

CODE OF ETHICS AND RESEARCH GUIDELINES

Preamble

This Code of Ethics is formulated with the purpose of ensuring quality, integrity and moral legitimacy in research and thereby preventing research misconduct within the institutional framework. The ethical pursuit of research in humanities, social sciences and other scientific disciplines is essential to the achievement of robust goals and research outcomes within the academe and it promotes systemic contributions in the field of advanced learning and knowledge generation. Adherence to the norms and practices of ethics thus enhances the merit of research within the qualitative, quantitative or statistical paradigms and fosters positive collaboration among investigators. Technically, research misconduct may be defined as indulging in fabrication, falsification or plagiarism including misrepresentation of credentials in proposing, performing or reviewing research or in reporting results. It excludes honest errors or differences of opinion but prohibits aberrations in research and other professional deviations that is subject to sanctions imposed by the university, professional associations and research funding agencies. These guidelines would therefore serve as a general repository of rules and practices followed by experienced researchers and would function as an orientation to scholars who are initiating their research careers. The principles contained herein would provide directives to investigators conducting research in social, behavioural or pure sciences that involves collection and interpretation of data from appropriate sources and specific research subjects.

Aspects of Ethical Concern in Research

1. Plagiarism

Authors or researchers while reporting research findings should avoid the use of words, ideas or data that occur in materials belonging to others, without proper attribution or citation, or with the implication that they own the same. This practice would be regarded as a violation of intellectual property rights and they would be charged of plagiarism and considered to commit research misconduct under such circumstances. This censor is applicable to sections

on methodology, literature review or those containing original research results or interpretations in the thesis/research paper. As a rule of thumb, if there is a word-for-word copying beyond a short passage or six or seven words of someone else's text, then that section should be enclosed in quotation marks or indented or referenced, citing the original source. Besides, the works of others, whether published or unpublished, written, oral or digital in the form of materials available on the internet / in a website, should be cited or credited. Special regulations need to be developed for using electronic information. However, in case of fundamental/foundational concepts that may be found in general textbooks, citations would not be required.

2. Handling Data

It is a primary condition in research that the conclusions/findings are to be based on accurate data and observations and also that all the relevant information is reported without errors, lapses or distortion. Negative results and outliers should be diligently reported and any deliberate disregard of truth in this regard would be considered as a breach of research integrity.

3. Ownership and Access to Data

The ownership question in terms of the research data collected by the investigator has been adequately settled within the purview of the current guidelines. The researcher or the principal investigator of the research group cannot make claims upon the data gathered as part of a project where the University is the grantee of sponsored research awards.

4. Authorship and other publication issues

Dissemination of information gained through research and publication of research results constitutes an ethical obligation on the part of the investigator. The research outcomes should be generated in the public domain in a comprehensible manner that is consistent with the standards and protocols of publication. The reported data should be made available in an

accessible format but should not be unduly subjected to the haste of a premature publication that compromises on the quality and authenticity of research.

a. Criteria for Authorship

An appropriate acknowledgement citing the sources of concepts and information has to be included at the time of publication of the manuscripts. In fact, minor contributions in the form of advice or suggestions on subject material should also be acknowledged. In case of co-authorship, the ability of individual authors needs to be analyzed and each author should individually undertake the task of compilation, revision or verification of parts before representing his/her contribution to the research. In order to use information from unpublished work or that obtained at a personal level, prior written permission should be obtained. Simultaneous submission of manuscripts or extracts from research for publication at multiple platforms is strictly prohibited, unless approved by the editors of the respective publications.

b. Order of authors

The order of inserting names of the authors on the published text may vary according to the disciplines and therefore has to be determined in advance. A corresponding author should be designated as per requirement for communicating with the editor on all matters regarding the status of review and publication.

c. Self-citations

An author has to be cautious about not implying an unwarranted status of the manuscript while citing his/her own unpublished work. A paper cannot be mentioned as submitted if it is merely intended for submission and cannot be specified as being accepted for publication unless the author has received galley proof or page proof or letter of acceptance from the publisher.

d. Duplicate publication

Publication of the same article in two different places without reasonable grounds is strictly forbidden. In the event of such publications, proper citation should be made in the later publication indicating the details of the previous one. Self-plagiarism or duplication of publication without citation is in fact misleading to the readers as it creates false estimates about the amount of original research data.

5. Conflict of Interest

It is advisable that researchers should disclose in good faith all potentially patentable inventions that have been made in course of a research that is affiliated to an institution. Researchers should conform to the standards of the Intellectual Property Policy that are followed by the publisher or the institution. The faculty may engage in research activities or research consultancy with an outside institution or with a scientific advisory board, but not without intimation at the concerned department of the college or without securing prior approval of the concerned institutional committee.

6. Obligation to Report

a. Reporting Suspected Misconduct

It is obligatory on the part of all members of the academic community to report research misconduct of all sorts to the appropriate authority.

b. Correction of Errors

In the event of the researcher discovering an intentional or inadvertent error, or an instance of plagiarism subsequently after the publication, it is mandatory to submit a correction or retraction in a form specified by the editor or publisher.

8. Responsibilities of research investigator

A principal investigator in a research group is responsible for determining the financial and administrative structure to support the research project. He/she should guide the individual members in the responsible conduct of research and maintain ethical integrity and accountability. A principal investigator/investigator thus serves as a research manager and also as a mentor promoting the intellectual and professional growth of students and junior researchers.

8. Responsibilities to Funding Agencies

Investigators should necessarily submit progress reports and final research reports to sponsors providing research awards. He/she should maintain the same standards of accuracy and integrity in proposals and grant applications as found in manuscripts submitted for publication. Investigators collaborating with commercial sponsors of research should be conversant with the special terms on reporting, disclosure and confidentiality, as laid down as part of such agreements and must comply with the specific set of rules on intellectual property right protection.