

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF ONE UNIVERSITY'S CODE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

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Massey University at present

- 19,994 EFT (36,125 headcount) students enrolled in 2009.
- 19 percent of students were postgraduate, 7 percent research postgraduate.
- 414 research degree completions; and 1000 doctoral students enrolled.
- Operating revenue of NZD 401M, of which NZD 122M or 30 percent was for research and consultancy.
- In the most recent national research assessment exercise in 2006, 78 percent of the 1,117 EFT academic staff was assessed as 'research active'.

Source: Massey University (2010). *Annual report 2009*. Palmerston North, NZ: Author.

Original MUHEC Code 1987-1990

- Guaranteed academic freedom and autonomy of open science in exchange for public scrutiny of standards
- Collegial culture of scholarship, service commitment to academic decision-making
- Limited human research activity and infrastructure across the university
- Code based on broad principles, education and explicit trust in individuals

HRC-accredited MUHEC review procedures 2010

- New Public Management external environment; capped government subsidy to be supplemented by commercialised science and RAE 'winnings'
- Performative academic culture of individual teaching and research outputs; growth in PG and demise of scholarly teacher
- Reduced commitment to academic decision-making; 75FTE staff in AVCR Office
- Code incorporates benchmarking and risk mitigation; reputation management for research groups and institution; individual employment contract proscribes 'dishonesty'

Challenge 1 for 2030

- As teaching and research performativity demands increase, altruistic service contributions to academic decision-making decrease, in both quantity and quality. This inevitably alters the balance of academic work, identity and culture.

Response 1 in 2030

- Should codes based on the capacity of the individual to interpret broad ethical principles be superseded by those which more clearly and comprehensively specify researcher obligations and duties – both prescribed and proscribed moral behaviours?

Challenge 2 for 2030

- Paradoxically, private funding may be essential to the maintenance of public university autonomy and academic freedom, and the conduct of 'disinterested' teaching and research.
- Universities have yet to articulate the criteria against which decisions about non-government research revenue and investment strategic choices are to be made.

Response 2 in 2030

- To ensure an appropriate balance between their commercial and open science commitments, universities will need to focus on policies that promote the ‘integrity’ of research decision-making at the most senior level of the institution.
- The entrepreneurial public university of the future will require both a code of ethical conduct for its researchers, and a code of corporate integrity for its governing body.