

YU Research Ethics Policy

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YU Research Ethics Policy

Context

1. The primary objective of this policy document is to set general guidelines related to ethical issues.
2. The Center for Research and Consulting shall make sure that ethical standards are being followed by the University community.
3. The 'University Ethics Committee' (the Committee, hereafter) shall be formed with the consent of the University President. The Director of Research shall act as the coordinator of the Committee. This Committee shall report to the Council for Postgraduate Studies and Academic Research.
4. The ethical standards discussed in this document shall apply to all research activities of the University, internal and external communications, and commercial and non-commercial transactions of the University.
5. All ethical judgments should be made after thoroughly debating the potential outcomes by considering important considerations, including social, religious, as well as University core values.
6. Serious consideration also shall be given to professional ethical codes adopted by the professional associations, governing bodies, accrediting agencies, or local and national legislation on issues such as information disclosure, diversity, and health and safety.
7. The University is committed to serious and constructive academic debate and investigation of all current issues that affect society; and this principle is used primarily to determine ethical standards and provide the basis for judgment in terms of the acceptability of standards.
8. In determining ethical considerations, an effort shall be made to determine appropriate and acceptable conduct along with providing reasons for any conclusion regarding ethical issues. The debate in terms of what constitutes good or bad or right and wrong shall be in a particular academic, cultural and religious context. This includes evaluation of the University's own activities and those of related parties in terms of positive or negative actions.
9. It is pertinent to mention that the ethical guidelines shall apply to all associated counterparts of the University.

The University Ethics Committee

- 10.** The Ethics Committee of the University shall look into broader issues related to the main activities of the University, such as teaching and research.
- 11.** It shall work as the main forum for providing general advice and guidelines on ethical issues and shall coordinate with different colleges of the University.
- 12.** Each college shall be represented on the University Ethics Committee. These representatives shall report to their respective colleges and their administration if a new policy is recommended by the Committee with significant bearing on the University values regarding ethics in teaching, research, communication, and transactions.
- 13.** The Committee is to be formed according to the following:
 1. Director of Center for Research and Consulting Head of the Committee
 2. A representative from COB Member
 3. A representative from COEA Member
 4. A representative from COL Member

The members of the Committee are to be appointed through a directive from the President. College representatives are nominated by the college deans and approval of the University President. Their appointment is for two years.

- 14.** The Committee is expected to perform the following functions:
 - a. To review applications for research projects that involve human beings and animals (both internally and externally funded) for University ethics compliance I believe it should be limited to research.
 - b. To develop research ethic guidelines.
 - c. To stop/suspend temporarily any project whenever it is deemed necessary (such as the serious breach of contract clauses).

Values

- 15.** We, at the University, aim to 'act' with integrity, transparency, and responsibility in communication, transactions, teaching, and research and will uphold the highest academic and professional standards. These commitments are also reflected in our three core values:
 - Faithfulness to our religious, ethical, and cultural heritage
 - Integrity and transparency
 - Creativity and innovation

16. The University's commitment to uphold the best academic and professional standards requires that all faculty be treated fairly; and that faculty shall maintain the highest standard of politeness, religious, and cultural sensitivities in their communication (internal and external) of the matters related to the University.
17. The University encourages and supports innovation and creativity, and hence would encourage faculty members to publish and publicize their completed works related to research and general scholarship. However, utmost effort shall be made by faculty and students in terms of not relating their personal opinions to the University's values.
18. It shall be mentioned in clear terms if the work conducted by a faculty member was not related to their roles in the University.
19. The University policy on working and engaging with external organizations or receiving funds shall be discussed in the University Ethics Committee. The individual faculty options in terms of engaging with any organization internally or outside of the University can be overridden if s/he breaches the University's core values.

Management and communication

20. The implementation of this policy shall be ensured by making sure that: each college dean, head of department and their representatives on the Committee are responsible for communicating research ethics-related issues to the University Ethics Committee. They also are responsible for communicating this policy to students and faculty.
21. Due consideration of upholding ethical standards is required by individual researchers, as well as research clusters.
22. The research director's office shall constantly develop and manage the University's ethics processes to ensure that this is in line with religious and cultural sensitivities along with effectiveness and integrity of the process.

Ethics in learning and teaching

23. All undergraduate or postgraduate research work/studies should give due consideration to the ethical dimension in terms of research ethics and research integrity of their project.

Research Ethics

- 24.**All research activities undertaken by the University faculty and others related to the University work that involves humans being and animals shall be subject to discussion and approval of the ethical review.
- 25.**An effort shall be made to not disclose individual identities of the study participants, as well as assuring the integrity of the researcher (s) in evaluating the work in terms of ethical considerations.
- 26.**All the ethical issues related to human subjects shall be fully adhered to and applied.
- 27.**It is suggested that all deans and heads of department should ensure that all guidelines and procedures related to ethics are communicated to faculty and students in a timely manner, and appropriate administrative arrangements are in place in this regard.

Research integrity

- 28.**All the researchers including students and faculty of the University are expected to follow generally accepted research ethics guidelines for carrying out research that contributes to the existing knowledge, following and adhering to truth, and the use of research method techniques which are commonly used and ethically approved while maintaining the highest level of honesty in reporting and communicating research outcomes in conferences, reports and journal publications.
- 29.**It is expected that all those faculty members who are part of a study/project are responsible for managing risks of the study, ensuring prudent financial management, ensuring value for money, fulfilling all contractual obligations, and the timely delivery of the tangible outcome of the research project contract.
- 30.**It is the responsibility of the principal investigator(s) to ensure clarity in the contractual documents and in particular intellectual property rights and disclosure standards.
- 31.**It is the responsibility of the research director's office to arrange workshops and training sessions at least once a year on existing rules and regulations governing research ethics and any potential issues and amendments.
- 32.**The failure to adherence to ethics in regard to actions such as plagiarizing someone else's work, manipulation or misrepresentation of research outcomes by hiding/deceiving or lying, confidentiality breaches related to externally/internally funded projects, hiding/falsifying and destroying relevant evidence, stealing someone else's idea and commercially exploiting it, and significant failures in taking into account cultural and religious sensitivities in performing or communicating research outcomes shall result in disciplinary actions.

- 33.**All researchers affiliated with YU are expected to be transparent when performing and disseminating research, taking into account certain cultural and religious sensitivities. It is essential for YU that conflicts of interest are identified and disclosed, and that information—including data—is clearly communicated regarding its collection, analysis, and interpretation. Researchers should report all findings, even if they differ from initial expectations. Both the researcher and YU are committed to sharing research as broadly as possible to promote discussion and benefit society.
- 34.**Research at YU should meet the highest quality standards. Researchers are encouraged to adhere to top international benchmarks and journal rankings when publishing. This commitment to excellence extends to the design, conduct, submission, and publication of research.
- 35.**YU researchers must uphold the highest levels of integrity and honesty in all their actions. This standard of honesty should persist throughout the research process, which includes acknowledging funding sources, data collection methods, analytical procedures, main findings, and recognizing colleagues, peers, and institutions. Efforts should be made to make data and codes accessible for replication and verification, provided there are no concerns regarding confidentiality and copyrights.
- 36.**YU expects researchers to rigorously design, implement, perform, and disseminate research. This thoroughness shall be maintained throughout the entire cycle of the research. No shortcuts and compromising of the highest standards in research protocols are expected from the YU's researchers.
- 37.**The safety of YU's researchers, students, community, and facilities is of utmost importance. Proper precautions should be in place to ensure research environments and equipment are secure. Any safety concerns must be promptly reported to the appropriate authority. YU upholds strict safety standards, especially concerning research activities. It's essential for researchers and participants to be well-acquainted with and adhere to health and safety guidelines.
- 38.**YU is responsible for nurturing and training young and less experienced researchers and assuring that there is no undue pressure on them from the senior and experienced researchers and management. YU expects that ownership of the research product is explicitly determined at the outset and order of the authors is well-defined from the beginning of the research cycle. YU is always trying to provide mentoring, training, and other research infrastructure and shall continue to do so.

39. YU expects its researchers to maintain the highest standards of ethical responsibility in dealing with research-related human subjects, animals, and other participants, alongside taking care of cultural and religious beliefs. Researchers should know the broader implications of their research findings for the individual, society, country, profession, and a particular segment of the population, and utmost care should be applied to minimize any negative implications of their actions. Research funding should be mentioned, and conflict of interest issues should be highlighted appropriately. In case of research involving humans and animals, research must not commence unless ethical approval has been received in writing from the concerned authority.
40. YU researchers must adhere to specific standards, including data protection, copyright regulations, health and safety protocols, and IT security, among others.
41. Certain funding organizations and professional bodies have established guidelines on how research should be conducted and disseminated. Researchers need to familiarize themselves with these standards and undergo any necessary training before embarking on research for these entities.
42. YU takes research-related misconduct—like plagiarism, intentional misreporting, and misuse of resources—very seriously. Faculty and students are urged to report any perceived misconduct promptly, and appropriate action will be taken.

This policy should be used in conjunction with other YU policies concerning all aspects of teaching, research, standard operating procedures, and protocols.

Exceptions

The University Council reserves the right to decide on any situation/circumstance outside of the conditions stated in this policy.

Authorization

This policy was authorized by:



University President

Date: 3-10-2023