

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure

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1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Scientia Clinical Research Pty Ltd (SCR) is committed to promoting ethical, responsible, and transparent conduct in all areas of its work. We value integrity, honesty, and trust, and aim to create a workplace where people feel safe to speak up.

SCR recognises the importance of those who report Serious Wrongdoing and is committed to protecting them (and anyone involved) from harm or disadvantage because of making a report.

All staff, contractors, volunteers, and Board members have a duty to report Serious Wrongdoing when they reasonably suspect it has occurred or is occurring. Because SCR is a controlled entity of UNSW, all SCR staff, contractors, and volunteers are considered Public Officials (POs).

If a PO reports a suspected Serious Wrongdoing at SCR, their report may be a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) under the **Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (NSW)** and **UNSW's Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblowing) Policy**.

This procedure outlines how SCR:

- Meets its obligations under the PID Act and UNSW's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Encourages and supports the reporting of Serious Wrongdoing.
- Protects the identity and safety of those making disclosures.
- Ensures reports are handled according to SCR's PID (Whistleblowing) Procedure.

2 DOCUMENT SCOPE

This procedure applies to all SCR staff whether permanent, part-time, or casual as well as contractors (including sub-contractors), volunteers, and Board members. For the purposes of this SOP, these individuals will be collectively referred to as Public Officials (POs).

It covers reports of Serious Wrongdoing, which includes:

- Corrupt conduct (e.g., fraud, bribery, money laundering, embezzlement, blackmail, conflict of interest)
- Government information breaches
- Local government pecuniary interest breaches
- Serious maladministration
- Privacy breaches
- Serious and substantial waste of public money

Other forms of workplace misconduct or concerns not covered above will be managed under SCR's Code of Conduct Policy.

This procedure must be read alongside UNSW's Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure (available in Dot Compliance as FRM-0000538).

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for:

- Supporting a culture of openness and ethical reporting.
- Implementing and making this procedure and the UNSW PID Policy accessible to staff, contractors and volunteers.
- Receiving reports from POs and escalating them as needed.
- Ensuring SCR's full compliance with UNSW PID Policy and this Procedure.

3.2 Disclosure Coordinator

UNSW's Director, Conduct and Integrity and SCR's CEO act as SCR's Disclosures Coordinator. They are responsible for:

- Receiving and assessing reports to decide if they qualify as PIDs.
- Being the main contact for all PID matters at SCR.
- Communicating with relevant integrity agencies if needed.
- Carrying out functions delegated by UNSW's President and Vice-Chancellor under the PID Act.

3.3 Disclosure Manager

Director of Quality Assurance and/or Head of Human Resources (or their delegate) act as SCR's Disclosure Manager. Their responsibilities include:

- Advising staff and stakeholders on PID processes.
- Supporting Disclosure Officers and managers in their roles.
- Helping assess and manage PID reports.
- Investigating PIDs and ensuring proper resolution.
- Managing records and ensuring compliance with PID laws and procedures.
- Delivering PID training.
- Reporting investigation outcomes to the Disclosure Coordinator.
- Keeping reporters informed.
- Seeking advice from UNSW's legal support when needed.

3.4 Disclosure Officer

Members of SCR's Leadership team serve as Disclosure Officers. Their role is to:

- Receive reports directly from staff or forwarded by managers.
- Document oral reports in writing.
- Ensure reports are referred to Your Call or the appropriate process as described within this SOP.

Important Note: Managers and Disclosure Officers must not investigate or attempt to verify Serious Wrongdoing themselves. Their role is to receive and refer reports only.

3.5 Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting and supporting a culture that encourages reporting Serious Wrongdoing.
- Ensuring all team members understand this procedure and how to report concerns.
- Introducing this procedure to all new staff at induction.

Receiving reports and promptly forwarding them to a Disclosure Officer or via **Your Call**.

Managers must not attempt to investigate or verify reports themselves.

3.6 Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

All Staff, Contractors and Volunteers of SCR must:

- Help create a culture in which speaking up about wrongdoing is supported.
- Report any suspected Serious Wrongdoing.
- Complete the required PID and Whistleblowing training.
- Cooperate fully and respectfully in any PID investigations.

They must not:

- Interfere with or obstruct an investigation.
- Knowingly make false or misleading statements.
- Offer or provide incentives to discourage someone from reporting or to retract a report.
- Prevent or attempt to prevent others from making a report.

Violations of these responsibilities may lead to disciplinary or contractual action, and in some cases, legal consequences.

Specific responsibilities are detailed in the procedural section of the document.

4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTIONS

4.1 Confidentiality

SCR is committed to protecting the identity of anyone who makes a PID. Identifying information will not be shared unless allowed under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022* (NSW).

4.2 Protection from Detriment

SCR does not tolerate any negative treatment or retaliation against someone who:

- Has made a report,
- Might make a report, or
- Is believed to have made a report.

If you suspect retaliation or unfair treatment, it must be reported immediately to the Disclosures Coordinator, Disclosures Manager, or an external integrity agency.

4.3 Legal Protection for Reporters

Anyone who makes a PID is protected by the PID Act. This includes:

- Protection from threats or acts of retaliation (Detriment),
- The right to seek a court order (injunction) to stop harm,
- The ability to claim compensation for unlawful retaliation,
- Immunity from legal liability for breaching confidentiality when proper steps are followed through an Integrity Agency.
- Protection under the **Defamation Act 2005**.

4.4 Reasonable Management Action

PID protections do not stop reasonable management actions from being taken. These actions may include:

- Performance appraisals,
- Disciplinary processes,
- Workplace suspension,
- Termination of employment,
- Role changes such as redeployment or redundancy.

4.5 Access to Records

The Disclosures Coordinator or Disclosures Manager may access relevant SCR systems, records, or assets as needed to manage and respond to a PID, in line with the SCR's IT and information policies.

5 PROCEDURE

5.1 Support for Reporters

SCR supports staff, contractors, and volunteers who suspect Serious Wrongdoing. Support includes:

- Access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Steps to minimise the risk of detriment
- Clear, transparent communication
- Confidentiality protections
- Opportunity to consult with a Disclosures Manager or Coordinator before making a formal report

If unsure whether a concern qualifies as Serious Wrongdoing, individuals are encouraged to report anyway or seek advice from a Disclosure Officer.

5.2 How to Report Serious Wrongdoing

Reports can be made to:

- Your Manager
- A SCR Disclosure Officer
- **Your Call**, UNSW's independent reporting service:
 - Online (via Your Call portal, Org ID: UNSW)
 - Phone: 1300 790 228 (Mon–Fri, 9am–12am AEST)

- Email: SpeakUp@scientiaclinicalresearch.com.au

Reports may be made verbally or in writing and should include:

- Dates, times, and locations of key events
- Names and roles of involved persons (if known)
- Reporter's relationship to those involved
- Description of the concern
- How the reporter became aware of it
- Consent level for sharing their identity
- Any witnesses or supporting evidence

Managers receiving reports must refer the Reporter immediately to a Disclosure Officer or Your Call.

If a matter being investigated under another SCR policy reveals suspected Serious Wrongdoing, it must be escalated under this procedure immediately.

5.3 Anonymous Reporting

- Reports can be made anonymously—preferably via **Your Call** for encrypted communication.
- SCR will investigate anonymous reports to the extent information allows.

5.4 Assessing Reports of Serious Wrongdoing

5.4.1 Initial Assessment

All reports made through Your Call or to a Disclosure Officer will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the criteria of a PID under the PID Act.

When a report is received, the Reporter will be:

- Acknowledged in writing,
- Informed that their report will be assessed under the PID Act and applicable procedures,
- Provided a link to the PID Procedure,
- Contacted by the Disclosure Manager and given support options.

5.4.2 Assessment Process

The Disclosure Manager reviews the report and recommends whether it qualifies as a PID. The Disclosures Coordinator makes the final decision.

During the assessment, the Coordinator or Manager may:

- Take urgent steps to protect people, property, or the environment,
- Contact the reporter or other parties for clarification (confidentiality applies),
- Seek expert or legal advice,
- Refer the matter to a law enforcement or integrity agency if needed.

5.4.3 Decision and Next Steps

If the report is **not** a PID:

- It may be managed under another SCR policy,

- It may be referred to another organisation, or
- No further action may be taken.

The reporter will be notified of the outcome, including:

- The reasons for the decision,
- Their internal review options,
- Confirmation that the NSW Ombudsman has been informed.

If the report **is** a PID:

- The Disclosure Coordinator will decide whether the matter will be:
 - Investigated internally under the PID Procedure, or
 - Referred to another agency or Integrity Agency for investigation.

If referred externally, the Disclosure Manager will notify the reporter of:

- The decision and its reasons,
- The receiving agency's contact details,
- The reporter's protections under the PID Act.

5.5 Investigating PIDs

5.5.1 Managing Conflicts of Interest

Before starting any investigation, the Disclosure Manager must assess and disclose any potential, actual, or perceived conflicts of interest. If necessary, the Disclosures Coordinator will appoint someone else to lead the investigation, in line with the SCR's Conflict of Interest Policy.

5.5.2 Conducting the Investigation

The Disclosure Manager is responsible for the investigation. They may consult UNSW's Legal & Compliance Office, Internal Audit, or external experts to support the process. The goal is to determine whether there is enough evidence to confirm some or all the reported wrongdoing.

In carrying out the investigation:

- Relevant parties may be contacted for clarification or additional information.
- Legal and expert advice may be sought.
- Everyone involved will be treated fairly and confidentially.
- Those being investigated may be informed about the issue at an appropriate stage.

The Disclosures Coordinator may recommend actions to leaders within SCR. Investigations must follow agreed procedures and legal obligations. Staff, contractors, and volunteers are expected to assist in investigations if asked.

5.5.3 Communication and Updates

The Disclosure Manager will:

- Provide progress updates to the reporter at least every three months.

- Submit a final investigation report, including any recommendations, to the Disclosures Coordinator.

5.5.4 Corrective Actions

The Disclosures Coordinator will determine the most suitable corrective actions. These may include:

- A formal apology,
- Changes to policies or procedures,
- Additional staff training,
- Disciplinary action (e.g. termination, warning, or relocation),
- Compensation for affected individuals.

5.5.5 Finalising the Investigation

Once the investigation is complete, the reporter will be advised of:

- The steps taken during the investigation,
- Key findings and outcomes,
- Any corrective actions taken.

Some details may be withheld for legal or privacy reasons, but SCR will balance transparency with its obligations.

5.5.6 Ending an Investigation Early

SCR may decide to stop an investigation if it no longer qualifies as a PID. If this happens:

- The reporter will be informed and given reasons,
- The Disclosures Coordinator will consider if the issue should be handled under another process.

5.6 Detrimental Action, Reasonable Management Action, Risk Management and Obstruction

5.6.1 Causing Detriment

SCR will not tolerate any harmful treatment of a person who has made, may make, or is suspected of making a PID. Such behaviour breaches the Code of Conduct and is considered serious misconduct.

If anyone believes they are being mistreated for reporting wrongdoing, they must report it immediately to the Disclosures Coordinator, Disclosure Manager, or an Integrity Agency.

- Staff or affiliates involved may be asked to stay away from work while the matter is investigated.
- Contractors or volunteers may be temporarily restricted from SCR activities during this time.

5.6.2 Preventing Detriment

To reduce the risk of harm to the reporter, the Conduct and Integrity Office, UNSW will:

- Complete a risk assessment,
- Develop and regularly review a risk management plan,
- Communicate with the reporter to identify any foreseeable risks,
- Discuss protective measures (e.g. temporary remote work),
- Explain available support options.

5.7 Internal Review and Dispute Resolution

5.7.1 Internal Review

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers who report Serious Wrongdoing can request an internal review of certain decisions, including if SCR and/or UNSW:

- Decline to treat the report as a Voluntary PID,
- Stop dealing with the report after deciding it is not a PID,
- Choose not to investigate the matter or refer it to another agency,
- End the investigation without completing it or referring it elsewhere.

To request a review:

- An application must be submitted in writing within 28 days of being notified,
- Explain why you believe the decision was incorrect,
- Include any supporting information,
- Send the request to the **Internal Review Officer** at SpeakUp@unsw.edu.au

5.7.2 Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises between SCR and the reporter about a matter that is, or may be a PID, SCR and/or UNSW may ask the NSW Ombudsman to help resolve the issue through conciliation. This is a voluntary process and requires agreement from both parties.

5.8 Breach of Protections

Breaching confidentiality or protections may lead to court fines, compensation, or contract reinstatement. Affected individuals are encouraged to seek legal advice.

6 INPUT: DOCUMENTS OR APPLICATIONS

The following are required to perform this process:

- UNSW Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure (FRM-0000538)

7 OUTPUT: RECORDS

SCR will maintain full and accurate records of PIDs in accordance with the UNSW Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure, Recordkeeping Policy and the State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

8 GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Contractor	Means any person or entity who has a contractual relationship with SCR to provide services or exercise functions on behalf of SCR but is not a staff member. This includes sub-contractors.
Corrupt conduct	Has the same meaning as in part 3 of the <i>Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988</i> (NSW)
Detriment or Detrimental Action	Has the same meaning as in section 32 of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022</i> (NSW)
Integrity Agency	Has the same meaning as in section 32 of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022</i> (NSW)
Manager	Means any person who directly or indirectly supervises a staff member or volunteer.
Public Interest Disclosure (PID)	There are three types of PIDs as follows: Voluntary Public Interest Disclosure A report of a Serious Wrongdoing will constitute a Voluntary PID if it: - it has been made by a public official including a staff member, contractor or volunteer of their own accord and - they have come forward and disclosed what they know because they honestly and reasonably believe that the information they are providing shows (or tends to show) Serious Wrongdoing and - the report is made verbally or in writing and - the report is made to either - The Chief Executive Officer - A Manager - A UNSW Disclosure Officer A report of a Serious Wrongdoing will not constitute a Voluntary PID if: - The reporter wilfully makes a false statement to or misleads or attempts to mislead SCR or the person to whom the disclosure is made; - The report is about a disagreement with a SCR policy; - Concerns only a grievance about a matter relating to the employment or former employment of an individual and either does not have significant implications beyond matters personally affecting or tending to personally affect the individual or - Relates to the disagreement with the taking or proposed taking of Reasonable Management Action. A disclosure is not a Voluntary PID if the grievance arises from a decision made by SCR in dealing with a previous public interest disclosure or alleged detrimental action relating to a previous public interest disclosure.

Term	Description
	The Chief Executive Officer and UNSW Disclosures Officer may determine a report made by a person is a Voluntary PID even if the report would not otherwise meet the criteria to be a Voluntary PID. Mandatory Public Interest Disclosures A Mandatory PID is where a report of a Serious Wrongdoing has been made because the public official has a legal obligation to make that report or because making that report is an ordinary aspect of their role or function. Witness Public Interest Disclosures A Witness PID is where a person discloses information in the course of an investigation of a Serious Wrongdoing following a request or requirement of the investigator.
Privacy contravention	Means the failure, other than a trivial failure by an agency or public official to exercise functions in accordance with: ○ <i>The Privacy & Personal Information Protections Act 1998</i> (NSW) ○ <i>The Health Records & Information privacy Act 2002</i> (NSW)
Reasonable Management Action	Reasonable Management Action includes but is not limited to: - Management for improved performance - Misconduct investigation - Disciplinary action - Suspension from the workplace - Termination of employment and - Redundancy, retrenchment, deployment or redeployment.
SCR	Scientia Clinical Research Pty Ltd
Serious maladministration	Has the same meaning as in section 26 of the <i>Ombudsman Act 1974</i> (NSW)
Serious Wrongdoing	Under this SOP Serious Wrongdoing means any or all of the following: a) Corrupt conduct, b) A government information contravention, c) A local government pecuniary interest contravention, d) Serious maladministration, e) A privacy contravention, or f) A serious and substantial waste of public money.
Staff	Means all employees of SCR, including casual employees.
University or UNSW	Means the University of New South Wales
Volunteers	Means any person that engages with SCR freely without being paid to do so.

9 RELATED DOCUMENTS

<i>Document Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
FRM-0000538	UNSW Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure

10 REFERENCES

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (NSW)

Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 (NSW)

Privacy & Personal Information Protections Act 1998 (NSW)

Health Records & Information privacy Act 2002 (NSW)

Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)

11 ADMINISTRATION

11.1 Revision History

Version	Effective Date	Main Changes from Previous Version
SOP-0000536 Rev. 1.0	See header	Original version

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