



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE

WEST INDIES

POLICY

ON

RESEARCH ETHICS

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1. PREAMBLE

This Policy should be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the vision of the University as a research community committed to the principles of honesty, trust and collegiality and to the idea that fair play must prevail at all times.

It is important for the University community to have an explicitly stated ethical framework within which all research should be conducted. Bodies that fund research expect that the University's research will be conducted within a framework of explicitly stated policies on research ethics.

2. INTRODUCTION

This Policy on Research Ethics applies to all individuals who conduct research at The University of the West Indies (UWI) or at one of its affiliated institutions. The term "research" includes all forms of funded and unfunded scholarly and creative work by UWI staff and students and by people who use UWI facilities for the creation, dissemination, and publication of scholarly work.

Some of the provisions of this Policy deal with matters that are also treated in other University guidelines and regulatory documents. In appropriate cases, reference to these guidelines and documents should also be made.

This Policy does not attempt to address all matters relating to the ethical conduct of research activities. Consequently, it is recognised that many academic units will require more specific provisions than those guidelines supplied in this Policy. Academic units are encouraged to develop and/or subscribe to more specific provisions.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University requires honesty and integrity in research and scholarship. The University, through the appropriate administrative offices and in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and other applicable regulatory procedures, will (a) help facilitate the resolution of disputes concerning matters dealt with in this Policy (see article 9), and (b) investigate allegations of misconduct under this Policy and take action, as appropriate.

4. THE SELECTION AND CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Research projects should be managed, funding should be used and research should be conducted with due consideration for all University policies. In addition to this Policy, these latter include policies set out in existing University

regulations or guidelines, such as the University Ordinances, the Financial Code, Financial Procedures and Financial Rules and Regulations.

The primary responsibility for the selection and conduct of research rests with the individuals performing the research. In the case of collaborative or team research, the research director or principal investigator is obligated to ensure that the members of the research team or group are aware of the contents of this Policy and of other applicable ethical norms governing the conduct of the research. In such cases, the research director or principal investigator should take all reasonable measures to ensure that the provisions of this Policy are complied with by the members of the research team. In the case of research conducted by students for academic credit, the instructor, supervisor or research director, as the case may be, in addition to informing the student of his or her obligations in respect of the ethical conduct of research, shall take further reasonable measures to ensure that the student's research is conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and with other applicable ethical norms.

5. THE DUTY OF HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Researchers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to the following, is a serious offence:

(a) Falsification of Data

The gathering of data and research materials must be undertaken with honesty and integrity. Researchers should never publish as true, data they know to be false or the result of deliberate acts of falsification.

(b) Plagiarism

Researchers should not knowingly represent the published or unpublished work of another person as their own or assist anyone else in doing so. The use by a researcher of work done by other people must be appropriately and adequately acknowledged. The attribution of authorship is addressed in Section 7 below. Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty and is considered to be misconduct meriting the most severe disciplinary penalties.

Upon the demonstration that a researcher has misappropriated another person's work and represented it as their own, the researcher would bear the burden of rebutting, by evidence satisfying the person or body hearing the case, the presumption of plagiarism.

(c) Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may arise when the researcher has a material interest - financial or otherwise - that may conflict with the researcher's duty of honesty and integrity. Where a conflict of interest of a financial nature arises, a researcher is under a duty to disclose that interest, to his/her superior and to all other persons to whom it should be disclosed, where the relevant circumstances are not a matter of public knowledge.

(d) Misuse of Research Funds

Where a research funding body provides guidelines on the use of research funds, researchers and directors of research projects must follow those guidelines scrupulously, including adequate reporting of financial statements as required by the sponsor. Researchers and directors of research must also follow all University guidelines on the management and disbursement of funds. Regardless of the source of research funding, it is not permitted to divert resources for personal use, except in cases where the grant or contract specifically provided otherwise. Should misuse of research funds occur (including the failure to account for funds), offenders will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University under Ordinance 8.

Nothing in the provisions of this policy is intended to impugn the actions of a person who exercises judgment or interprets data or designs experiments in a way which may reasonably be the subject of honest differences of opinion.

6. DUTIES WHERE RESEARCH WITH HUMAN AND ANIMAL SUBJECTS IS CONCERNED

(a) Human Subjects

Research involving human subjects must be carried out in accordance with the highest standards of conduct. It must be conducted in a manner which is ethical and which respects the rights of the persons who are the subjects of the research and in accordance with the rules and guidelines prescribed by research funding bodies, the law in the territories where the research is to be conducted and the University.

(b) Animal Research

All animal research must be conducted in compliance with University's guidelines on the use of animal for research and teaching.

7. COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

(a) Attribution of Authorship and Copyright Ownership

Research collaborators should establish as early as possible, how the attribution of authorship and how the allocation of copyright are to be divided between them.

(i) Attribution of Authorship:

In the absence of an agreement between the researchers (including students), the following rules governing the attribution of authorship apply:

- authorship is attributed to all those persons (including students) who have made significant scholarly contributions to the work and who share responsibility and accountability for the results;
- an administrative relationship to the investigation does not of itself qualify a person for co-authorship;
- the order of the names in a publication is decided according to the quality of the contribution, the extent of the responsibility and accountability for the results, and the custom of the discipline and must fully respect the contributions of students as outlined in article (7b).
- the attribution of authorship is not affected by whether researchers were paid for their contributions or by their employment status;

(ii) Duties of the Principal Author:

In the absence of an agreement between the researchers, where there are co-authors, the following further rules apply:

- the author who submits a manuscript for publication accepts the responsibility of having included as co-authors

all persons who are entitled to co-authorship, and none who are inappropriate;

- the submitting author should send each co-author (including student) a draft copy of the manuscript and should make a reasonable attempt to obtain consent to co-authorship, including the order of names; and
- other contributions should be indicated in a footnote or an “Acknowledgments” section, in accordance with the standards of the discipline and the publisher.

(iii) *Ownership of copyright:*

In the absence of an agreement between the researchers, the allocation of copyright is governed by university policy and the law.

(b) **Student-Professor Collaborations**

The rules in (a) apply to the case where the collaborators are academic staff members(s) and student(s). Further to those rules, when a multi-authored article is based primarily on the student’s dissertation/thesis, the student should have a position of priority on the list of co-authors, according to the practice in the discipline.

(c) **The Duty to Acknowledge Sources of Funding**

All public and private funding sources (grants, contracts and gifts including endowed income that funds named chairs) used in the conduct of research should be acknowledged in resulting publications.

8. DATA

(a) **Definition of Data**

“Data” in this article includes the methodology used to obtain results, the actual research results, and the analysis and interpretations by the researchers.

(b) **Authorship and Copyright Data**

The rules set out in article 7 of the Policy govern questions concerning the attribution of authorship of and the ownership of the copyright in Data.

(c) **Gathering of Data**

Data must be organised in a manner that allows ready verification. Data must be gathered in accordance with principles governing the use of human and animal subjects.

(d) **Availability of Data**

Subject to exceptions based on a duty of confidentiality and the laws respecting intellectual property and access to information, after data are published, they must be made available to any party presenting a reasonable request to examine them. In cases where there is a disagreement between the researcher and the person requesting the data, the matter shall be referred to the School for Graduate Studies and Research for resolution.

(e) **Maintenance of Data**

All original data must be retained for a reasonable length of time. This should be for at least five years from the date of publication.

9 DISPUTES BETWEEN CO-RESEARCHERS

The provisions in this article govern disputes between co-researchers. They do not govern allegations of misconduct under this Policy. Allegations of misconduct are dealt with in article 10 of this Policy.

(a) **The Duty on the Parties to Resolve Disputes**

Where disputes between co-researchers arise, they should be resolved amicably and in a respectful and collegial fashion. Where a dispute cannot be resolved by the parties themselves, the parties should seek the advice of the appropriate authorities in their unit, who may help the parties resolve the dispute in any way to which the parties may agree, including conciliation, mediation, and binding and non-binding arbitration. To this end, the parties may agree that other persons become involved in the dispute in order to help facilitate its resolution. The parties may stipulate

that their own involvement in any dispute resolution process is without prejudice to their rights in any subsequent process.

The University has no obligation to ensure that disputes are resolved, since the resolution of disputes is ultimately subject to the will of the parties to the dispute. However, the University may help facilitate the resolution of disputes, in accordance with the following provisions.

If the dispute is between individuals working under a principal investigator(s), the principal investigator should investigate and attempt to resolve the matter. If the principle investigator is involved in the dispute, the Head(s) of the Department(s) or academic units(s) concerned should investigate and attempt to resolve the matter. If any party involved in the dispute should object to the investigation of a Head, or if a Head is directly involved in the dispute or allegation of misconduct, the Dean of the appropriate Faculty and/or the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research or Graduate Studies) should be informed and may either investigate the dispute and attempt to resolve it or nominate a senior academic staff member, acceptable to the parties, to act as investigator, who would attempt to resolve the matter.

10. DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND GRIEVANCE

Any allegation of misconduct under this Policy made against a member of the University may be dealt with in accordance with the University's legal instruments (e.g., Ordinance No. 8 and the Students' Charter).

Approved by the Board for Graduate Studies and Research October 8, 1997

Revised and approved by the Finance and General Purpose Committee, February 12, 1998