

## Research: Gender equity [PROC004420]



### Purpose and intent

Metro North Hospital and Health Service (Metro North) strives to enhance research capability and consolidate the organisation's position as a world-class provider of healthcare by attracting and retaining highly competent clinicians and research leaders.

Whilst women comprise nearly 80% of the workforce within the Queensland Health sector, only one third of senior executives are women (Queensland Women, 2015). In the health and biomedical research sector locally and globally, there is increasing awareness of adverse cumulative effects of biases and barriers to the engagement, progression and retention of women in clinical, biomedical and health science research.

As Metro North has a role in administering research grant funding, it is required to maintain a policy and implementation plan to support gender equity in health science research with the organisation (NHMRC, 2015). These requirements for administering institutions were established through the NHMRC Women in Health Science Working Committee (2014), which sought to gain a better understanding of the issues facing women in health and medical research in terms of career progression and retention.

In keeping with the vision to deliver exceptional health outcomes through globally recognised discovery and translational research, Metro North aims for its clinical care and research to be enriched and informed by a diversity of perspectives afforded by inclusion and success of women engaged in research at all levels of experience. In the context of existing policies to support diversity and inclusion in its workforce, and through active leadership, Metro North commits to improve the retention and advancement of women in research.

### Scope and target audience

This procedure applies to:

- all Metro North clinical and non-clinical staff (permanent, temporary and casual) and all organisations and individuals acting as its agents (including Visiting Medical Officers and other partners, contractors, consultants and volunteers) undertaking research involving Metro North patients, staff and/or other resources.
- all settings across the health continuum including community, primary, acute, rehabilitation and residential care health services within Metro North

## Procedure

Metro North will:

1. Promote a workplace culture that appreciates and supports gender equity.
2. Monitor and report gender diversity in research funding, research activities and outcomes within Metro North across all levels, facilities and streams.
3. Enable appropriate representation of female researchers in leadership roles.
4. Recognise the contribution of outstanding women in research.
5. Ensure consistency in assessment of career disruptions in applications submitted for researcher support or research project awards.
6. Support women researchers at critical stages of career development.
7. Allow for implementation of flexible work arrangements across all research positions.
8. Provide for equal opportunity and progression of women across the research career pipeline.
9. Ensure every research committee and grant review panel achieves appropriate gender equity in its membership.
10. Mentor women in research on managing disruptions and career advancement.

Implementation of this procedure is outlined in the Gender Equity in Health Science Research Action Plan (Appendix 2).

## Partnering with consumers

The active involvement of consumers and community members in health and medical research benefits the quality and direction of research. Consumer and community involvement is about research being carried out with or by consumers and community members rather than to, about or for them.

Patients and family members are to be encouraged and given the opportunity to ask questions, clarify information and actively participate in the development and communication of research. Staff are responsible for providing information in a way that is understandable and that meets their needs and are to check consumer's understanding of discussions.

Refer to the [NHMRC Statement on Consumer and Community involvement in Health and Medical Research](#) for further guidance on research with consumers.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander considerations

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) provide [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018](#) and [Keeping research on track II 2018](#) as ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. These documents should be read alongside the [Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies 2012](#).

The [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#), [The Lowitja Institute](#) and the [Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council QAIHC](#) provide further resources.

There is currently no certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in Queensland. You may wish to contact one of these HREC's for more information:

- [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Research Ethics Committee](#)
- [Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council Ethics Committee \(NSW\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney Ethics Committee \(NSW\)](#)

- [Human Research Ethics Committee for the Northern Territory Department of Health and Menzies School of Health Research](#)
- [Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee \(SA\)](#)
- [Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee](#)

Refer to the [Metro North Better Together Plan](#) or the [Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010-2033](#)

## Legislation and other authority

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*

*Australian Research Council Act 2001 (Cth)*

*Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 (Qld)*

*Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*

*Industrial Relations Act 1999 (Qld)*

*National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (Cth)*

*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)*

*Public Health Act 2005 (Qld)*

*Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld)*

*Public Service Act 2008 (Qld)*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*

*Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 (QLD)*

## References

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2015, *NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy*, including APPENDIX C: Institutional policies – requirements in policies to support the progression and retention of women in health and medical research.

## Related documents

Metro North Research Policy (POL004365)

Research: Monitoring (PROC004412)

Research: Financial management (PROC004413)

Research: Conflict of interest (PROC004414)

Research: Intellectual Property (PROC004415)

Research: Authorship (PROC004416)

Research: Responsible reporting (PROC004417)

Research: Honorary Appointments, Research Students and Visitors (PROC004418)

Research: Partnership and collaboration (PROC004419)

Research: Gender equity (PROC004420)

Research: Complaints and breaches of the Code (PROC004421)

## Appendix 1- Definition of terms

Term	Definition
Author	An individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and who has agreed to be listed as an author.
Authorship	Authorship refers to the attribution of contributors to academic publications. Authorship must be determined based on substantial scholarly contributions.
Breach	A failure to meet the principles and responsibilities of the Code. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
Code, the	The <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018</i> (the Code) establishes a framework for responsible research conduct that provides a foundation for high-quality research, credibility and community trust in the research endeavour.  <a href="https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018">https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018</a>
Collaboration	A working relationship between researchers who together engage in research. A collaboration may occur between researchers internal or external to the one organisation and may be guided by formal agreements for a specific project.
Collaboration Agreement	An agreement made between Metro North and another entity for the purpose of performing research. For clarity, this definition does not include an employment agreement with an employee of Metro North.
Confidential Information	Confidential Information means any information that—  (a) is about a person who is receiving or has received a public sector health service; and (b) could identify the person.  <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 (Qld)</i>
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. <sup>1</sup>  Where a person's individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations in research; or where an institution's interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of its research obligations.
Contributor	A person, body or institution who has enabled the research to be completed either through provision of facilities, funding, data collection and management, supervision, mentorship, statistical support,

<sup>1</sup> Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

	technical writing who has not made other contribution that would constitute authorship as defined in this document.
Coordinating Principal Investigator (CPI)	<p>The Investigator responsible for coordinating a multi-centre research study, and the submission and communication of all subsequent requests and notifications to the site PIs and Reviewing HREC.</p> <p>The CPI and their team are responsible for coordinating the HREC applications and correspondence throughout a multi-centre study, on behalf of the Accepting PIs for which the CPI is responsible.</p> <p>For single site studies the terms Coordinating Principal Investigator, Coordinating Principal Researcher, Site Principal Investigator and Principal Investigator are all synonymous.</p>
Corresponding Author	The author who is, as agreed by all co-authors, responsible for communication between the publishers, managing communication between the co-authors and maintaining records of the authorship agreement.
Department Head	The person who supervises or directs the organisational unit in which the Researcher is engaged.
Ethics	The concepts of right and wrong, justice and injustice, virtue and vice, good and bad, and activities to which these concepts apply.
Facility	The site at which the research is performed or the researcher is engaged.
Facility Executive Director	The executive officer of the Facility. At any time, the Chief Executive may step into the role described for the Facility Executive Director.
Gender Equity	Women and men enjoying the same status; the same opportunities are available for both women and men to realise their full human rights and potential.
Human Research Ethics Application (HREA)	<p>The HREA is the Nationally accepted online application form provided by the NHMRC that enables all Australian research involving human participants to be efficiently and effectively reviewed.</p> <p><a href="https://hrea.gov.au/">https://hrea.gov.au/</a></p>
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)	<p>Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) review research proposals that involve humans or their tissue or data. HRECs are established by organisations, which register their HREC with the NHMRC. It may also be referred to as the Reviewing HREC in multi-centre research studies.</p> <p>A Certified HREC has had its processes assessed and certified under the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Certification Scheme. NHMRC certification lasts for three years.</p>
In-kind	Goods, services, and transactions not involving money or not measured in monetary terms.

Intellectual Property	<p>All rights in Australia or any other jurisdiction resulting from intellectual activity in the medical, industrial, scientific, artistic and literary fields, including any rights in, or rights to registration of:</p> <p>Works under the <i>Copyright Act 1968</i> (Cth)</p> <p>Designs under the <i>Designs Act 2005</i> (Cth)</p> <p>Inventions under the <i>Patent Act 1990</i> (Cth)</p> <p>Trade Marks under the <i>Trade Marks Act 1995</i> (Cth)</p> <p>Circuit layouts or integrated circuits under the <i>Circuit Layouts Act 1989</i> (Cth)</p> <p>Confidential information at common law and equity.</p>
Investigation	Used to describe the action of investigating an allegation of a breach of the Code by the Panel, following the preliminary assessment. The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether a breach of the Code has occurred, and if so, the extent of that breach, and to make recommendations about further actions.
Journal article	A report on research outcomes made available to the public via submission and acceptance in a scientific journal involving a process of peer review and/or editorial review.
Metro North	Metro North Hospital and Health Service
National Statement, the	<p>The <i>National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)</i> (Updated 2018) consists of a series of guidelines made in accordance with the <i>National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992</i>.</p> <p>The National Statement is intended for use by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any researcher conducting research with human participants;</li> <li>• any member of an ethical review body reviewing that research;</li> <li>• those involved in research governance; and</li> <li>• potential research participants.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018">https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018</a></p>
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NHMRC Women in Health Science Committee	Committee re-established in December 2014 to enable NHMRC to identify mechanisms that could be implemented to overcome gender equity issues.
Partnership	A research partnership involves engagement between two or more organisations who share a common purpose and whose researchers and decision-makers work collaboratively together to create better health services and health outcomes through generating or sharing research knowledge. Partnerships may involve organisations from

	different sectors; health service, academia, industry or non-government organisations.
Patient	An individual who receives, or has received, care treatment or other services through a Metro North facility.
Peer Review	The impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field.
Principal Investigator (PI)	<p>The nominated delegate with primary responsibility and accountability for a research project.</p> <p>For multi-centre studies the PI may be known as the Accepting PI if they do not have CPI responsibilities.</p> <p>For single site studies the terms Coordinating Principal Investigator, Coordinating Principal Researcher, Site Principal Investigator and Principal Investigator are used interchangeably.</p> <p>See also Coordinating Principal Investigator (CPI).</p>
Publication	<p>Dissemination of findings, whether in hardcopy, electronic or other tangible form, including: refereed and non-refereed books or journals; web-pages; eLearning resource packages; conference presentations, papers, proceedings, posters and abstracts; films; professional and institutional repositories; and patents, registered designs and intellectual property.</p> <p>A publication may be unsolicited or invited and may entail a primary research report or a review of previously published literature. A publication can also take the form of publication in an online platform or published proceedings of an organisation meeting or conference. Information submitted for publication must be an accurate representation of the research.</p>
Record	<p>Recorded information created or received by an entity in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs that provides evidence of the business or affairs and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anything on which there is writing</li> <li>• anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols or perforations having a meaning for persons, including persons qualified to interpret them</li> <li>• anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else, or</li> <li>• a map, plan drawing or photograph.</li> </ul>
Research	The original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight. The concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research Collaboration Agreement (RCA)	<p>An agreement made between Metro North and another entity for the purpose of determining those party's roles in Collaboration on Research.</p> <p>For clarity, this definition does not include an employment agreement with an employee of Metro North.</p>
Research Ethics	Ethics as it applies to research with particular consideration of research risks and benefits as well as protection of the rights and safety of the community and research participants.
Research Governance	<p>The process by which an RGO assesses the suitability of study to take place within their institution / HHS and recommends authorisation to the HHS CE. Once authorised, the study may commence at that institution / HHS.</p> <p>Also referred to as Site Authorisation.</p>
Research Governance Officer (RGO)	<p>The Office(r) or coordinated function within an institution / HHS whose responsibilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessing the site-specific aspects of ethically approved research applications;</li> <li>• making recommendations to the HHS CE or delegate as to whether a research study should be granted authorisation at that site; and</li> <li>• monitoring authorised research at the site to ensure it meets appropriate standards.</li> </ul>
Research Output	A research output communicates or makes available the findings of research that may be in hardcopy, electronic or other form. Examples of research outputs include journal articles, book chapters, books, conference papers, reports, datasets, patents and patent applications, performances, videos and exhibitions.
Research Student	<p>An individual enrolled in a course of study with a recognised research or teaching institution and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled in honours, research masters or doctoral program, or any substantial postgraduate research project or dissertation with a University.</li> <li>• Volunteer medical, nursing or allied health students gaining research experience.</li> </ul>
Researcher	A person(s) who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.
Scholarly and Academic Works	Copyright works that are intended for publication in order to further community knowledge of a certain phenomenon or area of study excluding any Teaching Materials.
Site Authorisation	The process by which an RGO assesses the suitability of study to take place within their institution / HHS and recommends authorisation to the HHS CE. Once authorised, the study may commence at that institution / HHS.



	Also referred to as Research Governance.
Supervisor	An individual responsible for the supervision of a research students, honorary appointee or other individual undertaking research.
Teaching Materials	Courses, teaching programmes and curricula developed for teaching at the Metro North and any ancillary materials such as web-delivery services for provision of such courses or teaching programmes.
Unconscious bias	Attitudes beyond our conscious, regular perceptions of others and ourselves, reinforced by our environment and experiences.
Visitor	An individual not employed by Metro North who is invited to attend a clinical facility within Metro North for the purposes of research.

## Appendix 2 – Research: Gender equity action plan

PROCEDURE/ ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
<b>1. Mentor women in research on managing disruptions and career advancement.</b>	
Establish an information page on Gender Equity in Health Science Research within the MNHHS Research webpage with links, procedures and resources that support women researchers.	Number of accesses to information on Gender Equity in Health Science Research Webpage
Establish a program for networking opportunities for women researchers with presentations from inspirational role models.	Number and range of networking sessions provided. Number and diversity of women attending networking sessions.
We will establish a mentorship scheme for women in research across MNHHS involving senior male and female mentors from MNHHS and its partner academic institutes	Number of mentors and women researchers who enrol as mentees.
<b>2. Support women researchers at critical stages of career development.</b>	
Advocate for access to and success in research higher degree scholarships and fellowships to enable women researchers, particularly following career interruptions.	Number and proportion of women who resume research after returning to work following career interruptions. Number of women who apply for and are awarded internal and externally funded research scholarships and fellowships.
Include in the Research Roadmap information on existing QH and MNHHS policies and procedures that enable flexible work arrangements	Number of women researchers who take advantage of flexible work arrangements.
<b>3. Allow for part-time options across all research positions.</b>	

PROCEDURE/ ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
Provide education on existing QH and MNHHS Human Resources policies, procedures and guidelines that support diversity and flexible work conditions.	Number of research position descriptions that have part-time options.  Number of staff engaged in research on a part time basis.
<b>4. Ensure consistency in assessment of career disruptions in applications submitted for research support or research awards.</b>	
Develop guidelines for appropriate consideration of career interruptions and measures of merit relative to opportunity for applications for people and project support schemes.	Number of grant and fellowship schemes that consider career interruptions and factors affecting research productivity in applications and grant review processes.  The number, proportion, investigator role and value of applications and grants received from men and women through internal and competitive national funding schemes.
<b>5. Provide for equal opportunity and progression of women across the research career pipeline.</b>	
Develop guidelines for appropriate consideration of career interruptions and measures of merit relative to opportunity for all new appointments.	Number and proportion of applications, interviews and appointments of women and men in senior roles for which research is a core duty.
Communicate QH and Metro North HHS procedures for supporting gender equity in clinical and health science research including Inclusion and Diversity Planning Strategies.	Number and distribution of communications.
<b>6. Ensure every research committee and grant review panel achieves appropriate gender equity in its membership.</b>	
Advocate for appropriate representation of women on research committees and panels.	Communications to research committees and grant review panels procedures for supporting diversity.  Proportion and representation (stream, discipline, level) of women on research committees and grant review panels.
<b>7. Enable appropriate representation of female researchers in leadership roles.</b>	
Communicate QH and MNHHS policy, procedures and guidelines for supporting gender equity in clinical and health science research, including Diversity and Inclusion Strategies.	Number and proportion of women appointed to senior positions involving a research component.  Representation of women on program committees of research symposia and conferences hosted internally and externally (e.g. annual conferences of professional societies).
Establish evidenced-based targets for appropriate diversity and representation of women researchers in leadership roles within and external to MNHHS.	Number of women researchers participating in leadership training and networks including for example, Queensland Health Aspiring Women's Leadership

PROCEDURE/ ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
Raise awareness and encourage participation in existing leadership training opportunities.	Symposium, Queensland Government Women's Network.
<b>8. Recognise and celebrate the contribution of outstanding women in research.</b>	
<p>Advocate for a prize for outstanding contributions to research by women in clinical and health science.</p> <p>Include symposia sessions to showcase outstanding research by Metro North women in research.</p>	<p>Number and proportion of women researchers presenting research outcomes at national and international conferences.</p> <p>Proportion and representation of women engaged and leading national and international research collaborative projects.</p>
<b>9. Monitor gender diversity in research funding, research activities and outcomes within MNHHS across all levels, facilities and streams.</b>	
<p>Establish processes for collecting and analysing research funding, research activity and productivity stratified by gender and level.</p> <p>Establish processes for monitoring the engagement and progression of women and men in research within MNHHS.</p>	<p>Number of approved research projects that are led by men and women.</p> <p>Number and value of research scholarships and grants from external and internal schemes (NHMRC, Foundations) awarded to men and women researchers within MNHHS.</p> <p>Number of publications captured in the MNHHS Research Endnote library that are co-authored by men and women.</p>
<b>10. Promote a workplace culture that appreciates and supports diversity</b>	
Promote access to existing training on unconscious bias.	Number, diversity and level of staff completing unconscious bias training.

## Document history

<b>Author</b>	Executive Director, Research Metro North
<b>Custodian</b>	Executive Director, Research Metro North
<b>Compliance evaluation and audit</b>	Compliance evaluation and audit will be conducted in line with the Research: Gender Equity Action Plan
<b>Replaces Document/s</b>	PROC004420 V1.0
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b>Key stakeholders</b></p> <p>HREC Chair and Administrator</p> <p>Research Governance Officers (RGO)</p> <p>RBWH Executive Director of Research</p> <p>Director of Research and Education, Redcliffe</p> <p><b>Broad Consultation</b></p> <p>Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit</p> <p>Metro North Information Technology</p> <p>Metro North Nursing and Midwifery</p> <p>Metro North Allied Health</p> <p>Metro North Medical Services</p> <p>Metro North Finance</p> <p>Metro North Workplace Health and Safety</p> <p>Metro North Legal Unit</p> <p>Metro North Risk and Compliance Officer</p> <p>Metro North Emergency Medicine and Access Coordination Stream</p> <p>Clinical Operations Strategy Implementation Unit</p> <p>Clinical Directorate Safety and Quality Units</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Clinical Skills Development Centre</p>
<b>Marketing Strategy</b>	A Policy, Procedure and Protocol Staff Update will be published online each month to update staff of all new and updated policies, procedures and protocols. This update will be emailed to all Safety and Quality Units in each clinical directorate and a broadcast email sent to all Metro North staff with a link to the published update.
<b>Key words</b>	Gender, equity, health, science, research, women, equality, unconscious bias

## AUTHORISATION

**Custodian Signature**

Date

Executive Director, Research, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

**Authorising Officer Signature**

Date

Executive Director, Research, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

The original signed version is kept in file at the Metro North Office of Research, Metro North.