

THIGARAJAR SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT (Autonomous)

Thirupparankundram, Madurai-625005, Tamil Nadu, India



## **Code of Ethics for Research**

### **Introduction:**

Students who undertake research at any level of study are required to conduct the research in a manner that conforms to requirements and standards set down by Alagappa University, Thiagarajar School of Management and, in many cases, by law.

Research can be defined as an inquiry of an investigative, experimental or critical nature which is driven by a question, hypothesis, or intellectual position capable of rigorous assessment, and the findings of which are open to scrutiny and formal evaluation; it includes any intellectual or creative work published, exhibited, presented, or performed in a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance, or other medium.

### **Institution Research Committee:**

1. Dr. K. Mathiyazhagan – Head of Research Ethics Committee
2. Dr. M. Balaji
3. Dr. P. Mutharasi
4. Dr. B. Nataraj
5. Dr. V. Pradeep
6. Dr. Wajahat Azmi

### **Purpose:**

Ethical issues arise when any research and/or related activities involve the interests and rights of others. The purpose of these regulations is to facilitate ethical conduct which respects the rights of people, communities, companies, trusts, and other organisations. These regulations explain the standards of ethical conduct and the procedures that apply for the maintenance and monitoring of these standards. All applications to the Institute's research ethics review committee will be reviewed for approval on the basis of their compliance with these regulations.

### **Application and Validity:**

These regulations apply to research undertaken by any Faculty / Research Scholar / Student as an element of a paper or thesis of the University / Institution at any level of study.

**Plagiarism:**

plagiarism means presenting as one's own work the work of another, and includes the copying or paraphrasing of another person's work in an assessment item without acknowledging it as the other person's work through full and accurate referencing; it applies to research and to assessment presented through a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance, or other medium. Plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism which is the use of one's own work that has been used and/or published in another context without acknowledging the previous work through appropriate referencing

**Code of Conduct:**

A Faculty/Scholar/Student engaged in research:

1. must fairly and fully represent results as he or she honestly perceives them, without falsifying data, fabricating data, claiming results where none have been obtained, or fraudulently changing records
2. must not commit or condone plagiarism
3. must be scrupulously honest in the ascription of authorship, and must not list authors without their permission or attribute work to others who have not in fact contributed to the research
4. must conform with professional standards and codes of ethics relevant to the discipline
5. must exercise integrity and good faith in every aspect of research practice
6. must comply with the Ethical Conduct in Research and Related Activities Regulations when the research involves collecting data about and from people and organizations.

**Research and Related Activities Regulations**

1. These Rules are applicable to:
  - a. All faculty members of Thiagarajar School of Management
  - b. All Research Scholars conducting research under Thiagarajar School of Management
  - c. Post-Graduate or equivalent students under Thiagarajar School of Management
2. Research Scholars / Students are required to apply for formal approval from the Departmental Research Committee / Respective Deans / Head of Research for the Research Study.
3. Under these regulations, all research and/or related activities are required to have formal ethics review and approval.
4. Faculty members are required to submit applications for approval from the Research Ethics Committee if the research involves active participation of one or more students or if the study involves collection of any form of data from the students.

**Procedures for Application:**

1. All Faculty members, Research Scholars and students, must not commence research or a related activity until it has been approved by the appropriate authority and in accordance with these regulations.
2. Researchers must submit their applications with any representative member of the Research Ethics committee within the Institution
3. If an ethical issue relating to the research and/or related activity that was not envisaged at the beginning and if it arises during the course of research study, the researcher must stop the research and/or related activity, consult the appropriate member of committee, and apply for approval. The researcher must not begin the research and/or related activity again until the necessary approval has been obtained from the Ethics committee.

**Responsibility:**

1. Faculty members, Scholars and students who are undertaking research are solely responsible for ensuring that the research activity complies with these regulations
2. Research Supervisors are responsible for compliance with the code of ethics by the research scholars and students under their supervision.

**Public Interest:**

1. A researcher must be able to justify to their peers the goals and methodology of the research and/or related activity in terms of its reasonably anticipated benefits balanced against any foreseeable risk of harm to the participants.
2. A researcher must normally make available the findings of research in the public domain.

**Informed Consent of Participants:**

1. Researchers must gain participants' prior, free, express, and informed consent in a culturally and socially appropriate manner, unless in the case of approved exceptions.
2. A researcher must establish explicit processes for reaching agreement with participants. A researcher must not involve a participant in any research and/or related activities unless the researcher is satisfied that the participant has understood the nature of their involvement and freely agreed to it in accordance with the principles outlined in this section.
3. A researcher must not use explicit or implicit coercion to obtain the agreement, and must not use inducement to obtain the agreement
4. A researcher must inform prospective participants of all information relevant to the decision to participate including

- a. their right to decline to participate in the research and/or related activities or any portion or any part of these
  - b. the form in which the findings will be published
  - c. duration and security of data storage
  - d. their right to withdraw any information they have provided up until analysis has commenced on their data
  - e. their right to access and correct personal information
  - f. the process for withdrawing information they have provided.
5. The more readily identifiable the participants may be, the more formal the consent should be. Where participants are asked to answer questionnaires that might identify them, answer questions in a formal interview, undergo formal tests, or where they are subjected to formal observation and recording procedures, the process for obtaining informed consent, and the form of the consent, should be similarly formal and recorded in writing or some other reproducible form. Where the participation is more anonymous the consent may be less personalized and less explicit
  6. If the research or related activity involves manipulation of, or intervention in, the physical or psychological state of a participant, the participant's consent, or, if subsection (8) of this section applies, the consent of the person with authorized responsibility for the participant, must be recorded in writing or some other reproducible form.
  7. Because some research and/or related activities involve collectives, a researcher must recognise the complexities of relationships between individuals and collectives. In some cultures it is common for the leader of a collective to make a decision in respect of participation on behalf of its members. If an individual in a collective wishes to participate or not to participate in the research and/or related activity, regardless of a decision taken on behalf of the collective, the individual's wishes must be respected and all reasonable care taken to ensure that those wishes are also respected by other members of the collective.
  8. If a prospective participant is reasonably judged incapable of giving informed consent, the researcher must obtain the proxy consent from the person who has responsibility for the prospective participant's welfare, taking particular care to protect the participant's interests and also taking into account any potential conflict of interest between them and the person whose consent is required.
  9. A researcher who seeks the proxy consent of another person on behalf of a prospective participant under subsection (8) of this section must make all reasonable effort to involve the prospective participant themselves in the process and the decision about consent.
  10. Staff, students, and other approved persons must obtain informed consent when recording images of participants, participants' possessions, or research and/or related activity in which participants are involved, unless the recording of images is of lawful activity occurring in a public place and is culturally appropriate.

11. A researcher must provide the information under subsection (1) of this section plainly and in the language and medium that is appropriate for the prospective participants.
12. A researcher must inform participants of their right of access to any data that may have been collected from or about them.
13. A researcher must inform participants of their right to complain about the conduct of the research and/or related activity and must also inform them of the process for making a complaint.

### **Large random sample surveys and informed consent**

1. A researcher who intends to collect data involving large numbers of people is not required to adhere to all the principles concerning informed consent outlined in section 9(4) of these regulations if the research method makes adherence to all these principles impractical or undesirable and if such a requirement is likely to impact adversely on the researcher's ability to generate reliable information.
2. However, the researcher must declare and justify an intention not to adhere to the principles in the Informed Consents section of these regulations in the application for approval submitted under section 6 of these regulations.
3. In these situations the researcher must provide the following information, as a minimum, to a participant before the research or related activity begins
  - a. the anticipated length of the research or related activity
  - b. the general purpose of the research or related activity
  - c. the forms in which the data might be published
  - d. an assurance that the participant will not be identified in any publication or dissemination of research findings.

### **Field research and informed consent**

1. 'Field' research in this context means research conducted in person in a natural setting outside of a laboratory.
2. In field research situations, prior, free, express, and informed consent must be gained in a culturally and socially appropriate manner from participants.
3. In some forms of field research using such methods as participant observation, participatory research and action research, where obtaining prior, free, express, and informed consent from all participants would be inappropriately intrusive or impractical for social, cultural, or methodological reasons, it is acceptable not to gain such consent.
4. However, the researcher must take care to apply other ethical principles, especially minimising the risk of harm to participants and maintaining the anonymity of participants. It may also be appropriate in such cases that informed consent be sought afterwards but prior to the publication of research findings, from people who have in the course of information collection come to the attention of the researcher.

## **Archiving of data, privacy, storage, and use of information**

1. All non-identifying data (Example: Data sets and transcripts) used for publication must be securely kept long enough to allow for academic examination, challenge, or peer review. This period would normally be at least five years. Identifying data such as consent forms, photographs, and videos will be securely stored consistent with agreements made under Informed Consents Section of these regulations. The responsibility for data storage lies with the department or other equivalent academic unit.
2. Where the research and/or related activity is conducted in India, the researcher must comply with the Data Protection Guidelines by the Government of India and must adhere to the following principles consistent with that legislation
  - a. Participants and informants must not be publicly identified or identifiable without their explicit consent
  - b. Participants must be informed that they will not be identified in any publication or dissemination of the research findings without their explicit consent
  - c. Researchers must take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized use, access, modification, or disclosure of personal information
  - d. Data identifying participants must not be kept for longer than required for the purpose for which it is collected (see subsection (1) of this section)
  - e. Except in circumstances specified in the relevant legislation, personal information may be used only for the purpose for which it is collected.
3. Where the research and/or related activity is conducted in a country other than India the researcher must comply with any legislation that applies in that country with respect to privacy and storage of personal information.
4. Even where the research and/or related activity is conducted in a country other than India, the researcher must comply as far as possible with the spirit of the Data Protection Guidelines by the Government of India; however, if there are contradictions between the legislation of India and the other country, the legislation of the other country must prevail
5. A researcher must include in an application submitted for approval a statement about the conditions under which, and the period for which, any personal information collected for the research and/or related activity is to be stored.
6. Data must not be made available to persons or for purposes that are not named on the application.

**Minimization of harm:**

1. A researcher must make particular effort to identify physical, psychological, social, economic, or cultural harm to participants before seeking their consent to participation.
2. A researcher must minimize both the risk of harm to a participant and the potential for negative consequences of the harm.
3. 'Harm' in this context includes pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, and exploitation.
4. Unless it would be impractical or undesirable to do so in the terms described in these regulations, a researcher must consult participants to ascertain any risk of harm that they themselves may identify or concerns that they themselves may have.
5. If, during the course of the research and/or related activity, it is apparent to the researcher that the risk of harm to the participant is greater than originally envisaged, the researcher must inform the participant and re-evaluate the research and/or related activity in terms of the principles outlined in this section.

**Limitation of deception:**

1. Deception of participants conflicts with the principle of informed consent, but in some research and/or related activities it may be necessary to withhold information about the purpose of the research and/or related activity or the procedures involved.
2. Research and/or related activities involving deception of participants will be approved only if the researcher demonstrates in the application for ethics review that the deception is absolutely essential to the goals of the research and/or related activity.
3. A researcher who undertakes research and/or related activities involving deception of a participant must ensure that the participant is provided with an explanation of the true purpose of the research and/or related activity and the reason for the deception as soon as practicable after the participation.

**Social and cultural sensitivity**

1. A researcher must respect the cultural, social, and language preferences and sensitivities of the participant.
2. Where the research and/or related activity potentially affects individuals or groups who are significantly different in culture from the researcher, the researcher must consult an appropriate person before the research and/or related activity begins about appropriate cultural procedures and approaches to the research and/or related activity and about informing the participant or community concerned of the research findings.
3. An application for ethics review under these regulations must demonstrate how the researcher has responded to the advice received from the person consulted.
4. Appropriate consultation and subsequent responses on matters of social and cultural sensitivity are the responsibility of the researcher.

### **Exploitation of relationships**

1. A researcher must not exploit the relationship between researcher and participant.
2. A researcher must resist any initiative by a participant to exploit the relationship between researcher and participant.
3. 'Exploitation' in this context means the seeking or obtaining of money, goods, services, favors, information or relationships that have no direct bearing on the stated research and/or related activity aims or data gathering.
4. Where a researcher is a staff member and the prospective participant a student, the researcher must not exploit that relationship and must strive to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged through their participation or refusal to participate, academically, professionally, or otherwise.

### **Respect for property rights**

1. A researcher must ensure that procedures or publications associated with the research and/or related activities do not infringe legally determined property rights.
2. A researcher must ensure that procedures or publications associated with the research and/or related activities do not infringe culturally determined property rights to the extent possible and reasonable in all circumstances.
3. Property rights in this context may apply to land, goods, works of art and craft, images, and intangible materials such as spiritual treasures, music, information, and intellectual property.
4. A researcher must identify and address any issues associated with property rights and ownership of data at the time they seek informed consent and monitor these issues throughout the research process.

### **Payment for participation**

A researcher must not pay participants for their participation, or arrange for participants to be paid, in money, goods, services, prizes, favors, or in any other form of remuneration or form of hospitality appropriate to the engagement, either directly or indirectly, unless the payment is approved by the appropriate approving authority.

### **Professional codes of ethics**

A researcher must ensure that their research or related activity complies with any professional code of ethical practice or standard relevant to the research and/or related activity.



### **Declaration of potential conflict of interest**

1. A researcher must, in an application submitted under section 4 of these regulations, declare any potential conflict of interest.
2. 'Conflict of interest' occurs where a researcher or related party is, or is reasonably likely to
  - a. obtain an unfair, inappropriate, or unethical professional, commercial, or personal advantage as a result of or in connection with the research and/or related activity
  - b. be in a position in relation to the activity or the participants that could appear to affect the researcher's impartiality in the research and/or related activity;
  - c. Obtain a direct or indirect pecuniary benefit or interest as a result of or in connection with the research or related activity.
3. If the research and/or related activity is commissioned or sponsored, the researcher must ensure that the commission or the sponsorship
  - a. is declared to the participants and in any published findings

### **Authority for ethical approval and monitoring**

1. Authority for administering these regulations rests with the Institution Research Ethics Committee.

### **Researcher appeals against decisions concerning applications for approval**

1. A researcher may appeal to the Departmental Research Committee against any decision by the Institution Research Ethics Committee under these regulations.
2. The Departmental Research Committee determine its own procedures for hearing and deciding the appeal provided that they conform with the principles of natural justice, and may delegate authority to hear and decide an appeal on its behalf.
3. The decision of the Departmental Research Committee (or delegated authority) on an appeal is final.

### **Appeal provision**

1. A person may appeal to the Departmental Research Committee against any matters dealt with under these regulations by the Institution Research Ethics Committee under these regulations.
2. The Departmental Research Committee determines its own procedures for hearing and deciding the appeal conforming with the principles of natural justice, and delegates authority to hear and decide an appeal on its behalf.
3. The decision of the Departmental Research Committee(or delegated authority) on an appeal is final.