

**ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY**



# Research Ethics Policy & **PROCEDURES**



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December, 2022

## **ATBU RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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## 1.0 Research Ethics Policy

### 1.1 Background

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and principles in the conduct of its research. The Research Ethics Policy sets out the principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research and defines the process and principles for the objective and rigorous ethical review of research which falls within its scope. This Research Ethics Policy has been drawn up to conform to the international best practices of conducting research ethically.

However, the Research Ethics Policy is to be read in conjunction with other university policies such as ATBU Research Policy and ATBU Intellectual Property Policy. Together the policies set out the University's commitment to research integrity. Intellectual integrity involves using sound and ethical methods in the pursuit of knowledge as well as embracing honesty in the dissemination of knowledge.

Researchers are expected to familiarize themselves with the Research Ethics Policy and observe the principles and procedures to embed good ethics practice in all aspects of their work before commencement of and during the conduct of the research. They are to be guided by ethical principles that address their professional responsibilities as teachers, scholars, and, more generally, members of faculties, college and university

communities.

It should be noted that this policy intends to:

- a. facilitate, not inhibit, research;
- b. promote a culture within the University whereby researchers conscientiously reflect on the ethical implications of their research;
- c. apply a principle of subsidiarity whereby responsibility for research ethics will be embraced by researchers, supervisors, departments or University at a level as close as appropriately possible to the actual conduct of the research.

## **1.2 Scope of the University research ethical policy and procedure**

The Policy applies to all researchers, supervisors and students conducting research under the auspices of the University. Researchers, supervisors and students must familiarize themselves with this Policy before commencing research.

University ethical evaluation shall be required for:

- I. Research involving human participants, human tissue, material or remains, personal data; and
- ii. Any other types of research that might not involve humans but still raises ethical issues or concerns. For example, the research or results of the research may

pose a risk of damage to the environment, or cause political, social or religious tensions or sensitivities or may impact on cultural heritage.

- iii. Evaluating and ensuring that the research complies with the international, regional and national research ethics and disciplines pertaining to human, animal and genetically modified plant/organisms. Animal research ethics is regulated by the University's Policy Statement on Research Involving the Use of Animals and applicable statute and is not covered by this Policy.
- iv. Legislation or Government bodies may require ethical review to be conducted by a specific ethics committee. In this case, the specified Research Ethics Committee takes precedence over the University ethics system. Researchers should avoid duplication of ethics review.
- v. Ensuring compliance to the research rules pertaining to dissemination of the findings of research and confidentiality;

## **1.3 Definition of Terms**

- a. The “Policy” refers to the Research Ethics Policy.
- b. The “Committee” refers to the University Ethics and Integrity Committee.
- c. The “Sub-Committee” refers to the Departmental, Faculty or College Research Ethics Committees.

For consistency, definitions and meanings of other key words in the Research Ethics Policy (such as Principal Investigator, student, research and researchers) shall have the same meaning and definition as those found in the University Research Policy.

- d. Researcher' or 'You' indicates an individual involved in research, including, but not limited to:
  - I. staff in any of the University's job families (teaching and research, technical and experimental, management and administration, and community and operational), including Honorary Staff and Emeritus Professors;
  - ii. staff visiting from other institutions undertaking or supervising research at or for the University;
  - iii. undergraduate and postgraduate students (both taught and research), whether registered here or on temporary placement.
  
- e. Research' is defined according to the internationally accepted OECD Frascati Manual as "Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications" [sic]. This includes, but is not limited to, funded and unfunded

- research projects, consulting within and outside the University, and exploitation and knowledge transfer activities. This Code applies to all research and consultancy activity undertaken by university staff and students in collaboration with other organisations, such as collaborative research projects, and to individuals from other organisations who are undertaking or supervising research at or for the University.
  
- f. Principal Investigator' or 'PI' refers to the lead investigator – generally the main holder of the research funding or leader of a project or, for multi-institution projects, ATBU lead investigator.
  
- g. Supervisor' covers any person or persons who are responsible for oversight of other researchers.
  
- h. Head of Department' refers to the Head of the academic unit to which a researcher belongs, which can include Directorates, Departments, Research Centres and other academic divisions within the University.
  
- i. Student' covers any person who has registered on a programme of study with the University, which can include undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes. This also includes students from elsewhere visiting as part of an exchange or similar programme.

- j. A 'Research Student' is a student who is registered on a research-based programme of study, such as an MPhil, professional doctorate or PhD.
- k. Research Funder' covers any organisation or person which provides research funding to the University, and can include research councils, public sector organisations, charities, non- governmental organisations, commercial and business organisations and government agencies whether located within Nigeria or elsewhere.
- l. Research Funding' covers all forms of external funding in support of research and enterprise activities including research grants and contracts, philanthropic donations, consultancy and industrial research contracts and grants in kind providing access to external expertise, facilities, equipment, etc.
- m. Directorate refers to the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID) of the University.

#### 1.4 Research Ethical Policy Issues

*Plagiarism:* Representing the ideas, words, or data of another person or persons as one's own constitutes plagiarism. Thus, a person's words, ideas, or data, whether published or unpublished, must be acknowledged as such. Reproducing someone else's sentences more or less verbatim, and presenting

them as your own is considered as plagiarism. Plagiarism referred here may include complete, direct, source-based, self, paraphrasing, inaccurate authorship, mosaic or accidental plagiarism.

*Acknowledgement of contributions:* Acknowledgement of the contributions of others means appropriately recognizing and crediting those who have contributed to a scholarly work whether the work is a manuscript, exhibit, or performance. Both recognition and accountability come with allocations of credit. Depending on their contributions, such others, including students, may be deserving of credit ranging from acknowledgement in a footnote to co-authorship. Regardless of whether faculty members work with students or colleagues, the work of all parties should be equitably acknowledged in a manner appropriate to the norms of their discipline.

*Data:* Researchers must acknowledge the source(s) of their data and accurately describe the method by which their data was gathered. Moreover, the fabrication or falsification of data or results constitutes a violation of ethical standards. While fabrication is defined as "making up data or results," falsification is "changing or misreporting data or results" Both of these actions interfere with the search for knowledge and truth and undermine trust both within and outside the academic

community.

*Authorship:* Only the Researcher, student or staff who writes shall be entitled to be accredited as the author and shall be fully responsible for the content of his work. To be recognized as an author, the Researcher, student, and staff must have involved in at least two (2) combination of the following situations:

- i. becomes the contributor to the concept and framework of the research;
- ii. becomes the analyst and interpreter of the related research data or information; and/or;
- iii. becomes a significant contributor to the writing or makes intellectual revision to the content of the writing.

*Corresponding Author:* For research output made by joint authors, all joint authors shall give consent in writing that only one author among themselves shall become a corresponding author that is responsible to coordinate the overall submission and revision of the manuscript.

Student shall become a corresponding author except otherwise disallowed by all joint authors. Joint authors and corresponding author shall be responsible for the content of the manuscript and any failure of the corresponding author in the coordination and revision to co-ordinate and revise the manuscript.

*Conflict of interest:* Research funded by corporate sponsors potentially leads to a situation in which a conflict of interest may arise. Researchers may feel pressure, for example, to conduct research in a way that would bias the results toward the desires of the sponsor or to reveal only those results that benefit the sponsor. Biomedical research, in particular, brings forth such concerns. Conflict of interest issues are not limited to corporate-sponsored research projects; conflict of interest situations may occur with government-sponsored research as well. Non-profit organizations and social advocacy groups also have the potential to place college and university researchers in situations that make it potentially difficult to conduct the sponsored research in an unbiased manner. Researchers must be able to publicly disclose their sources of funding and the intent of the research, as well as conduct their research in a manner consistent with the ethical standards for investigation in their respective disciplines. Scholars must not let the source of their funding nor do the sponsors' goals cloud their own professional and scientific judgments regarding their research.

*Other research concerns:* Informed consent for research involving human subjects. That is, human subjects must be aware of the nature of the research as well as voluntarily agree to be a part of such research. The humane use and care of animals in research is another area of concern. Disciplines that rely more



heavily on archival research may say little about informed consent from human subjects, but may focus on the importance of obtaining permission to use archival data. Professional associations in the sciences are additionally concerned with providing safe working conditions for those who work in research laboratories.

*Harassment:* Sexual harassment is one major area of ethical concern in research. It is a general principle that no other person should sexually harass the other. Such policies are applicable to faculty and students as well as to administrators, staff, other employees, and research subjects. Hence sexual harassment may be manifested in sexual solicitation, physical advance, or verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Some types of sexual harassment are quid pro quo, in which the sexual favors are presumably requested in exchange for a promised or implied future benefit, such as a higher grade or appointment to a position. Other conduct, namely that which creates a hostile or uncomfortable work environment, including the classroom environment, also constitutes sexual harassment. The code of ethics of many professional and disciplinary associations addresses the issue of sexual harassment, and faculty handbooks and other institutional documents typically include a set of procedures for dealing with situations in which alleged sexual harassment has occurred.

In addition, members of the academic community should not harass others on the basis of other personal and demographic characteristics, including race, ethnicity, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability. Regardless of the basis of harassing or demeaning behavior, victims of harassment may find it helpful to consult with faculty and administrators for advice on avenues of action in such situations.

*Nondiscrimination and fair evaluation:* it is required that members of the academic community should not engage in discrimination based on issue such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law. Furthermore, professors who have agreed to serve as reviewers of manuscripts, grant proposals, or other scholarly submissions, should evaluate those materials in a fair, objective, professional, and timely manner. These standards are also applicable to the evaluation of students' academic work. The principle of fair and respectful treatment also applies to interactions with and evaluation of the work of other members of the academic community.

*Allegations of ethical misconduct:* Alleged ethical violations on the part of faculty shall be dealt with in a number of ways. A

student or faculty member may choose to approach the faculty member thought to have engaged in ethical misconduct. One could also speak with another faculty member, head of the department, dean or provost about the alleged misconduct and seek advice about possible avenues of action. A hearing on the matter is one of the possible outcomes. Faculty members accused of ethical misconduct are entitled to academic due process. That is to follow the due process as provided in the condition service. Although the incidents of alleged misconduct are to be handled within the university frameworks, other disciplinary and professional associations may pursue the matter through mechanisms within those associations or agencies.

### **1.5 Ethical Research Funding Policy**

It is University policy to accept donations or funding from all sources except where it judges it to be illegally obtained or to risk adversely affecting its reputation or compromising its academic freedom or integrity. Researchers should contact the Directorate for guidance on sourcing, accessing and acceptance of any form of funding.

### **2.0 Role and Responsibilities of Researchers**

- i. Secure funds or research grants from the University or any other third party if financial assistance is required;
- ii. Comply with the requirements and regulations of the University and any other third party sponsoring the funds or research grants;
- iii. Submit regular reports relating to the progress and outcomes of research activities to the University and the sponsors of research fund or grant;
- iv. Ensure that laboratory books, documents, data, samples and/or specimens are recorded and kept at a place easily accessible. Original documents, data, samples and/or specimens shall be stored and preserved in accordance with procedures determined by the Committee; and
- v. Enter into a contract of research with the sponsor of research fund or grant and comply with the terms and obligations contained in the said contract.

### 3.0 Research Ethical Principles and Codes

#### 3.1 The Research Ethical Principles

The following is a general summary of some ethical principles that the policy upholds:

*i. Honesty:* Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data.

Do not deceive colleagues, research sponsors, or the public.

*ii. Objectivity:* Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.

*iii. Integrity:* Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.

*iv. Carefulness:* Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and

correspondence with agencies or journals.

*v. Openness:* Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas.

*vi. Respect for Intellectual Property:* Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.

*vii. Confidentiality:* Protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.

*viii. Responsible Publication:* Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.

*ix. Responsible Mentoring:* Help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions.

*x. Respect for colleagues:* Respect your colleagues and

treat them fairly.

*xi. Social Responsibility:* Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.

*xii. Non-Discrimination:* Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors not related to scientific competence and integrity.

*xiii. Competence:* Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.

*xiv. Legality:* Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies.

*xv. Animal Care and use:* Show proper respect and care for animals when using them in research.

Do not conduct unnecessary or poorly designed animal experiments.

*xvii. Human Subjects Protection:* When conducting

research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly.

### 3.2 Research Ethical Codes

**Researchers** must abide with the following principles at all stages of the research lifecycle. This includes the planning stage, applying for funding, the conduct and later stages of the project, such as dissemination and impact activities. Hence, every research relating to human, animals and genetically modified organisms shall adhere to the following research ethical considerations including:

- i. acceding to standard ethics and procedures for research pertaining to human as prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) or other bodies recognised by the University;
- ii. respect for human dignity;
- iii. obtaining written permission or consent from the research subjects;
- iv. minimising harm and maximising benefit to mankind;
- v. acceding to ethical standards stipulated by the World Organisation for Animal Health, Animal Care Use Committee of the university or any other bodies

- recognised by the University;
- vi. undertaken in accordance with any relevant common law or legislation.
  - vii. conducted and supervised by the student, teacher, or competent and trained staff;
  - viii. obtaining consent freely without force or coercion from participants;
  - ix. respect confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and any agreement to grant anonymity to respondents;
  - x. be careful with collecting, handling and storing sensitive, classified and/or personal data. Such data should be kept securely and protected from unauthorised access. Particular care should be taken to ensure that human data cannot be linked back to individuals unless by authorised persons. It is essential that all sensitive, classified and /or personal data are disposed of appropriately in line with legal and funder requirements;
  - xi. caring for animal welfare, such as minimising extreme hunger and thirst; minimising pain and injury; minimising fear and distress; allowing animals to show their natural behaviour;
  - xii. compliance with the Bio Safety Act or any other acts related to genetically modified organisms;

- xii. obtaining written permission for animals which are protected by law from relevant agencies;
- xiii. minimising the number of animals used for research and substituting the use of animals, if possible, with other alternatives;
- xiv. using appropriate research methods to the animals used in the research;
- xv. ensure integrity, quality and provide benefits that outweigh potential risk or harm.
- xvi. uphold principle of academic independence. Where any conflicts of interest or partiality arise, these must be clearly stated prior to ethical approval being obtained;
- xviii. all research involving human participants is subject to ethical evaluation and approval by Federal Ministry of health or any other relevant authority.
- xvii. research that does not involve humans but raises ethical issues or concerns is also subject to ethical evaluation and approval;
- xviii. researchers are responsible for ensuring the project is undertaken as approved by the University research ethics approval process and in compliance with any legal or organisational requirements;
- xix. any major divergence from the approved project must be subject to further ethical approval and the researcher is responsible for acquiring further ethics approval before

continuing with the research

- xx. use environmentally friendly materials for research;
- xxi. proper disposal of research waste; eg biomedical, business, chemicals, spent materials, ewaste etc xxiv.

The Researcher, student or staff who conduct research on politics, social and environment shall be aware and pay attention to the political, social and environmental issues that can tarnish or smear the name of the University;

Any breach of the ethical provisions pertaining to the roles of the staff, student or staff in research misconduct shall be sanctioned in accordance with the provisions in the condition of services of the university.

### **3.3 External Codes**

Researchers must adhere to any regulations laid down by their professional bodies and any legal requirements relating to their research. Reference should, in addition, be made to different funders and professional ethical codes in relation to different subject areas where this is appropriate.

## **4.0 Research Ethical Processes and Procedures**

### **4.1 Awareness of Research Ethics Policy**

The DRID in conjunction with faculties and colleges shall ensure that researchers are provided with adequate and regular training in research ethics as is appropriate for their level of expertise or study and subject discipline. Researchers and students should be adequately aware of the ethical implications of research and on all aspects of this Policy. The policy shall be made available to all the university community members.

In case of doubt about the scope of applicability of this Policy, or about the appropriate ethical evaluation process, advice should be sought from a member of the DRID or the Ethics Committee or a Sub-Committee in the university directorate of Research, Faculty, College or departmental ethics advisor.

### **4.2 Complaints Procedure**

Any complaint of misconduct in research concerning a university member of staff or student or regarding the University's ethical policy must be made to the Chairman of department research ethics committee for an initial assessment of the nature and severity of the complaint. If need be, it shall then be forwarded to the faculty ethics and subsequently, University research ethics committee. In a situation whereby a case of misconduct has been established, penalties such as

insisting on correction of the research record, issuance of letters of reprimand, Suspension or termination of a research grant may be applied and this shall be done in accordance with the provision of the condition of service of the University.

#### **4.3 Oversight**

The research ethics policy is subject to oversight by the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development which is in turn responsible to Senate. The Directorate shall also be responsible for organizing the process of periodic review of the research ethics policy document. The policy shall be made available to potential research funding agencies in the interests of transparency and to avoid possible pre-contractual misunderstandings.

#### **4.4 Monitoring and Reporting**

The Directorate shall ensure an effective system of monitoring of research projects and other related activities is in place. Similarly, the research ethics committee shall submit an annual report to the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development. The annual report will contain summary statistics on the research projects conducted within the period under review which shall contain details such as number, discipline/ type, outcome of the research projects, information on any strengths, weaknesses, disputes, and trends identified. The DRID shall in turn submit comprehensive report on research ethical issues to the Senate the chairman of senate.

#### **4.5 Other University policies and guidance**

From time to time, the Research Ethics Committee may issue policy or guidance for staff and students on such issues as: informed consent, internet research, recruitment of research assistants and associates, recruiting vulnerable participants, and recognition of another institution's ethics approval. Any policy approved by the university Senate shall be circulated appropriately.

## **5.0 Processes of Ethical Evaluation of Research**

### **5.1 Background**

The Directorate shall be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the ethical evaluation process. Ethical evaluation of research proposals, applications and reports shall be conducted by the Research Ethics Committee. The responsibility of ethical evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate students' research projects shall be on the authorized supervisory committees and organs within departments, faculties and colleges of the university.

### **5.2 Application for ethical clearance**

All applications for research funding shall undergo ethical review and hence, shall be submitted to the directorate through departmental and faculty research ethics committees to be subjected to the ethical evaluation process. The research ethics committee shall evaluate each research proposal submitted by the Principal Investigators using the available approved evaluation tools and procedures.

The applications to be subjected to ethics review contain the following elements:

- a. Aims of the research
- b. Scientific/academic background of the research
- c. Study design
- d. Participants – who (inclusion and exclusion criteria), how

- many, how potential participants are identified and recruited, vulnerable groups
- e. Methods of data collection
- f. Methods of data analysis
- g. Methods of data storage
- h. Response to any conditions of use set by secondary data providers
- i. Principal investigator's summary of potential ethical issues and how they will be addressed
- j. Benefits to research participants or third parties
- k. Risks to participants or third parties
- l. Risks to researchers

### **5.3 Review Process**

Upon receipt of an application, the relevant committee shall assess the likelihood and magnitude of ethical risks, and consider the risk of harm as well as issues of intellectual property right. For staff-led research, the peer-review process shall be carried out by reviewers appointed by the Directorate, while for postgraduate and undergraduate research projects the review shall be undertaken by any supervisory committee or the postgraduate coordinator. The relevant ethical evaluation tools shall be made available for the committees by the university.

For proposals on funded research projects each Sub-Committee will consider applications on a regular basis. It is expected that an initial evaluation of the ethics will happen within 14 days of a



complete and valid application.

A final decision is expected to be given no later than 30 days from date of submission of a complete and valid proposal, unless there are special circumstances warranting a longer time for a decision. The Committee must form quorum before making a decision on any application. For projects that involve more than minimal risk, the Sub-Committee will endeavor to seek the opinion of experts before making a decision, to ensure independence of judgment.

#### **5.4 Risk Assessment Procedure**

Where the actual or potential risk of harm to participants and others affected by the proposed research is minimal, the reviewers shall carry out a basic evaluation. Should there not be sufficient information for a decision on the level of risk to be made, the application will be returned to the applicant and a request made for more detail to be supplied. For levels above minimal risk the application will be escalated to higher level committee to handle.

For undergraduate student projects and taught postgraduate student projects, the chairman supervisory committee shall assess the risks in the application. The chairman supervisory committee will escalate to the Departmental Ethics committee any applications that are above minimal risk or where it is unclear whether or not they meet the

criteria for minimal risk. All research projects which involve more than minimal risk shall be subject to an ethics review by the university ethics committee.

#### **5.5 Feedback**

Where a proposal does not meet the expected ethical standards or changes are required, the ethics Committee shall give feedback on what needs to be done. The decision made for each proposal, and the grounds on which it was made, should be recorded and provided to the researchers.

#### **5.6 Approval**

In some instances, it may be appropriate for a committee to review and approve 'one research ethics guidelines' for commonly occurring situations (e.g., research undertaken by undergraduate students with children in mainstream school settings). In such instances of generic approval, the applicant researcher should confirm compliance with the established protocol when research is being conducted and that this is appropriate for the research project.

#### **5.7 Collaborative research**

Where a joint research project with another institution is proposed, the lead principal investigator at ATBU shall submit an application to seek ethical approval.

In cases where the co-applicant is at ATBU (and the lead principal investigator is at another institution), the ATBU co-applicant shall submit an application to seek ethical approval, ensuring that the ethics approval from the other institution is attached with the ethics application (if it is made available). In addition, it should be noted that compliance with ethical principles which may be regarded as appropriate in the jurisdiction where the research is being undertaken is not a substitute for ethical approval from ATBU.

### **5.8 Referral to University Ethics Committee**

When an issue of principle arises, the Sub-Committee may refer the application to the Committee for guidance and will continue with the ethics review by the Sub-Committee once guidance is provided.

### **5.9 Retrospective ethics applications**

In accordance with the University Research ethics Policy, research involving human participants should not begin until proper ethical review has taken place and approval given. Retrospective ethical reviews are therefore not permitted.

## **6.0 Research Ethics Committees**

### **6.1 The University Ethics Committee and Sub-Committees**

- I. There shall be Departmental Ethics Committee in each academic department or research institutes with Chairman of the committee to be appointed by the Head of the Department.
- ii. The Chairmen of all Departmental Ethics Committees shall form Faculty Ethics Committee with Chairman of the committee to be appointed by the Dean of the Faculty.
- iii. The University Ethics Committee shall be consisting of all Chairmen of faculty committees, Chairman of the Committee (from the DRID) to be appointed by the university Vice Chancellor.
- iv. The Departmental Ethics Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Faculty Ethics Committee. And the Faculty Ethics Committee is a Sub-Committee of the University Ethics Committee which shall be supervised by the DRID.

### **6.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Ethics committees**

The primary role of the Committee and Sub-Committee is to ensure good ethical practice and protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants and researchers.

- i. The Committee and Sub-Committee shall act in a way that is independent, competent and timely.
- ii. The Committee and the Sub-Committee shall act within their Terms of Reference.
- iii. The Sub-Committee shall review research proposals in terms of their ethical probity and any discipline-specific ethical issues which may arise.
- iv. The Sub-Committee shall consider ethical issues arising from the design, outputs and proposed conduct of the research.
- v. The Sub-Committee shall be sensitive to the context in which a research study will be conducted
- vi. The Sub-Committee shall act independently, free from bias and undue influence from the University, from the applicant researcher and from the personal or financial interests of their members.
- vii. The Sub-Committee members must declare any conflict of interest which they may have in relation to an application or matter under consideration and withdraw from the proceedings.
- viii. The Sub-Committee shall record each decision in writing.

### **6.3 Membership Composition and Tenure**

The Committee and Sub-Committees will be formed in

accordance with principles of equality and non-discrimination. The Committee and Sub-Committees should also be multi-disciplinary, including at least one lay member and led by a chairman. The appointment of these posts shall be for two years in the first instance, with the possibility of final renewable for another two-year-term if deemed appropriate.

### **6.4 Committee Meetings**

The Committees shall meet to discuss proposals applications, review ethical considerations, may also ask the applicant to attend in order to clarify an application and other matters falling within the remit of the committee/Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee should meet at least twice a year to conduct review.

### **6.5 Decisions**

The Sub-Committee may make one of the following determinations:

- a) to request changes or revisions;
- b) to approve the project without amendment;
- c) to approve the project conditional upon amendment;
- d) to reject.

### **6.6 Appeal**

The Committee may consider an appeal following a decision by one of the Sub-Committees to reject an application.

### **6.7 Significant Amendments to Research**

Following ethics approval and the commencement of the research, any significant change to the Research question, design, methodology or conduct over the course of the research project should be submitted as an amendment to the original application for re-approval by the Sub-Committee. A change to the question, design, methodology or conduct of the project is significant where it could have a potential impact on the welfare, dignity and rights of the participants or researcher.

Examples of significant changes include proposing:

- a. a different method to recruit participants
- b. a different method to obtain consent
- c. a new lead researcher or
- d. a different place to conduct the research.

### **6.8 Extraordinary cases**

In very exceptional circumstances, where a case raises an issue of acute difficulty for the Departmental Ethics Committee, the Faculty Committee has the power to review an application instead of the Departmental Committee. Same is the case for Faculty and University Committee.

In reviewing the application, the Committee shall abide with the procedures described above.

### **6.9 Review of the Research Ethics Policy**

The DRID is responsible for regularly reviewing and updating this Policy to ensure it takes into account current guidelines and relevant legislations. It shall be responsible for basic and comprehensive reviews to include revisions and reflect changes to legislation or changes to funder regulations, and seek for approval from the Senate. For basic review, it should be conducted in every two years while the comprehensive is after five years

### **6.10 Failure to comply with this Policy**

Failure to subject a proposal to ethical evaluation or to comply with any other aspect of this ethical Policy and procedure or failure to apply reasonable care in assessing the likely ethical implications of a research project, may constitute research misconduct under the university's misconduct policy and procedures.