University Statement on Peer Review

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) recognises the importance of peer review and is committed to encouraging and supporting researchers to participate in the process. That encouragement extends to participation as an expert or generalist reviewer both within the University and to Australian and international peer review processes. UTAS also expects researchers to engage with the process by having their work peer reviewed. This includes ensuring that all applications submitted for research ethics approval, funding and publication to have undergone a peer review process prior to submission.

Peer review takes on many forms but, in essence, requires both experts in areas of research and generalist readers (in associated or more generalised fields of research) to provide clear, unbiased, timely and considered review of material submitted for publication, grants, promotion and other forms of public release. Normally a peer review process requires at least three reviewers. Peer reviewers are often asked to comment on the academic quality, relevance, coherence and financial viability of applications and/or be able to rank the review material against selection criteria.

The University recognises that one important aspect of peer review is the discovery of apparent deviations from the principles of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007). Examples include double publication, incorrect and misleading statements, fabrication, plagiarism and fraud. In such cases, reviewers should consult the UTAS Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct Procedures.

Responsibilities of Researchers

The University strongly encourages all researchers to participate in, and support, the peer review process. In doing so, those who agree to act as peer reviews must:

- Be fair and timely in their review;
- Act in confidence and not disclose the content or outcome of any process (to those other than the author/s) in which they are involved;
- Ensure they are informed about, and comply with, the relevant criteria;
- Declare all conflicts of interest, including perceived conflicts of interest, which may influence the peer review process;
- Give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking;
- Not take undue or calculated advantage of knowledge obtained during the process; and
- Be aware of their obligations under various grant Funding Agreements as to the requirement to undertake peer review when requested by the Funding Body (for example, NHMRC, ARC).

Taking into consideration the field of research and the number of recognised experts within the field, reviews should not agree to participate in specialist peer review outside their area or level of expertise. In instances where this does occur, researchers should declare their limitations. When asked to participate as a generalist reader, researchers should be aware that they need a general level of awareness and understanding of the field involved.
The University encourages researchers supervising research students to assist their students (as an essential part of research training) in developing the skills and responsibilities involved in peer reviewing and appreciate their obligation to participate in this scholarly activity.

**Endorsed** by the Research Integrity and Ethics Committee, January 2014