

MIECAT Institute Ethical Standards for Practice and Participation

Owner	Education Committee
Category	Academic
Status	Approved
Approval body	Academic Board
Last amended	30 th May 2023

PURPOSE

This document outlines the ethical standards of practice and participation for MIECAT staff and students in the context of their interactions with others and in companioning practice.

SCOPE

All MIECAT staff and students.

PREAMBLE

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

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

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

MIECAT's primary purpose is education and research in the tertiary sector in Australia. MIECAT 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.

MIECAT 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. MIECAT also supports individuals who wish to understand more about themselves, groups wanting to explore shared meaningfulness, and organisations that rely on collaborative intersubjective approaches.

OBJECTIVES

This document articulates the values that underpin therapeutic arts practice and the relational actions and responsibilities of staff and students at MIECAT. It also describes the ethical standards for practice and participation that MIECAT fosters in the education of therapeutic arts practitioners.

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

Any complaints related to staff or student misconduct can be pursued through the *MIECAT Student grievance handling and resolution policy* which is available online and from the MIECAT office.

All enrolled students are expected to conduct themselves in alignment with MIECAT's *Student Conduct Policy*, *Student Academic Misconduct Policy*, *Student Non-academic Misconduct Policy*, and these *Ethical Standards for Practice and Participation*. In addition, while students are undertaking Workplace Practice practicum placements in the third year of their Masters Course, they are representing MIECAT and are also expected to follow relevant ethical guidelines and codes 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, and
- welcoming diversity and a wide range of human qualities and the multiple ways of knowing that can be brought to bear in relationships.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION AT MIECAT

- 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 respectfully attune to the multiple ways of being when attending to another's experiencing;
- a commitment to fairness and justice, and
- a highly developed capacity for reflexive self-awareness in all interactions with others.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE AT MIECAT

Companioning is at the heart of the MIECAT approach. Companioning refers to the actions undertaken with others. As companions MIECAT staff and students 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 one's capacity to be resilient and able to work with others; monitoring personal health and well-being; seeking help, support and supervision, and
- not engaging in or withdrawing from therapeutic arts practice when one's functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, drugs or for any other reason.

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.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

MIECAT Student Conduct Policy
 MIECAT Student Academic Misconduct Policy
 MIECAT Student Non-academic Misconduct Policy
 MIECAT Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy
 MIECAT HREC application forms and guides
 MIECAT 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

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

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 <https://www.pacfa.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/PCFA/Documents/Document%20and%20Forms/PACFA-Code-of-Ethics-2017.pdf>

VERSION HISTORY

Date of Issue	Version	Author	Summary of changes
1 st January 2014	1.0	Jan Allen & Yarn Sullivan	Revised version
19 th August 2015	1.1	Jan Allen	Amended course names after TEQSA reaccreditation approval
3 rd September 2018	1.2	Stacey Bush	Amended new Code of conduct information, professional bodies information, and logos
19 th January 2022	1.3	Stacey Bush, Kim Swan, Jessie Brooks Dowsett	Reviewed and updated content to reflect current values and guidelines.
30 th March 2023	1.4	Stacey Bush, and Jessie Brooks Dowsett	Pending Academic Board and Council approval.
30 May 2023	1.5	S. Bush	Refinements made in response to Academic board recommendations.
13 June 2025	1.6	A Richards	Updated hyperlink for PACFA Ethics

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