

IQRA UNIVERSITY

EXTRACTED GUIDELINES FROM INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW BOARD POLICY

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1. OBJECTIVES

The goal is to strengthen a culture embedded in ethics, integrity, and academic honesty throughout IQRA University's research initiatives. This entails guiding researchers, strengthening ethical considerations, and guaranteeing commitment to ethical standards.

2. SCOPES OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) The IU Institutional Review Board (IU-IRB) is entrusted with the task of conducting comprehensive, pertinent, and timely assessments of research applications submitted by students, faculty, and staff of its various faculties.
- b) The IU-IRB autonomously reviews the research ethics of these applications and addresses related matters in a thorough manner.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) The Institutional Review Board (IU-IRB) is meant to conduct an independent, comprehensive examination of the ethical aspects of potential research projects.
- b) The integrity of the Institutional Review Board (IU-IRB) will be upheld at the highest level and will be protected from any political, institutional, or professional influences.
- c) IU-IRB will ensure the proficient review and evaluation of the ethical standards of submitted research proposals.
- d) The Board is entrusted with disseminating appropriate ethical research standards to all departments and researchers, ensuring strict adherence to these standards.
- e) IU-IRB holds the responsibility of issuing the Research Ethics Clearance Certificate to the Principal Investigator before the commencement of any research project and its associated activities.
- f) IRB will follow SOP for its functioning according to international standards.
- g) No research involving living animals or objects can proceed within the University without a thorough ethical review by the IU-Institutional Review Board (IU-IRB) of the respective department.
- h) The IU-Institutional Review Board (IU-IRB) is also responsible for addressing broader ethical concerns related to the University's teaching and research, particularly those involving human subjects or organizations.
- i) The IRB Secretary (ORIC Dpt.) within the constituent campuses will coordinate with the relevant department's head and Deans to schedule meetings as required.

4. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

The following ethical values are recognized and encouraged by the Policy:

- a) **Prevention of harm:** Throughout the study process, it's crucial for university students and staff to prioritize safeguarding respondents from physical and psychological harm. Researchers must avoid using participants for unethical purposes and take measures to protect their well-being during the study.
- b) **Informed consent:** Obtaining informed consent is essential for ensuring participant safety. Without proper information, participants may feel deceived or mistreated by researchers.

Unless there are compelling reasons for limited consent, securing full participant agreement is vital. Researchers should inform participants in advance about all relevant details influencing their willingness to join the research. The consent process should also include plans for keeping participants informed about ongoing study findings.

- c) Rights of participants: Participants have the right to withdraw their consent even after initially agreeing. Researchers should specify when participants can withdraw their consent, if applicable.
- d) Minimizing risk with vulnerable participants: Certain groups, such as patients, widows, or others with limited consent capacity, should be recognized as vulnerable in research. Additionally, circumstances might render other groups, like the unemployed, migrants, or refugees, vulnerable.
- e) Appropriate use of rewards and incentives: Encouraging participation in research should focus on fostering genuine interest rather than solely relying on rewards. Exceptions are for cases where individuals are unable to resist such rewards.
- f) Honesty and integrity: Upholding transparency, truthfulness, and sound judgment goes beyond meeting professional standards. Our commitment involves operating ethically, avoiding conflicts of interest, and refraining from decisions made solely for personal financial gain. We pledge to disclose and manage any conflicts of interest, maintain openness, and honesty in our evaluations and interactions.

5. ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

- a) Research interventions must not cause harm to humans, animals, or public property.
- b) Any form of risk or harm—physical, mental, emotional, financial, or otherwise—is strictly prohibited in research endeavors.
- c) Research activities must not result in damage to public property, harm to the environment, or involve hazardous activities for people and animals.
- d) Personal identities of research participants, respondents, or observed individuals must not be disclosed or published without their consent.
- e) Upholding integrity and honesty are of utmost importance in all interactions involving humans, animals, public property, and institutional research.
- f) A neutral and unbiased approach is essential concerning ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, and g) specific societal groups.
- h) No coercion or force should be employed to compel individuals to participate in research.
- i) Obtaining consent for participation and ensuring comprehension of the research activity are mandatory requirements.