

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY & REVIEW PROCEDURES

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Introduction

The ethical principles of any research is laid down in the instruments and guidance to protect the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of research participants. Independent examination of the scientific merit of a research project and review of its ethical acceptability are central to ensuring respect for these principles.

This guideline is applicable to all research grants and incentives sponsored by ULAB. The policy is implemented by the Office of Faculty Research (OFR) and administrative support is provided by all concerned offices led by the Office of the Vice Chancellor, ULAB. In addition to ULAB-sponsored research, faculty members obtaining external research funding are also required to follow the provisions of this guideline. Hence, any research project (ULAB-sponsored or External Funding) requires obtaining ULAB Ethical Review Committee's (ERC) clearance prior to starting the project.

On the other hand, this guideline is not applicable to non-sponsored research that faculty members are doing as their workload. Sponsored Research does not need to be informed about these research projects as they fall completely under the jurisdiction of the Department/School.

Statement of Ethical Values

(Adopted by The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh)

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh is committed to the highest ethical standards in fulfilling the Vision, Mission, and Goals of teaching, research, and community engagement. The policies, procedures, and standards provide guidance for the application of the ethical values stated in the following sections in our daily life and work as members of this community. We are committed to Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect.

Standards of Ethical Conduct

(Adopted by The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh)

Objective - Pursuit of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh's mission of teaching, research, and public service requires a shared commitment to the core values of the University as well as a commitment to the ethical conduct of all University activities. The Standards of Ethical Conduct are a statement of our belief in ethical, legal, and professional behavior in all of our dealings inside and outside the University.

Applicability - The Standards of Ethical Conduct apply to all members of the University community, including faculty and other academic personnel, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, agents, and others associated with the University. Organizationally, the Standards apply to campuses, campus organizations, foundations, alumni associations, and support groups.

Fairness - Members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves ethically, honestly and with integrity in all dealings. This means principles of fairness, good faith, and

respect consistent with laws, regulations, and University policies govern our conduct with others both inside and outside the community.

Governance, Responsibility, and Accountability - Members of the University community are expected to exercise responsibility appropriate to their position and delegated authorities. Each individual is expected to conduct the business of the University in accordance with the Core Values and the Standards of Ethical Conduct, exercising sound judgment and serving the best interests of the institution and the community.

Respect - The University is committed to the principle of treating each community member with respect and dignity. The University prohibits discrimination and harassment and provides equal opportunities for all community members and applicants regardless of diversity. The University is committed to creating a safe and drug-free workplace. Following is a list of the principal policies and reference materials available in support of this standard:

- The Faculty Code of Conduct
- The Faculty Handbook
- Personnel Policies for Staff Members
- Policy on Sexual Harassment and Procedures for Responding to Reports of Sexual Harassment

Compliance with the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Constitutional Laws and Regulations - Institutions of higher education are subject to many of the same laws and regulations as other enterprises, as well as those particular to public entities. There are also additional requirements unique to higher education, binding us to the UGC. University activities are to be conducted in conformance with legal requirements, including contractual commitments undertaken by individuals authorized to bind the University to such commitments. The Office of the Proctor has responsibility for the interpretation of legal requirements.

Compliance with University Policies, Procedures, and Other Forms of Guidance - University policies and procedures are designed to inform our everyday responsibilities, set

minimum standards, and give University community members notice of expectations. Members of the University community are expected to transact all University business in conformance with policies and procedures and accordingly have an obligation to become familiar with those that bear on their areas of responsibility. It is expected that all employees will comply with applicable professional standards in addition to laws and regulations.

Conflicts of Interest or Commitment - Employee members of the University community are expected to devote primary professional allegiance to the University and to the mission of teaching, research, and public service. University community members who have certain professional or financial interests are expected to disclose them in compliance with applicable conflict of interest/conflict of commitment policies. In all matters, community members are expected to take appropriate steps, including consultation if issues are unclear, to avoid both conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts.

Research Ethics - All members of the University community engaged in research are expected to conduct their research with integrity and intellectual honesty at all times and with appropriate regard for human and animal subjects. To protect the rights of human subjects, all research involving human subjects is to be reviewed by the Office of Faculty Research. Members of the University community engaged in research are not to: fabricate data or results; change or knowingly omit data or results to misrepresent results in the research record; or intentionally misappropriate the ideas, writings, research, or findings of others. They are also expected to demonstrate accountability for sponsors' funds and to comply with specific terms and conditions of contracts and grants.

Confidentiality and Access to Information - The University is the custodian of many types of information, including that which is confidential, proprietary, and private. Individuals who have access to such information are expected to be familiar with and comply with applicable laws, University policies, directives, and agreements pertaining to access, use, protection, and disclosure of such information. Computer security and privacy are also subject to the law and University policy. Information on the University's principles of privacy or on specific privacy laws

may be obtained from the respective departments or research centers. The public right to information access and the individual's right to privacy are both governed by state law, as well as by university policies and procedures.

Internal Controls - Internal controls are the processes employed to help ensure that the University's business is carried out in accordance with these Standards, University policies and procedures, applicable laws and regulations, and sound business practices. They help to promote efficient operations, accurate financial reporting, protection of assets, and responsible fiscal management. Each Center or Department head is specifically responsible for ensuring that internal controls are established, properly documented and maintained for activities within their jurisdiction. Any individual entrusted with funds, including principal investigators, is responsible for ensuring that adequate internal controls exist over the use and accountability of such funds.

Use of University Resources - University resources may only be used for activities on behalf of the University. They may not be used for private gain or personal purposes except in limited circumstances permitted by existing policy where incidental personal use does not conflict with and is reasonable in relation to university duties (e.g., telephones). Members of the University community are expected to treat University property with care and to adhere to laws, policies, and procedures for the acquisition, use, maintenance, record keeping, and disposal of university property. For purposes of applying this policy, University resources are defined to include but not be limited to the following, whether owned by or under the management of the University:

- Cash, and other assets whether tangible or intangible; real or personal property;
- Receivables and other rights or claim against third parties;
- Intellectual property rights;
- Effort of University personnel and of any non-University entity billing the University for effort;
- Facilities and the rights to use University facilities;
- The University's name;
- University records, including student records; and

- The University information technology infrastructure.

Financial Reporting - All University accounting and financial records, tax reports, expense reports, timesheets, and other documents including those submitted to government agencies must be accurate, clear, and complete. All published financial reports will make full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable disclosures as required under generally accepted accounting principles for respective authorities and their requirements.

ULAB Ethical Review Committee (ERC)

Overview

ULAB Ethical Review Committee (ERC) is a multidisciplinary, independent group of individuals appointed to review research proposals to ensure the dignity, fundamental rights, safety, and well-being of research participants are duly respected and protected. ERC should be established and function according to commonly accepted ethical principles and values of the institute (See Chapter 2). Hence, it is expected that the ERC review attains the highest possible standards concerning the protection of research participants and the communities from which they are drawn. In this regard, ERC can make important contributions to the quality of the research and its ethical principles. ERC also provides a means for checking whether investigators are adhering to the policies and procedures of the funding body.

Functionalities

The ULAB Ethical Review Committee (ERC) has specific roles before, during, and after a research project is authorized and conducted, and the research results are evaluated and reported. Hence the functionalities of ERC can be enumerated as follows,

- ERC aims to fulfill its fundamental objective which is to ensure that research is conducted ethically.
- The composition of the committee should be a pool of expertise in ethical and scientific issues.
- ERC should provide assurance that it is trustworthy and can carry out its responsibilities effectively and independently.
- ERC or its members may become involved in public dialogue about ethical issues or take on an educational role in research ethics policy and decision making.
- Most scientific journals, when considering a submission involving human research participants, will require that the research had been approved by entities such as ERC. In this way, ERC also contributes to the scientific and ethical quality of the research that is done.
- ERC must be independent and demonstrably able to make decisions without undue political, professional, institutional, or market influence. This crucial requirement should be duly reflected in the procedures for appointing ERC members, in the requirements for ERC membership, and in the procedures for dealing with potential conflicts of interest (members must declare potential conflicts of interests).
- ERC should follow up, as appropriate, on any approved research project. This is especially important when the research entails a non-negligible level of risk, or where it is expected to generate relevant information which could affect – positively or negatively – the safety, health, or wellbeing of the research participants.
- The roles of ERC after the research is completed (Figure 5.1) are currently rather limited. However, ERC may provide the guidance to ensure that the obligations of

researchers (and their institutions or sponsors of research) to the research participants, and/or to the groups or society from which they were recruited, are fulfilled as specified in the original research proposal.

- Additional ethical obligation of the researchers or of the sponsors of research is to make the conclusions of the research publicly available by means of fair and adequate publication. Sometimes research results, especially 'negative' results, are suppressed; such biased under-reporting is both unscientific and unethical. Hence, ERC can help by being attentive to this important issue as it pertains to projects completed following their review.
- All ERC members should treat any information provided to ERC as confidential. Any external experts who are invited to give an opinion to the ERC about a particular research proposal should likewise keep the information confidential.
- Another aspect of confidentiality concerns the need to promote free and open discussion among ERC members when they review proposals. Since free discussion is crucial if ERC is to fulfill its responsibilities concerning reviews, the content of such discussions should be kept confidential, as should details of the assessment process.
- ERC should provide sufficient information about its work – ethics review, research follow-up, and other activities – to ULAB by means of well-structured regular reports, which should not reveal confidential details of the research or its participants. Such reports, in their entirety or in the form of an executive summary, should also be made available publicly, for example on the OFR website.
- Plenary meetings are one of the major ERC activities where ERC members review research proposals and decide on their ethical acceptability. A schedule of meeting dates should be announced in advance and ERC members must be given sufficient time to review relevant documents before each meeting.
- ERC should periodically devote time to free discussion about the method of working when members should be encouraged to voice any concerns and to propose ways of improving ERC performance. Drafting of the annual report may

also be used as an opportunity for informal self-evaluation of the ERC, for example in relation to the number of research projects reviewed.

- In addition, ERC should have mechanisms for periodically evaluating the quality of its work and functioning to see whether there is room for improvement.

Review process

As their primary objective, ERC ensures that the considered research proposals are ethically acceptable before being approved. In this way, ERC also provides public assurance that unethical research is avoided and that good quality, ethically sound research is encouraged. ERC fulfills this objective mainly by conducting an ethics review of research proposals and by issuing written opinions on their ethical acceptability.

ERC evaluates the ethical acceptability of a research proposal from two main standpoints:

- From the standpoint of the ethical implications of the research conduct, foreseeable research outcomes, and potential consequences of research results for society. 'Society' can encompass both local and wider contexts and may include the potential interests of future generations.
- From the standpoint of the prospective research participants to safeguard their rights, dignity, safety, and well-being.

When evaluating a research proposal, ERC needs to consider the ethical issues involved in accord with applicable ethical principles accepted both by the given society and internationally. The ERC must be satisfied with the scientific quality of the research proposal and of its conformity with national law.

Furthermore, the assessment process for an ongoing research project is listed below:

- Review of regular reports,
- Review of regular safety reports,

- Mechanism for dealing with any serious information regarding the conduct or outcomes/ results of the research.

Composition of ERC

The composition of ERC should be multidisciplinary and reflect an appropriate range of professional and lay views. Depending on specific projects under review, there should be a satisfactory mechanism for seeking additional advice (e.g., by inviting external experts).

Based on the needs and characteristics of the research projects and their contexts, the number of members and composition (professional and other expertise represented) of ERC may vary considerably. They should, however, share several key features reflecting the principles and goals of their work – the effective and trustworthy ethical review of research projects submitted to them.

The composition ULAB Ethical Review Committee (ERC) and its features are as follows,

- The ERC should be led by the Dean of Research at ULAB or by the Director, the Office of Faculty Research (OFR), who is the chair of the committee.
- It is generally anticipated that ERC also includes Deans and/or Deans' representatives of all the schools.
- To fulfill the requirements, ERC must possess one or more external expertise in the fields or disciplines deemed necessary for the research.
- The appointment mechanism should ensure that potential ERC members provide an appropriate balance of scientific expertise, philosophical, legal, or ethical backgrounds, and lay views. All ERC members, whether internal or external members, should have equal standing.
- ERC members should be able to strike an appropriate balance between achieving the greater common good that can be brought about by the research and

recognizing and protecting the human dignity, rights, health and wellbeing, and interests of research participants. Above all, they must ensure that, where there is a conflict, the interests and welfare of the people participating in research prevail over the sole interest of society or science.

- ERC members should have a basic understanding of the importance of research and how it can benefit human health and welfare. They should be able to understand the principles of research and research methods, the research context, and the practicalities of carrying out biomedical research. They must be able to make their own independent judgments when considering the ethical issues involved in the research proposals placed before them.
- The crucial requirement for ERC is to work independently from the researchers and their sponsors, as well as from the institution or authority. The mechanisms designed to achieve this independence should be reflected in their appointment process, as well as in their working methods and decision-making.
- In gaining and sustaining recognition of their moral authority, ERC composition should reflect the prevailing cultural tradition. ERC members should be able to demonstrate their impartiality, transparency, goodwill, and ability to foster and use dialogue when communicating with other parties.
- The issue of maintaining independence with respect to ethics review and follow-up of reviewed research projects highlights the management of possible conflicts of interest. Consequently, when people are appointed to be ERC members, they should declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest with respect to the work of the ERC and agree to declare any conflicts that may arise subsequently. Such declarations should be documented and kept up to date. People appointed ERC members should be given a document of appointment. It may be useful for them to receive written specifications of their responsibilities established by that appointment.

The composition of the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) is as follows:

<u>Dean, Research / Director, OFR</u>	Chair
Dean and/or Dean's Representative	
<u>School of Science & Engineering</u>	Member
Dean and/or Dean's Representative	
<u>School of Business</u>	Member
Dean and/or Dean's Representative	
<u>School of School of Arts & Humanities</u>	Member
Dean and/or Dean's Representative	
<u>School of Social Science</u>	Member
<u>OFr's Representative</u>	Member Secretary
<u>External Expert</u>	Member

ERC Meeting Schedule and Application Submission Deadlines

Regular meetings of the ERC are held quarterly. Hence, these four meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of February, May, August, and November. However, changes in this schedule sometimes occur due to members' absences, particularly during university holidays and breaks.

Length of time for review

The length of ERC review from the submission of the initial application to the ERC decision depends on several factors: the type of review required, the timeliness of the researcher responding to ERC communications, number of applications received and currently being processed by the ERC, and availability and responsiveness of ERC members. It is incumbent upon the researchers to allow for that necessary time of review, and to facilitate the review by being diligent in completing the application correctly and responding to feedback promptly. Typically, applicants will receive an email from the ERC regarding their submissions within one week of the corresponding ERC meeting.

As the applications are processed on a first come first serve basis, hence, an application and its related material for review must be submitted at least three full weeks in advance of any ERC meeting.

Please note: The three-week period is needed to ensure ERC members have sufficient time for review.

Appendix

Ethical Clearance Application Form

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM

Please complete all the sections of this form. An incomplete application may delay the approval process. Completed forms must be submitted to the OFR for review.

SECTION A: Title of the Project & Investigator(s)					
Title of the Study:					
Research Area(s)/ Keywords					
<i>Please mention the discipline(s)/ keywords your research can be categorized best. (i.e. Machine Learning; Cultural Studies; Business Ethics; Comparative Historiography)</i>					
1.					
Primary Investigator's Details					
Title	Prof. Dr. Mr. Ms.	First Name		Last Name	

Department		Designation	
Email		Contact No.	
Research Location and Duration			
Research location/population(s)			
Research start date			
Research end date			
Approximate duration			

SECTION B - Project purpose, research quantification and funding details
Introduction & Research Background
<i>Please briefly introduce your topic in layman's term along with its academic significance and practical implications (if any) (300 Words)</i>

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Research Design & Quantification

Research Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed methods	<input type="checkbox"/> Others. (Please Specify) ...
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Data collection/ Data Sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires/ Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Document analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Structured interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-structured interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Open ended interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-participatory observation/ Notes <input type="checkbox"/> Participatory observation/ Notes <input type="checkbox"/> Experimental <input type="checkbox"/> Others. (Please Specify)
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Research Funding Source(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal <input type="checkbox"/> External (Please Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Both (Please Specify)
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Collaboration

Is the co-investigator(s) of the proposed research affiliated with a different institution?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please Specify)
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<p>Does this research project have any prospect to get additional support from sources other than ULAB Research Grant?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (<i>Please Specify</i>)</p>
<p>Conflict of Interest</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (<i>Please Specify</i>)</p>
<p>Are there any anticipated inducements for participation (e.g. monetary payment), or costs to be borne by subjects (e.g. travel costs)?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (<i>Please Specify</i>)</p>

SECTION C - Obtaining free and informed consent

<p>Informed Consent</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Informed consent will be obtained and documented <input type="checkbox"/> Informed consent will be obtained, however requested for documentation waiver. <i>Please provide details as attachment.</i></p>
<p>Are you planning to involve any vulnerable group in this project</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (<i>please provide details mentioning their age group, status of physical and mental health and level of language proficiency.</i>)</p>

SECTION D - Confidentiality and Data storage

Specify your plans on how you will protect the confidentiality of the data collected, and protect against risks of breach of confidentiality or invasion of privacy.

(For example, where will paper files and/or electronic data be stored? What security measures will be applied in each situation? Specify your plans for de-identifying or maintaining anonymity of the data, especially if audio/video recordings or images will be collected; Specify procedures for data sharing with entities external to ULAB; Provide a timetable and methods for destroying the data) (300 Words)

Data security for storage and transmission. *Select all that apply:*

For electronic data:		For hardcopy data (including specimens, tapes etc.)	
Secure network:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Data de-identified by research team:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Password access:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Locked office:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Encryption:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Locked cabinet:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Portable storage: (e.g. laptop, flash drive)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Data coded by research team with master list secured and kept separately:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Other: (provide detail below)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Other: (provide detail below)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Please provide details:			

SECTION E - Data analysis and outcomes

Data Analysis in the Study

How will the data be evaluated? Where and by whom will data analysis be performed? Are research assistants adequately trained and experienced to manage the type of data being collected? Please provide details

Potential Benefits of the Study

Describe the possible benefits, if any, to the participant. If there are any anticipated benefits to society or to a specific group, describe this in a separate statement. Please be careful not to overstate the benefits of your research or promise direct benefits to participants if they are unlikely or unknown.

Potential Risks of the Study

Describe all relevant risks (e.g., psychological, cultural, privacy, confidentiality), and a description of the procedures in place to minimize risks or to provide counselling or referral for those in distress. Describe any risks to communities (e.g. stigmatization, discrimination etc.) Consider consulting any groups that may be affected by the research to assess the risk of negative impacts such as stigmatization and discrimination.

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SECTION F - List of attached documents

Copy of all data collection instruments, including surveys, interview questions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Copy of all consent and information forms, including translated forms, as appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Copy of any ethical approval for co-investigators external to ULAB, or collaborative institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Copy of human subjects' research completion reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any other relevant documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

SECTION G - Declaration

I certify that each of the co-investigators has accepted their role in this project.

I agree to a continuing exchange of information with the OFR and to obtain approval before making any changes or additions to the project.

I agree to report promptly to the OFR all unanticipated problems or serious adverse events involving risk to human subjects.

Signature of PI:

Date:

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OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received		Date PI notified	
Date checked and accepted		Date of change notification	
Date(s) of committee review		Date committee approved	

Is demographic information collected with cultural sensitivity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Is the consent requirement waived?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Is documentation of the consent process waived?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Does the application meet ethical clearance requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Detail of any additional information required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Revisions required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<i>Type of Approval:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Approval with Modification <input type="checkbox"/> Denial <input type="checkbox"/> Deferral