



## Responsible peer review conduct

### Section 6: *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

Peer reviewers must complete their work in a fair and timely manner, act in confidence and not disclose the content or outcome of any review process, declare all conflicts of interest, not take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, not agree to participate in peer review outside of their area of expertise and review papers according to criteria, without prejudice (NHMRC et al 2007).

### Scenario

Many journal editors are busy academics who juggle their own research and teaching with the demands of regularly publishing an academic journal. Finding appropriate reviewers who are both familiar with the specifics of a submission and willing to complete the review in a timely manner can be challenging. An editor has become suspicious that one of his most reliable and punctual reviewers has been incorporating the ideas he comes across in the review process into his own work. The editor has no proof that this is the case and is apprehensive about making a false accusation. Furthermore, the editor does not want to alienate the reviewer, who has provided outstanding service to the journal over a number of years.

### Points for discussion:

1. What should the editor do?
2. Who is responsible for the integrity of the peer review process: the editor or the reviewer?
3. Is it acceptable for a peer reviewer to use ideas that he/she comes across in the course of the review process? Why/why not?
4. Why is it important for academics to accept invitations to peer review articles in their areas of expertise? Who benefits?

National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. 2007. *Revision of the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice: Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, Canberra: Australian Government.

*Support for this project/activity has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views in this project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.*



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Australia License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/au/).