

RESEARCH IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure outlines CQUniversity's requirements under the Memorandum of Understanding between the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#) and CQUniversity, and expectations of researchers undertaking research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to CQUniversity research activities undertaken in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The University has an ongoing commitment to improve practices and standards in all activities undertaken in the Marine Park to help protect the Great Barrier Reef. As such, the University is an accredited research institution under the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019](#) (Cwlth). The accreditation allows limited impact research (extractive and non-extractive) to be undertaken by researchers affiliated with the University, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations, the University's [Code of Conduct for Research](#) and any Environmental Management Plan for the Scientific Research Zone around research stations.
- 3.2 The accreditation removes the need for researchers to obtain a research permit from the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#) if they are conducting limited impact research.
- 3.3 The University encourages researchers and other personnel to learn more about the tradition, culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to respect the values and many special cultural and heritage sites of traditional owners throughout the Marine Park.

3.4 University researchers must adhere to all environmental practices and standards, including any changes or updates to these practices and standards, and ensure that all other personnel involved in project work are informed of, and comply with, these practices and standards. The [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website](#) outlines the legal requirements and environmental practices and standards for a range of activities, including:

- anchoring
- bird watching
- boating
- collecting
- diving and snorkelling
- dugong watching
- fishing
- moorings
- motorised water sports
- reef walking
- spear fishing
- turtle watching
- waste disposal
- whale and dolphin watching, and
- yachting.

4 PROCEDURE

Administration

4.1 The Vice-President (Research) will appoint a Secretary from within the Research Division to manage research operations being undertaken within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Research protocols

4.2 The Secretary will prepare proformas, which detail the format and requirements for presentation of research protocols, for researchers to use.

4.3 The Vice-President (Research) will provide initial consideration to a research protocol by no later than four weeks after receipt of the protocol and will finalise consideration by no later than eight weeks after the research protocol receipt.

Project applications

4.4 Research projects and protocols will only be accepted from persons affiliated with the University. There will be no fees charged for consideration of applications.

4.5 Applications will initially be reviewed by the Secretary to:

- determine eligibility for approval as limited impact (extractive or non-extractive) under the Memorandum of Understanding, and
- confirm the location of the proposed research to ensure the proposed protocol can be undertaken under the conditions of the zoning map, and that the proposed species and numbers do not exceed the listed species.

- 4.6 The preliminary review will be presented to the Vice-President (Research) for consideration. Where the Vice-President (Research) is unable to reach a decision, the Vice-President (Research), may consult with the Chair of the Animal Ethics Committee, or other suitably qualified persons from within or external to the University.
- 4.7 If the Vice-President (Research) is still unable to make a decision, they may communicate with the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#) to obtain an opinion or may reject the application and direct the researcher to apply to the [Authority](#) for a research permit.
- 4.8 The Secretary will advise the proposer/s in writing of any research proposal decisions made by the Vice-President (Research). If a research project has been approved the proposer/s will be issued with a letter of authorisation to work within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Monitoring of research projects

- 4.9 The Vice-President (Research) will determine:
- the frequency and type of monitoring required for each research project according to the degree of risk in the research project and the persons responsible for the monitoring. These decisions will be recorded in writing, and
 - the frequency of reports required from the principal researcher of an approved research project. Reports must include:
 - progress to date or outcome in the case of completed research
 - compliance with the approved research protocol
 - compliance with any conditions of approval, and
 - copies of any academic publications arising from the research.
- 4.10 The Secretary will ensure that monitoring and monitoring reports occurs as determined.

Adverse occurrences

- 4.11 All approved research proposals must include the following condition of approval:
- “It is a condition of approval of this research project that you report immediately anything which may warrant review of ethical approval of the research protocol, including:*
- *serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants, animals or the habitat*
 - *proposed changes in the protocol, and*
 - *unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.*
- A written report of any adverse occurrence or unforeseen event that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the research project must be submitted to the Vice-President (Research) by no later than the next working day after recognition of an adverse occurrence/effect.”*

Suspension of a project

- 4.12 Where there has been an adverse occurrence, or if the Vice-President (Research) determines that a research project is not being conducted, or cannot be conducted, in accordance with the approved protocol, and that the welfare and rights of human participants, or the welfare of animals is not or will not be protected, the Vice-President (Research) can suspend or withdraw approval of the project.
- 4.13 The Vice-President (Research) will formally advise the researcher/s, Secretary, Chair of the Animal Ethics Committee, and any other formal parties to the research project of any withdrawal of approval, that the research project be discontinued, suspended or that specified steps be taken to allow the project to continue.
- 4.14 The Vice-President (Research) may restore approval for a research project if satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to allow the project to continue.

Equipment and material requirements

- 4.15 Vessels used for a research project must be clearly marked "Research Vessel" while being used for those activities in the Marine Park.
- 4.16 Equipment, including minor research aids, placed in the Marine Park must be clearly marked with the name, institution, and research project duration. Where this information cannot be placed on the equipment, the researcher must record a differential global positioning system (DGPS) or global positioning system (GPS) location for the equipment. The GPS location should be lodged with the Director - Environmental Impact Management, [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#), on placement of the apparatus.
- 4.17 Within 30 days of concluding a research project, all equipment and material used for the project must be removed from the Marine Park. If for any unforeseen circumstances the University is not able to remove the research equipment and material, the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#) must be notified, in writing, within the 30 day period providing reasons for the delay and providing a timetable for removal of the equipment and material.
- 4.18 When undertaking research in a part of the Scientific Research Zone in one of the locations listed below, the researcher must discuss the study sites with the appropriate person (as specified), and comply with any approved Environmental Management Plan for conducting research in that area:

LOCATION	APPROPRIATE PERSON
Day Reef SR-14-2001	Co-Directors, Lizard Island Research Station
Yonge Reef SR-14-2002	Co-Directors, Lizard Island Research Station
MacGillivray Reef SR-14-2003	Co-Directors, Lizard Island Research Station
Lizard Island Reef SR-14-2004	Co-Directors, Lizard Island Research Station
North Direction Reef SR-14-2005	Co-Directors, Lizard Island Research Station
Green Island Reef SR-16-2006	Manager, Monkman Research Station
Orpheus Island north SR-18-2007	Manager, Orpheus Island Research Station
AIMS SR-19-2008	Director, Australian Institute of Marine Science
Heron Island Reef east SR-23-2009	Station Manager, Heron Island Research Station
One Tree Island Reef SR-23-2010	Resident Officer, One Tree Island Research Station

Complaints

- 4.19 Enquiries and complaints will be treated confidentially by the University unless the University is under an obligation to disclose the complaint. In such case, the complainant will be advised if the University is to disclose the enquiry or complaint. No student or employee will have their academic progress or employment put in jeopardy by raising a concern.
- 4.20 The Vice-President (Research) is authorised to receive and attempt to resolve complaints or concerns about the conduct of an approved research project from research participants, researchers, or other interested persons.
- 4.21 The Vice-President (Research) may consult with the Chair of the Animal Ethics Committee, or other suitably qualified persons from within or external to the University to seek advice and assistance in attempting to resolve any complaint or address any concern.

Confidentiality

- 4.22 Research protocols submitted for approval will remain confidential to the Vice-President (Research) and the Research Division.
- 4.23 Research protocol files, including any associated documents, will be accorded high security status and be accessible only by the Vice-President (Research), and Research Division employees authorised by the Vice-

President (Research). Files will remain confidential except as required by law, or if authorised by the Vice-President (Research) to be conveyed to:

- an applicant seeking ethical approval
- a research funding body
- the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#)
- an expert adviser, or
- the State Ombudsman in the event of a complaint concerning a research project or a grievance or an irreconcilable difference.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

5.1 Researchers and personnel must:

- always carry the Letter of Authorisation while working within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The letter of authorisation serves as an indication to compliance officers that researchers and/or other personnel are undertaking research under the auspices of an accredited educational or research institution for the purposes of the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan](#). If a letter of authorisation is not able to be produced when required, the researcher or other personnel is liable to be prosecuted for contravention of the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan](#)
- recognise that the Marine Park is a multiple use Marine Park
- be aware of other users (e.g. tourists, traditional owners, commercial fishers, etc.) in any area where research is being conducted and minimise the potential for negative interactions whenever possible
- be familiar with all relevant requirements and restrictions applying to the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act](#), [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations](#), [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan](#) and relevant Plans of Management
- lodge, in an appropriate curated museum collection within Australia, a portion of any new taxonomic material (including all holotypes and at least half the number of paratypes of new species) collected as part of a research project in the Marine Park
- submit annual reports for projects operating over 12 months and a completion report on conclusion of the project, and
- submit a copy of any publications/s arising from work conducted in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park with the Research Division.

5.2 The Vice-President (Research) and the Research Division are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

Reporting

5.3 In line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#) and CQUniversity, the University will provide an annual report to the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#), outlining active projects, and any publications arising from previous projects.

5.4 The Secretary will provide an annual written report on any matters involving adverse occurrences to Research Committee.

Records management

5.5 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

5.6 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Code of Conduct for Research](#)

[Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975](#) (Cwlth)

[Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019](#) (Cwlth)

[Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003](#) (Cwlth)

Memorandum of Understanding between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and CQUniversity

[Safety in Recreational Water Activities Act 2011](#) (Qld)

[Safety in Recreational Water Activities Regulation 2024](#) (Qld)

8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	Research Committee
Advisory Committee	N/A
Required Consultation	N/A
Administrator	Vice-President (Research)
Next Review Date	19/07/2026

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Research Committee 19/07/2023
Amendment Authority and Date	Editorial amendments 14/03/2024; Editorial amendments 12/08/2024; Editorial amendments 23/04/2025.
Notes	This document consolidated and replaced the Code of Conduct for Research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Operating Procedure, and the Research in the Great Barrier Park Marine Park Grievance Procedure (approved 19/07/2023).