

**CHRIST UNIVERSITY**  
**Bengaluru**

**Code of Research Conduct and Ethics**

**Policy:**

Christ University will follow internationally recognised Codes and Ethical Practices as **Minimum Standard in all its Research pursuits across all academic/professional disciplines. The Departments/ Schools/ Institutes/ Centres of the University may specify additional regulations in this regard if is so warranted by the discipline related conventions.** The University will respect the autonomy of researchers and will create and maintain an environment with adequate support systems to enable researchers to follow the ethical guidelines. The University will encourage publication of all material outputs of its Researchers irrespective of whether they support or contradict the Research expected outcome(s). There shall be adequate and effective mechanism set by the University to ensure regular check on the compliance of the prescribed Codes and Guidelines throughout the Research Process from the start till the delivery of its final output.

**Regulations:**

1. The entire research process at the University including the outputs thereof in the form of Publications, Research Reports (Minor and Major research projects, Monographs and Working Papers), Academic & Consultancy Research, Formal & Informal Research Programs and any such research initiatives will be covered under this Policy and Regulation which will apply to all approved Researchers at the University including but not limited to University Teachers, Staff, Students, Post Doctoral Fellows and Emeritus Fellows.
2. Externally funded Research Projects shall be additionally guided by specific instructions if any of the concerned funding agency so long as they do not contradict with the provisions contained in this Regulation.
3. Code of Research Conduct and the Research Ethics herein stated are inter-related and complementing to each other (may be overlapping as well) and hence must be applied carefully with due regard to the Research Problem. These are not administrative rules and therefore the conscience of researchers may be the best guide to ensure that conduct of research is not entirely left to the discretion of individual researchers while addressing the ethical dilemmas that may crop up.

**4. Code of Research Conduct**

Everyone involved in research (Sponsors, Investigators, Associates, Assistants, Supervisors and any others generally referred to herein individually and collectively as 'Researchers') in the University owes a duty of accountability to society, to their profession, to the University, to all participants in the research and to its funding agencies. Hence no one shall embark on any Research Activity without acquiring adequate theoretical and practical knowledge about the process and conduct of Research.

- b) Researchers should undertake only such research that according to their understanding will be useful to society or for the furtherance of knowledge on the subject.
- c) Researchers must accept full responsibility for their research conduct and for the activities of all persons involved under their direction or supervision.

- d) Researchers must be honest and lawful in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research work, outputs and deliverables, including applying for funding, research design, generating and analysing data, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contribution of colleagues, collaborators and others.
- e) Researchers must make all possible efforts to get and give adequate consideration to existing literature/knowledge and its relevance, and the alternatives available on the subject/ issue under the study. Sincere commitment to research in general and to the relevant subject in particular and readiness to acquire adequate knowledge, ability and skill for undertaking particular research are essential prerequisites in the conduct of Research
- f) Any Research must have a clearly defined objective and must be done meaningfully with full adherence to quality aspects. Research for research sake without creation of new knowledge or new dimension to existing knowledge will be considered unsatisfactory with reference to this Code.
- g) Researchers must ensure that the research is conducted in a suitable working environment with appropriate equipment and facilities; Care must be taken to safeguard the health and safety aspects and to follow the prescribed legal requirements.
- h) Researchers must encourage Peer Review as an essential part of every research endeavour and must take in to consideration all valid comments thereof at different stages of research process as may be deemed relevant and appropriate. However the Reviewer chosen must be able do the task objectively, impartially and constructively.
- i) Researchers must ensure integrity of financial management of the research project to provide the optimum value for the public or private funding agencies with appropriate quality standards, as well as the timely delivery of any scheduled tangible outcomes.
- j) Research data must be managed in accordance with standard practices and expectations of the particular discipline and in accordance with any privacy law.
- k) Researchers must ensure that all personal records of research progress, including authorised laboratory books, are maintained to the recommended or required standards, and that the falsification of results does not occur. Laboratory books must be signed and dated by the researcher, and signed off by the supervisor.
- l) Unless there are ethically and legally justified reasons for doing otherwise, Researchers must ensure that they have each study participant's explicit informed written consent to obtain, hold and use his/her personal information.
- m) Personal information pertinent to the research only should be collected and such information should be kept on record only for such time limits as warranted by the research requirements.
- n) Researchers must ensure confidentiality in order to achieve protection of intellectual property rights where appropriate and that dissemination of research findings are done with due regard to such requirements.
- o) All Research Data must be recorded in a durable form with appropriate references. All such Data must be retained intact for a period of at least seven years from the date of any publication which is based upon them. Data should be stored in their original form, i.e., tapes/discs, etc., and should not be deleted and reused, but kept securely as per approved procedure as may be prescribed by the Centre for Research of the University. These procedures must be made known to and complied by all the members of the Research Team.

- p) Access to retained data shall be normally made available only to the Research Team (Researchers) but may be shared with other Staff/Students with the approval of the concerned Regulatory Authority with such conditions as may be specified.
- q) Confidentiality provisions relating to publications may apply in circumstances where the University or the researcher has made or given confidentiality undertakings to third parties or confidentiality is required to protect intellectual property rights. It is the obligation of the research leader to inform researchers as to whether confidentiality provisions apply and of researchers to enquire of their research leader whether there are any obligations with respect to these provisions.
- r) Researchers must adhere to the guidelines herein with reference to Sensitive Data, Confidentiality and Data Sharing contained in Para 8 and Intellectual Property Rights & Publications contained in Para 9 herein.
- s) Covert research (Research purpose or implication thereof is not declared to the research participants or subjects) may be undertaken when it may provide unique forms of evidence or where overt observation might alter the phenomenon being studied.
- t) Researchers must ensure that the participants are allowed to participate voluntarily without any fear or favour and absolutely free from coercion in an environment of least harm or risk to all living beings and to property.
- u) Researchers prior to commencement of Research must obtain approval of their Research Design by the prescribed Regulatory Authority under Para 7 herein. The Research Design shall contain such information as may be specified by the relevant Regulatory Authority.

5.

#### **Research Ethics Guidelines**

The University is committed to follow good ethical practice, as a principle in itself and as a means to create public confidence in the research work of the University. The prescribed Regulatory Authority in this regard (Research Conduct & Ethics Committee – RCEC) will lay down specific Guidelines with reference to different disciplines of research duly reviewed from time to time in accordance with international practices and as guided by the Centre for Research of the University. Periodic review and approval of the Research Process for its conduct and ethical compliance by RCEC is mandatory and is done to ensure quality conduct and ethical propriety of the Research pursued at the University. General Guidelines for Research Ethics are as under:

- a) Research must not cause harm to the participants in particular and to people in general.
- b) Research should as far as possible make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people.
- c) Researchers have a right, as well as a responsibility, to refrain from undertaking or continue undertaking any research that contravenes ethical guidelines, violates the integrity of research and/or compromises their autonomy in research, including design methodology, analysis and interpretation of findings and publication. If they feel that their rights are being violated, or that the study is unethical, they should make all possible efforts at making corrections. In the event of failure of remedial measures they should exercise their right to terminate the study or to opt out of it.
- d) Research must respect and protect the rights and dignity of participants.
- e) The benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people.

- f) All information and records provided by participants or obtained directly or indirectly on/about the participants are confidential. For revealing or sharing any information that may identify participants, permission of the participants is essential.
- g) All research must take adequate precautions towards minimizing and mitigating risks if any involved in the research process or in the delivery of its output.
- h) Research must not unnecessarily consume the time of participants or make them incur undue loss of resources and income. It should not expose them to risks due to participation in the research.
- i) Covert research must not be undertaken lightly or routinely. It is only justified if important issues are being addressed and if matters of social significance which cannot be uncovered in other ways are likely to be discovered.
- j) The relationship within the research team, including student and junior members, should be based on the principle of non-exploitation.
- k) Researchers have a responsibility towards the interests of those involved in or affected by their own work. They should make reasonable efforts to anticipate and to guard against possible misuse and undesirable or harmful consequences of research.
- l) Researchers should take reasonable corrective steps when they come across misuse or misrepresentation of their own work.
- m) Contribution of each member of the research team should be properly acknowledged.
- n) The conduct of research must be fair, honest and transparent. It is desirable that the researchers are amenable to social and financial review of their research.
- o) Researchers must ensure respect, protection and promotion of rights of participants. Criteria for the selection of participants of research should be fair, besides being scientific.
- p) Researchers should declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest.
- q) The principal researchers should delegate to the juniors, assistants, students and trainees only those responsibilities that they are reasonably capable of performing on the basis of their education, training or experience, either independently or under supervision.
- r) All members of the team on a research project have a right to know and document all aspects of research including ownership of the data. This will also apply to the participation of students doing their own research in a project team.

6.

#### **Misconducts and Unethical Practices**

- a) Plagiarism, deception or the fabrication or falsification of results shall be regarded as research misconduct and a serious disciplinary offence.
- b) No researcher should engage, personally or professionally, in discriminatory, harmful or exploitative practices, or any perceived form of harassment. Nor should the researcher impose views/beliefs on or try to seek personal, sexual or economic gain from anybody, including other researchers, juniors, assistants, trainees and students.
- c) Researchers should not undertake secret or classified research, any secret assignment under the garb of research nor research whose findings are to be kept confidential.
- d) Researchers should make adequate efforts to make public in appropriate manner and form, and at appropriate time, information on the research undertaken, and the relevant results and implications of completed research having social impact. Failure on this count will be against acceptable ethical practice.

- e) Researchers should not impede the autonomy of participants by resorting to coercion, promise of unrealistic benefits or inducement or by any other means of exploitation.
- f) Participants should be informed about their right to decline participation outright, or to withdraw consent given at any stage of the research, without undesirable consequences, penalty and so on. The participants should be informed that they are free to object to and refuse to allow the use of data gathering devices, such as camera, tape recorder etc. Failure on this count will be against acceptable ethical practice.
- g) Dissemination of the results of research shall be done only after it has been peer-reviewed and/or published in recognised Journals.
- h) Non adherence to every applicable part of this Regulation regarding the Conduct and/ or Ethical Compliance, if not rectified suo motu or as per the direction of the concerned Regulatory Authority within reasonable time shall be deemed ipso facto a misconduct which may lead to stoppage or rejection of Research and the Researchers will be required to refund the Grants received if any from the University or from any external agencies.

7.

### Regulatory Authorities

- a) The Regulatory Authorities of the University as tabled herein will be responsible for overseeing the quality conduct of Research at the University including adherence to the requirements of this Regulation.

Authority		Role & Powers	Composition	Chairperson
Research Approval Committee (RAC)	Academic Programs	Pre-Approval; The Powers will include Critically reviewing the Research objectives and scope, quality aspects, financial assessment and Design Correction;	Supervisor (Guide), Research Director (Academic), Independent Discipline Expert.	Research Director (Academic)
	Minor Research		Minor Research Coordinator (RDC) Independent Discipline Expert. Head of the Department	Head of the Department
	Major Research, Monographs, Working Papers Post Doctoral Research		Research Director (Projects), Independent Discipline Expert. Head of the Department	Research Director (Projects),
Research Conduct & Ethics Committee (RCEC)	Academic Programs	Yearly/periodical review of the Research Progress with special reference to adherence to code of conduct and ethics. The Committee may issue suggestions and directions for correction.	Director of Research, Research Director (Academic), Research Director (Projects), Two nominees of Senior Professors (Ph.D) including one from the discipline	Director of Research
	Minor Research			
	Major Research, Monographs, Working Papers Post Doctoral Research			

- b) The Regulatory Authority concerned will record and document the proceedings of its review.
- c) The RCEC may delegate the review of research that poses minimal risk to human participants to research committees at departmental or deanery level. Guidelines as to what form of research poses risk to human participants can be obtained from the Centre for Research of the University.
- d) The Regulatory Authority will have powers to stop the Research if its directions are not acted upon by the Researchers.

8.

### **Sensitive Data, Confidentiality and Data Sharing**

- a) Sensitive information or data which are normally private or classified in nature must be used with care and should not be disclosed or disseminated without appropriate authorization of the participants.
- b) The term 'sensitive' is descriptive and not an official classification and hence may fit in to various classifications depending on legal requirements and usage.
- c) Personal information of individual participants obtained for the purpose of or as a result of research is to be considered confidential and disclosure to third parties is prohibited with the exception of statutory notification as applicable to the particular research. Participant confidentiality should be ensured by utilising identification code numbers to correspond to research data in any research paperwork and computer files.
- d) The University values free exchange of timely and accurate information while fully appreciating privacy and confidentiality requirements. Sharing of data should be done in a form, which is in consonance with the interests and rights of the participants.
- e) There shall apply proper distinction between Public Data (Information available in Public Domain which does not impose any confidentiality restrictions) and Private Data (Information which are of restricted access). Private Data will include personal data about and by the individual including unpublished research data. Researchers using personal data in research have a duty to maintain confidentiality and protection of authorship rights, in the interest of the individuals concerned.
- f) Data security arrangements (for storage, retention and accessibility) must be sufficient to prevent unauthorised breaches of confidentiality;
- g) All information and records provided by participants or obtained directly or indirectly on/about the participants are confidential. For revealing or sharing any information that may identify participants, permission of the participants is essential.
- h) Data, in the form of anonymous or abstracted facts that do not identify participants and / or their whereabouts may be commonly shared, among the researchers, peer reviewers, or may even be made available to the Public.
- i) The University encourages its researchers to make all research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material), where copyright allows, should be made available in an open access form upon publication and deposited in the University repository.
- j) Researchers should avoid dissemination of the results of research before they are peer-reviewed or published in appropriate journals.
- k) When Research results are disseminated through the popular media, extra care should be taken to ensure that even those media persons not specifically trained in the subject matter of Research are able to comprehend the limitations and implications of research results to enable the media to handle research results truthfully and honestly.
- l) Researchers must facilitate to take back relevant summary findings of the research to the research participants in a form and in understandable manner duly safeguarding against potential social harm such information may cause on them.
- m) Data Sharing will include legally required dissemination of information under the RTI Act or uploading of Doctoral Research Report in the depository of UGC and such other requirements for which Researchers must enable the University to carry out such compliances.

9.

### Intellectual Property Rights & Publications

- a) Intellectual Property including potential Patents and Copy Rights generated by approved Researchers at the University will belong to the University unless there is an agreement to the contrary. Approved Researchers will include all those who are employed by or associated with the University on a research relationship either as part of their normal duties or on assigned responsibility.
- b) Given that the University delivers varied undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes the most likely types of intellectual property to be created include theses, dissertations, cognate essays, research papers, books, poems, plays, scripts, essays, articles, dictionaries, maps, lyrics, musical scores, paintings, photographs, films, videos, tapes, computer software, databases, records, tapes, cassettes, educational materials, web based materials and inventions (new kinds of technology).
- c) Intellectual Property to be recognised by law, must satisfy three criteria:
  - (i) It must be an original creation.
  - (ii) It must be a specific expression of an idea, not the idea itself and...
  - (iii) It must be fixed in a physical form.

Ownership rests initially with the creator of the work, unless the creator has been employed by the University to create a work in which case the copyright rests with the University.

- d) If the research work involving intellectual property is likely to have potential for commercialisation, it is required that there has to be properly written agreements governing the sharing of financial returns with due consideration to the contribution of individual researchers in the research deliverables.
- e) The interests of the funding agencies and its' binding agreements shall be duly recognised while determining the value sharing of Intellectual Property Rights.
- f) For the purpose of this Regulation publications will include all reports, articles and other such knowledge material relating to Research or on general subject areas in printed and electronic form by the Researchers or any other person associated with the University whether it is funded (internally or externally) or non-funded.
- g) Reporting of research and its results is the right as well as duty of every researcher and the institution that conducted the study. This responsibility may be delegated to funding agencies or sponsors or to any other individual/organisation subject to a mutually agreed written commitment to publish /disseminate the results / report on a stipulated time frame.
- h) Researchers should take advantage of opportunities available, to publish their work in an open access form offered by journal publishers, and may make use of research grants and other funds, in order to pay open access publication fees.
- i) Researchers are encouraged to disseminate their research and research findings in an appropriate form, usually as papers in refereed journals. Publication and wider dissemination of research and research findings must be carried out responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of dissemination in the wider media. The following guidelines will generally apply in this regard.
  - (i) A publication must contain appropriate reference to the contributions made by all participants in the relevant research.
  - (ii) Authorship of the publication and its sequence in case of more than one author, should be based on the quantum of contribution made in terms of ideas, conceptualisation, actual performance of the research, analysis and writing of the

report or any publication based on the research. Status of the individual should not bias the sequence of authorship.

- (iii) All other individuals not satisfying the criteria for authorship but have made contribution for the completion of the research or publication should be properly acknowledged. Appropriate credits should be given where data or information from other studies or publications is quoted or otherwise included.
- (iv) A student should be listed as principal or first author on any multiple authored publication that substantially derives from the student's dissertation or thesis.
- (v) A publication which is substantially similar to other publications derived from the same research must contain appropriate reference to the other publications.
- (vi) A researcher who submits substantially similar work to more than one other publisher should disclose that fact to the publishers at the time of submission.
- (vii) Publication and dissemination of work electronically or on the Web should be treated with the same degree of integrity as every other form of publication.
- (viii) Publication should not directly or indirectly identify individual research participants. Measures should be taken to disguise the identity of research subjects unless explicit consent is given by them for revealing their identity.
- (ix) Researchers should also disclose in their publications, the source(s) of funding and sponsors, if any, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. The findings should also explain the methodology used, as well as how, in actual practice the ethical guidelines were followed, ethical dilemmas encountered and resolved.
- (x) The research funder should be notified in advance when research might be published, publicised or disseminated.
- (xi) The University encourages its researchers to make available all research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material), where copyright permits, in an open access form upon publication and deposited in the University repository to ensure their easy availability and accessibility.
- (xii) All publications, including related external communications, whether through websites, e-bulletins, press releases, media briefings, or events should be undertaken with the core principles of openness, transparency and accountability.

10.

#### Clarifications and Resolution of Conflicts

a) Any clarification, interpretation, advice or direction on any of the provisions contained in this Regulation shall be referred to the Centre for Research of the University.

b) In case of any conflict among the Researchers it may be referred for its resolution to the Centre for Research of the University whose orders will be final and binding.

c) In case of any conflict between the Researchers and the Centre for Research it may be referred for resolution to the Director of Research whose orders will be final and binding.

d) Appeal against the findings or directions of the Regulatory Authorities or Director of Research may be referred to the Vice Chancellor who may at his discretion hear the case either directly or may refer it to the Registrar to study and report. The Order issued by the Vice Chancellor in this regard shall be binding on all parties and there shall be no further appeal.

