

ZIAUDDIN UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Title	Research Ethics Policy
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Contact	ORIC Department

Introduction:

The ethics policy sets out in detail the requirements for ethical review of all research activity at the Ziauddin University (hereinafter referred to as ZU). Research integrity and good conduct are essential aspects of research at the University and a core part of a sustainable research culture. ZU is fully committed to ensuring good conduct of all research undertaken by its staff/faculty/students through its engagement with external research collaborators and stakeholders. High professional standards and integrity are of central importance to our commitment to research, and it is the responsibility of all faculty members and students engaged in research activity to maintain them. Researchers in the University are duty bound to society, their profession, the University and the funders of their research to accept responsibility for their own conduct of research and practice, the activities of staff and students researching under their supervision, and for making best efforts to provide value for public or private funds invested in their research.

The Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (hereinafter referred to as ORIC) has been set up at ZU under the guidelines given by the Higher Education Commission. ORIC is mandated to facilitate high-quality research process in the University and its commercialization. ORIC deals with research training (students and faculty), planning, execution, support, IPRs, technology transfer to develop industry-academia linkages and to provide an appropriate mechanism for the process of commercialization.

Ethical Institutional Review Board/ERC

ZU has an Ethical Institutional Review Board/ERC (hereinafter referred to as IRB) of the University to ensure compliance with ethical standards, legal aspects and professional standards in research process undertaken at ZU. At present, IRB comprises up to sixteen (16) members and is headed by Dr Qudsia Hassan (HOD, Forensics Medicine, ZU)

IRB constitutes of members from Ziauddin University and outside. It includes physicians and people from various other walks of life. Director ORIC is a member of IRB.

The secretary IRB after receiving research protocols sends these along with the filled IRB forms to all members. Two members are assigned the responsibility of formal review and recommendations.

The Role of IRB

IRB is mandated to monitor ethical compliance and ensure that the research process is according to ethical requirements. The aim of IRB at Ziauddin University is to review research projects regularly and facilitate research.

The general role of IRB is:

- To promote a culture of research ethics in research practices at ZU.
- To advise ORIC for training and other activities to build capacity for research ethics at ZU.
- To serve as ethics monitoring and compliance authority for all research at ZU.

Objective

The objective is to develop a culture of ethics, integrity and academic honesty in the research process and undertakings of ZU. To guide researchers, build ethical capacity and ensure compliance accordingly.

All research projects involving human subjects, whether as individuals or communities, including the use of fetal material, embryos and tissues from the recently dead, undertaken or supported by Ziauddin University faculty, staff or students, wherever conducted, shall be reviewed by ERC. Before a study can begin ERC will consider ethical issues related to research and will also evaluate scientific content when needed through consultation with subject experts.

General Principles

The University Research Ethics Policy is based upon widely accepted principles and practices governing research participants. The key elements are:

- Minimal risk of harm to participants and researchers.
- The potential for the benefit to society.
- Preserving the dignity of participants.
- Minimal risk of harm to the environment.
- Voluntary informed consent by participants, or special safeguards where this is not possible.
- Transparency in declaring funding sources.
- Confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and anonymity of respondents.
- Acknowledgment of assistance.
- Appropriate publication and dissemination of research results.
- Independence and impartiality of researchers.

ZIAUDDIN UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

1. Coverage

- 1.1 Research Ethics Policy covers all the research undertakings of ZU and external collaborators of ZU who complete any research with ZU students/faculty/staff, including surveys, observations, focus groups, lab experiments, field trials, human and animal interventions and other forms of investigation.
- 1.2 The policy covers research activity undertaken by ZU staff, students, faculty and other persons.
- 1.3 The policy covers research undertaken which interacts with humans, animals, and objects of ZU, other organizations, city, state, country, and stakeholders involved in research.
- 1.4 All types of research projects/consultancies etc. should be channeled through ORIC ZU.

2. Principles

- 2.1 No harmful effect is to be allowed in any kind of research intervention on human, animal and public property.
- 2.2 No risk or damage to physical, mental, emotional, financial or any other form is to be permitted in any kind of research undertaking.
- 2.3 No research undertaking is permitted causing loss of public property, damage to the environment and involving any hazardous activity for people and animals.
- 2.4 Personal identity of participants, respondents, observed people and others taking part in research must not be disclosed or published without consent.
- 2.5 Integrity and honesty with humans, animals, public property and institutional research must be observed on priority.
- 2.6 Impartiality and unbiased approach must be observed in the case of ethnicity, religious values, gender and specific groups of people and society.
- 2.7 No element of force is to be allowed to coerce persons to take part in research.
- 2.8 Consent of participation and understanding of research activity is mandatory.
- (b)
- 2.9 Obtaining prior consent is a prerequisite for any research process from the participants in research.
- 2.10 Clear explanation of predictable risks and associated benefits is required and must be agreed upon voluntarily by participants for research.

- 2.11 Obtaining prior consent is a prerequisite for any research process from the owner/caretaker of animals and public properties selected for research.
 - 2.12 Informed consent is a prerequisite for any research process from the caretaker of children, people with disability, or anyone/anything involved in research, with no ability to provide informed consent.
 - 2.13 Permission is required if humans and animals of other collaborative institutions are involved.
- (c)
- 2.14 Plagiarism report is a prerequisite for any kind of research approval duly signed by Chief Library Officer (CLO)
 - 2.15 Approval of the Ethics Institutional Research Board (IRB) is mandatory regarding compliance to research ethics.
 - 2.16 Research supervisor/project head assumes the responsibility of ethical compliance and guidance during the research process.

3. Legal Aspects

Research ethics policy does not cover anything prohibited in the prevailing laws of Pakistan.

- 3.1 Research ethics policy and permission of the committee do not cover permission of humans and animals involved by collaborative institutions.
- 3.2 The research ethics policy and all the approvals of the committee are in accordance with the university's rules and regulations.
- 3.3 The researcher is under obligation to abide by the law of state and country.
- 3.4 The researcher is under obligation to abide by the rules and regulation of collaborative partners involved in research.

4. Contingencies

- 4.1 The research ethics policy and permission of the committee do not cover any commitment made by the researcher.
- 4.2 Any dispute that arises between the researcher and the committee may be referred to Director ORIC or a subcommittee formed for dispute resolution.
- 4.3 Any dispute that arises between the researcher and the collaborators/participants/third party may be referred to IRB.
- 4.4 The researcher bears the sole responsibility for abiding by generally accepted principles and practices of research ethics.

- 4.5 The notified head of the Ethics Institutional Research Board needs to be approached through submission of an official form.

5. Human Related Research (Definition)

All human-related research which includes one or more of the following requires ethical assessment and approval at the appropriate level:

- 5.1 Direct involvement through physically invasive procedures, such as the taking of blood samples
- 5.2 Direct involvement through non-invasive procedures, such as laboratory-based experiments, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations.
- 5.3 Indirect involvement through access to personal information and/or tissue
- 5.4 Involvement requiring consent on behalf of others, such as by parents for a child participant.

6. Vulnerable Participants

Some participants may be particularly vulnerable to harm and may require special safeguards for their welfare. In general, it may be inappropriate for undergraduates to undertake research projects involving such participants.

Particularly vulnerable participants might be:

- 6.1 Infants and children under the age of eighteen
- 6.2 People with physiological and/or psychological impairments and/or learning difficulties.
- 6.3 People in poverty
- 6.4 Relatives of sick, or recently deceased people
- 6.5 People with only a basic/elementary knowledge of the language of the researcher
- 6.6 Minorities
- 6.7 Females

7. The Legal Framework, The Role of Professional Associations, and Research Councils

- 7.1 All the research projects, academic, industrial or otherwise, must meet the legal requirements of Pakistani and international laws and statutory regulations.
- 7.2 Researchers in each specific discipline should comply with any research ethics guidelines set out by their professional associations.
- 7.3 Research Councils, charitable trusts and other research funding bodies in most cases require an undertaking from grant applicants that research proposals involving human participants have been approved by the University Ethics Institutional Research Board (IRB).

8. Plagiarism

ZU shall not permit any sort of plagiarism from students/faculty researchers. The Official Plagiarism Report must be signed by CLO ZU and it must stay below the acceptance level given by HEC.

In the case of infringement of Ethics Policy, specific sanctions will be imposed, depending on ZU's BASR decision, ranging from financial penalties to temporary suspension or expulsion. HEC's Plagiarism policy must be adhered to letter and spirit.

Following are some major points discussed in plagiarism policy:

- 8.1 Improper citation without dishonest intent.
- 8.2 Citing a source that does not exist.
- 8.3 Signing in for another author.
- 8.4 Copying or using unauthorized materials, devices, or collaboration.
- 8.5 Falsifying evidence or data or other source materials, including falsification by selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one's claims or conclusions.
- 8.6 Intentionally destroying or obstructing another researcher's work.
- 8.7 Knowingly violating research or professional ethics.
- 8.8 Submitting as one's own work a text largely or wholly written by another person(s).
- 8.9 Copying or paraphrasing substantial sections from one or more works of other authors into one's own text, without attribution, that is, omitting any reference to the work(s) either in the body of the text, in footnotes, or in the bibliography/reference list.
- 8.10 Paraphrase of a substantial section or several smaller sections of another text(s) without any reference in the body text, but the work is included in the bibliography/reference list.
- 8.11 Copying/verbatim two or three not necessarily consecutive phrases, or one or two not necessarily consecutive sentences, from the work of others without attribution.
- 8.12 Copying/verbatim one substantial or several smaller sections from another text without quotation marks but with the reference provided within the student's text.

- 8.13 Submitting without permission one's own work that has been largely or wholly submitted for credit to another course.
- 8.14 The ratio of Turnitin similarity index would not be the only indicator of Plagiarism. However, it would be the responsibility of the supervisor to check the plagiarism beyond the Turnitin / any other similarity checking software report.

9. Plagiarism and Poor Scholarship

- 9.1 Summarizing an author's ideas at length but only mentioning the author or the source at the end of the paragraph.
- 9.2 Mentioning an author with an appropriate citation in an earlier sentence but no attribution in subsequent sentences, so that it is unclear whether the author's ideas are continuing or the writer's own comments are being offered.
- 9.3 Including a correctly referenced short fragment from another text but without quotation marks
- 9.4 Using an author's work with incomplete reference e.g., page number is missing, or the work appears only in a footnote/parentheses and is missing from the reference list.

10. Measures to be taken in Cases Confirmed as Plagiarism

- 10.1 An oral or written reprimand
- 10.2 Receive a written reprimand
- 10.3 Financial punitive measure
- 10.4 Contract with ZU ceases
- 10.5 Other measures as per HEC Plagiarism Policy

University decisions will be binding in case any dispute arises between the researcher and ZU.