avoid using their influence over subordinates, students or others to compel them to participate in research.

Protection against harm

Considering whether a participant in a planned study will be a 'subject at risk' or a 'subject at minimal risk', according to recognised standards, is of primary ethical concern to the investigator. As a general rule, the use of research techniques that might have negative social consequences is to be avoided (for example, negative sociometrics with young children or experimental interventions that might deprive students of important parts of the standard curriculum).

- Participants in projects must be protected from physical and mental discomfort, harm and danger that may arise from research procedures.
- If a risk exists, the participant must be informed of that fact.
- The participant must also be made aware of procedures for contacting the investigator within a reasonable time period following participation should stress, potential harm or related questions or concerns arise.

- Where research procedures result in undesirable consequences for the individual participant, these consequences must be detected and removed or corrected, including long-term effects.

Informed consent

Informed consent should be obtained from participants in projects, or where relevant from parents or guardians, wherever feasible and must be obtained when the risks of research are greater than the risks of everyday life.

- The individual's freedom to decline to participate in, or to withdraw from, the research at any time must be respected.
- Particular care must be taken in this respect when the researcher is in a position of authority or influence over the participant.
- In cases other than minimal-risk research, researchers should establish a clear and fair agreement with research participants, prior to their participation, an agreement that clarifies the obligations and responsibilities of each.
- Each potential participant should be informed about the general nature and sponsorship of the inquiry and the intended uses of the data.
- Except in those rare instances in which deception is an unavoidable requirement of the research design (see 'Deception' below), participants must be informed in plain English of all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate.
- Participants should be informed about any significant changes in the research program likely to make them want to revise their agreement to participate.
- Special safeguarding procedures are required in the case of research with children or with participants who have impairments that would limit understanding and/or communication.
- Where participants are children or others with limited understanding and/or capacity to communicate, special care must be taken to protect these persons' interests by obtaining informed consent on their behalf from parents or guardians.

Deception

Deception is discouraged. Honesty should characterise the relationship between researchers and participants and appropriate institutional representatives. In rare instances, however, the methodological requirements of a study may make the use of concealment or deception unavoidable.

- If deception is contemplated, staff must make a case to the ACER Research Ethics Committee that the use of deception is justified by the study's prospective scientific, educational or applied value.
- For approval to be given, a determination must be made that alternative procedures that do not use concealment or deception are unavailable.
- After that data are collected, participants should be provided with information about the nature of the study.
- Efforts should be made on conclusion of the research to remove any misconceptions that may have arisen during the course of the research.
- Where scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding this information, it is critical that the research is monitored to ensure that there are no damaging consequences for the participants.

Confidentiality

Subjects of research are entitled to rights of biographical anonymity. Confidential information provided by participants must be treated as such, even when this information enjoys no legal protection or privilege. The obligation to respect confidentiality applies to all staff members who have access to the information, including interviewers, coders, clerical staff, etc. It is the responsibility of project directors to instruct staff members on this point and to make every effort to insure that access to confidential information is restricted.

- Staff must acknowledge that information obtained about a participant during the course of an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed upon in advance by the participant.
- When the possibility exists that others may obtain access to such information, this should be explained to participants, together with the plans for protecting confidentiality, as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.
- Participants should be informed that information obtained from records that are open to public scrutiny cannot be protected by guarantees of privacy or confidentiality.
- Researchers must protect identifiable information against loss, unauthorised access, modification and legal seizure when confidentiality guarantees have been given.
- Staff must make provisions for maintaining confidentiality in the storage and disposal of records.

- Before data are made available to persons other than the original investigators all identifiers should be removed unless participants have given permission for the identifiers to be retained.
- Whenever data are transferred to other persons or organisations with personal identifiers retained, written assurance should be obtained from recipients of the data that the measures employed to protect confidentiality will be at least equal to those originally pledged.

Professional conduct

Educational researchers are committed to increasing knowledge of human behaviour. While pursuing this objective, they must show their respect for the dignity and worth of the individual and make every effort to protect the welfare of those who seek their services and those who may be the subjects of their research. They must apply their skills only for purposes consistent with these values and not knowingly permit the misuse of these skills by others.

Competence

- All staff are responsible for the maintenance of high standards of competence in the interest of the public and the profession as a whole.
- All staff must adhere to the highest possible technical standards in their research and associated activities.
- Where recognised standards do not yet exist, precautions are necessary to protect the welfare of participants.
- Staff should recognise the boundaries of their competence and the limitations of their techniques.
- Staff should only provide services and use techniques for which they are qualified by training and experience.
- In all their dealings, staff must accurately represent their competence, education, training and experience, their affiliation with ACER and their function within the organisation.

Responsibility

- In their published reports staff must always report their findings fully without omission of significant data, disclosing details of their theories, methods and research designs that might bear upon interpretations of research findings.

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- Particular care must be taken that all significant qualifications on the findings and interpretations of research are stated.
 - Staff should always provide a thorough discussion of the limitations of their data and their findings, especially where their work touches on social policy or might be construed to the detriment of persons in specific age, sex, ethnic, socioeconomic or other social groups.
 - Staff must not fabricate, falsify or misrepresent evidence, data, findings or conclusions.
 - Staff must not suppress disconfirming data.
 - Provision should be made for the public dissemination of research findings, except those likely to cause harm to clients, collaborators and participants or those which are proprietary under a formal or informal agreement.
 - Public statements providing information or professional opinions, or announcing the availability of products or services, must be based on scientifically acceptable findings, with full recognition of the limits of such evidence and with sufficient information to allow the consumer to make an informed decision about the information, opinion, product or service.

Ethical practice

- Staff must accept responsibility for ensuring ethical practice in research.
- In planning a research project, the project director must accept responsibility for making a careful evaluation of its ethical acceptability.
- In the conduct of a research project, the project director must accept responsibility for the ethical treatment of research participants by co-workers on the project, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.
- Staff should recognise that personal problems and conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness and, accordingly, refrain from undertaking any activity in which such problems or conflicts are likely to lead to inadequate performance or cause harm to a client, colleague or research participant.

Moral and legal standards

- Staff are obliged to conduct their professional lives in such a way that they do not jeopardise future research, or the public standing of research or the results of research.

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- Where questions of conflict of interest arise or where there are affiliations that might tend to bias interpretation or professional judgment, staff must disclose this to appropriate parties.
 - Staff should report fully all sources of financial support in their publications and note any special relations to any sponsor.
 - Staff should not accept grants, contracts or research assignments that appear likely to require violation of the principles enunciated in this Code.
 - In the event that such violation should arise in the conduct of a project, staff should dissociate themselves from the research when they discover the violation and are unable to achieve its correction.
 - Staff must not misuse their positions as researchers for fraudulent purposes or as a pretext for gathering intelligence for any organisation.
 - Staff must not exploit their professional relationships with clients, colleagues or research participants.
 - Staff must avoid all forms of harassment.

Authorship and attribution

- When involved in joint projects, staff should establish mutually accepted explicit agreements at the outset with respect to division of work, access to data, rights of authorship and other rights and responsibilities. Such agreements may need to be modified as the project evolves and such modifications must be agreed upon jointly.
- Staff should view authorship rights as predominantly a function of creative contribution rather than effort expended or status. Those who have made a substantial creative contribution have a right to be included among authors, with order of authorship based on relative level of creative contribution.
- Staff must always obtain the consent of anyone listed as author.
- Staff must appropriately acknowledge the work of those who have contributed to the production of an intellectual product in ways short of the requirements for authorship.
- Staff must acknowledge other work significantly relied on in the development of an intellectual product. Such reliance is not grounds for authorship or ownership to be claimed by those whose work is thus used and cited.
- Staff must not misrepresent the work of others.

Sponsors

- ACER and its staff should not agree to undue or questionable influence by funding agencies, examples of such improper influence including endeavours to interfere with the conduct of research, the analysis of findings or the reporting of interpretations.
- ACER and its staff must not allow sponsors to compromise the integrity of research, the community of researchers, the subjects of research or the users of research.
- ACER and its staff must protect ACER's freedom to interpret and publish research findings without censorship from individuals or organisations, including sponsors, funding agencies and participants.
- ACER and its staff should fully disclose the aims and sponsorship of research, except where such disclosure would violate the usual tenets of confidentiality and anonymity.
- Staff should provide for the right of sponsors or funders to have disclaimers included in research reports to differentiate their sponsorship from the conclusions of the research.
- In some circumstances in contract research, it may be appropriate to accept limitations on the release of results, such as in the case of testing programs or evaluations where the sponsors or the participants should have proprietary rights over the use and release of the data or findings. All such cases, other than ones involving measures of individual performance obtained with agreement that the results be supplied to an external agency, should be referred to the *ACER Research Ethics Committee* for approval.

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APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY (AEP)

MAJOR GOAL 1 - Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Educational Decision-Making

Long Term Goals

1. To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of pre-school, primary and secondary education services for their children.
2. To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisers, teachers assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and contemporary society, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.
3. To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of post-school education services, including technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.
4. To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed as administrators, teachers, researchers and student services officers in technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.
5. To provide education and training services to develop the skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in educational decision-making.
6. To develop arrangements for the provisions of independent advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding educational decisions at regional, State, Territory and National levels.

MAJOR GOAL 2 – Equality of Access to Education Services

Long Term Goals

7. To ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of pre-primary school have access to pre-school services on a basis comparable to that available to other Australian children of the same age.
8. To ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have local access to primary and secondary schooling.
9. To ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to post-compulsory secondary schooling, to technical and further education, and to higher education.

MAJOR GOAL 3 – Equity of Educational Participation

Long Term Goals

10. To achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in pre-school education for a period similar to that for other Australian children.
11. To achieve the participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in compulsory schooling.
12. To achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in post-secondary education, in technical and further education, and in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of other Australians in those sectors.

MAJOR GOAL 4 – Equitable and Appropriate Educational Outcomes

Long Term Goals

13. To provide adequate preparation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through pre-school education for the schooling years ahead.
14. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attainment of skills to the same standard as other Australian students throughout the compulsory schooling years.

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15. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the successful completion of Year 12 or equivalent at the same rates as for other Australian students.
 16. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in technical and further education, and in higher education, as for other Australians.
 17. To develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages.
 18. To provide community education services which enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people develop the skills to manage the development of their communities.
 19. To enable the attainment of proficiency in English language and numeracy competencies by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with limited or no educational experience.
 20. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity.
 21. To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.