

# miecat

## Ethical Guidelines

for

The MIECAT Institute staff and students  
in interactions with others  
and in companioning practice

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THE MIECAT INSTITUTE INC

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**Preamble**

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The MIECAT Institute is a not-for-profit higher education provider that offers accredited post graduate courses in therapeutic arts practice.

Our approach seeks congruence between *what* is taught and *how* it is taught. The dynamic process of inquiry invites you to be curious, challenged and immersed in a community of co-learners.

The MIECAT Institute creates opportunities for you to reconstruct understandings of experience, values and meaningfulness, to enrich professional practice and to contribute creatively to society.

Our primary purpose is education and research in the tertiary sector in Australia. The MIECAT Institute offers an accredited Masters in Therapeutic Arts Practice and Professional Doctorate in Therapeutic Arts Practice.

MIECAT inquiries are dedicated to the idea of lifelong pursuit of meaningfulness through the purposeful search for understanding that is found in relational experiencing. Working experientially with multi modal arts, meaningfulness and choices for action are explored in the context of our relational lived experiencing. This approach to inquiry is based in mutual respect, shared compassion, and collaborative commitment to the search for ways of living that support the flourishing of the planet.

The MIECAT Institute aims to teach a program of study for those passionate about how the arts may contribute to health, well-being and scholarship in the field of therapeutic arts practice. Graduates may consider vocations in creative arts therapy, education, research, community mental health, community development, and/or community activism for example. The MIECAT Institute also supports individuals who wish to understand more about themselves, groups wanting to explore shared meaningfulness, and organisations that rely on collaborative intersubjective approaches.

## The guidelines

This document articulates the values that underpin therapeutic arts practice and the relational actions and responsibilities of the staff and students of The MIECAT Institute. It also describes the personal attributes that The MIECAT Institute fosters in the education of therapeutic arts practitioners.

The guidelines apply to all enrolled students and to The MIECAT Institute's staff in their roles as teachers, supervisors or administrators.

Any complaints related to staff or student misconduct can be pursued through The [MIECAT Institute's Grievance Policy](#) which is available online and from the MIECAT Institute's office.

All enrolled students and MIECAT staff are expected to conduct themselves in alignment with MIECAT's *Ethical Guidelines* and relevant *Codes of Conduct*. In addition, students undertaking companioning practicums during their course are also expected to follow the *Ethical Guidelines* and *Code of Conduct* of the organisation in which they are working.

## Guiding principles

The MIECAT approach to arts based inquiry is informed by core values that relate to experiencing, relationality, multimodality, and emergence. Using the MIECAT approach, the emergent outcomes are part of an inquiry that is ongoing and seeks to find approximations to meanings, choices and actions.

These values are enacted through the sustained commitment to:

- Collaborative interactions that emphasise shared responsibility, curiosity, openness, respect and agency for authoring one's own experiencing.
- Cultivating a safe enough learning environment that invites robust participation, courage and resilience.
- Co-creating an environment that fosters trust in one's own agency, the inquiry process and relational processes.
- The expression of intersubjective resonances offered in service of the ongoing inquiry and contribute to the companioning relationship.
- Celebrating the wide range of human qualities and multiple ways of knowing that can be brought to bear in relationships through inclusive practises.

## Companioning responsibilities at MIECAT

Companioning is at the heart of the MIECAT approach. Companioning refers to the actions undertaken with others. As a companion you are responsible for:

- Attending external supervision where appropriate and required as a part of the course in which they are enrolled.
- Remaining descriptive, non-judgmental, non-interpretive and companion with the intention to inquire with the other.
- Recognising and respecting the complexity and diversity of human experiencing with its many intersections.
- Opposing discrimination and oppressive language and behaviour.
- Being honest and accountable in all dealings with others
- Taking all appropriate steps to ensure the safety of those with whom they work.
- Communicating the terms on which companioning is offered (for example within an educational environment or as part of a course of study).
- Maintaining confidentiality of information disclosed by co-inquirers within the companioning relationship. Companions must obtain written permission before any material (verbal, recorded or in artistic forms) is shared in any written documentation or verbal exchange with another.
- Sharing information with the facilitator/supervisor when the companion feels there is some risk to self or other in not disclosing this material. Unless it is a clear situation of crisis, where possible it is best for the companion to discuss the situation with the inquirer prior to meeting with the facilitator or supervisor.
- Maintaining your own capacity to be resilient and able to work with others. Students are expected to monitor their own personal health and well-being and to seek help, support and supervision.
- Not engaging in or to withdraw from therapeutic arts practice when their functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, drugs or for any other reason.

## **The personal attributes we foster in all students and staff members are:**

- A capacity to be deeply present and remain attentive to relational processes
- An awareness of personal interactions as a co-construction
- A generosity of spirit towards other including respectfulness, acceptance, openness, warmth, and genuineness
- A highly developed capacity to be attuned to one's embodied resonance and felt sensing and to respectfully attune to another's experiencing
- A commitment to fairness and justice
- A reflexive self-awareness in all interactions with others

## **In conclusion**

We expect students who have graduated from The MIECAT Institute to seek membership of an appropriate professional association for example, ANZACATA, ACA or PACFA and to work within the scope of practice defined by these associations.

The MIECAT Institute also expects its graduates to take steps to maintain and develop their competence throughout their professional lives. They are expected to abide by the laws of the society in which they practice and to conduct themselves professionally in their companioning related activities. They are encouraged to act in ways which foster public confidence both in their role as therapeutic arts practitioners and in the broader field of creative arts therapy.

## **Other relevant MIECAT policies and documents**

The MIECAT Institute Academic Grievance Policy

The MIECAT Institute Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy

The MIECAT Institute's Student Code of Conduct

The MIECAT Institute's HREC application forms and guides

The MIECAT Institute's Guidelines for Workplace Practicums

## Additional reference material

Australian Counselling Association(2012)*Code of Ethics and Practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaca.net.au/documents/ACA%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20v8.pdf>

Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (2013).*Policy Paper:Australia's workforce of allied health professionals*. Retrieved from [http://www.ahpa.com.au/Portals/0/Representation/AHPA\\_Policy\\_Paper-Workforce-March\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ahpa.com.au/Portals/0/Representation/AHPA_Policy_Paper-Workforce-March_2013.pdf)

Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (2014).*Consultation paper: A National Code of Conduct for health care workers*. Retrieved from [http://www.ahmac.gov.au/cms\\_documents/A%20National%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20health%20care%20workers-National%20Code%20consultation%20paper.pdf](http://www.ahmac.gov.au/cms_documents/A%20National%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20health%20care%20workers-National%20Code%20consultation%20paper.pdf)

ANZACATA – Australian, New Zealand, and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association Code of Ethics Retrieved from <https://www.anzacata.org/ethics-and-standards>

Health Education and Training Institute (2012). *The superguide: a handbook for supervising allied health professionals*, HETI, Sydney.

Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (2012).*Code of Ethics: The Ethical Framework for Best practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Retrieved from <http://pacfa-org-au.cloud.hosting-toolkit.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PACFA-Code-of-Ethics-2012.pdf>