University of Management and Technology

Research Ethics Policy

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1 Purpose

This policy establishes a comprehensive framework to ensure the ethical conduct, integrity, and responsible use of research practices at the University of Management and Technology (UMT). It aims to:

a. Promote a culture of academic honesty, integrity, and accountability
b. Ensure compliance with national regulations (HEC) and international standards (COPE)
c. Safeguard the rights, dignity, and safety of human participants, animals, and the environment
d. Regulate the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research and academic activities
e. Provide structured procedures for ethical approval, monitoring, and retractions
f. Foster a research environment that upholds transparency, fairness, and respect for intellectual property
g. Strengthen UMT's standing as a responsible and globally recognized research institution

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

a. All faculty, researchers, staff, and students
b. All research activities, including:
    i. Laboratory and field research
    ii. Human and animal studies
    iii. Surveys, interviews, and observational studies
    iv. Funded and non-funded research
    v. Collaborative and consultancy projects
c. All research conducted under UMT affiliation, including joint ventures and externally funded projects
d. Research outputs submitted for publication, presentation, or grant applications

3 Definitions

a. Research Misconduct: Includes plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, unethical AI use, and violation of ethical approvals
b. Plagiarism: Use of others' work without proper acknowledgment (as per HEC policy)
c. Retraction: Withdrawal of a publication due to serious ethical or scientific issues
d. Correction (Erratum/Corrigendum): Amendments that improve accuracy without invalidating research
e. Ethical Approval: Formal authorization prior to conducting research involving humans, animals, or sensitive data
f. AI Use: Application of AI tools (e.g., generative AI) in research, writing, or analysis
g. Authorship: Credit given to individuals who made substantial intellectual contributions to a research work
h. Data Fabrication: Inventing data or results and reporting them as actual research findings
i. Data Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, processes, or changing/omitting data
j. Conflict of Interest: Any financial, professional, or personal relationship that may bias research conduct or outcomes

4 Policy

4.1 Core Ethical Principles

UMT research shall adhere to the following core principles:

a. Integrity and Honesty
b. Transparency and Accountability
c. Respect for Human Dignity
d. Animal Welfare and Environmental Protection
e. Fairness and Non-Discrimination
f. Confidentiality and Data Protection
g. Responsible Use of AI
h. Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Frameworks
i. Respect for Intellectual Property and Copyright
j. Ethical Stewardship of Research Funding

4.2 Ethical Approval Requirements

4.2.1 Mandatory Approval

Prior ethical approval is required for:

a. Human-related research (surveys, interviews, clinical, behavioral studies)
b. Animal research (experiments, testing, field interventions)
c. Research involving:
    i. Personal or sensitive data
    ii. Vulnerable populations
    iii. Environmental or societal risks
d. Research involving deception, covert observation, or psychological stress
e. Research with potential dual-use implications (e.g., biosecurity, cybersecurity)

4.2.2 Human Research Requirements

a. Informed and voluntary consent is mandatory
b. Participants must be informed of:
    i. Purpose of research
    ii. Risks and benefits
    iii. Right to withdraw at any time without penalty
    iv. How data will be stored, used, and protected
c. Special safeguards for:
    i. Children
    ii. Disabled individuals
    iii. Vulnerable groups
d. Data collected from human participants must be anonymized or pseudonymized where possible

4.2.3 Animal Ethics

Research involving animals must:

a. Follow humane treatment standards
b. Minimize pain and distress
c. Be scientifically justified
d. Adhere to the 3Rs principle: Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement
e. Be conducted by personnel with appropriate qualifications and training

f. Approval from the Ethics Committee is mandatory before experimentation.

4.3 Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

UMT promotes responsible, transparent, and human-centered use of AI in research.

a. AI must support not replace human intellectual contribution
b. AI usage must be transparent and disclosed
c. AI must not compromise academic integrity
d. AI-generated content must be critically evaluated and validated by the researcher
e. Researchers remain fully responsible for AI-assisted outputs

4.4 Acceptable Use

a. Language refinement and editing
b. Literature exploration and summarization
c. Idea generation and conceptual support
d. Data analysis (with validation)
e. Statistical modelling and visualization support
f. Translation assistance (with human verification)

4.5 Unacceptable Use

a. Writing full assignments, theses, or research papers
b. Fabricating data, citations, or results
c. Misleading reviewers or stakeholders
d. Automated decision-making without human oversight
e. Using AI to circumvent peer review or editorial processes
f. Submitting AI-generated work as the researcher's own original intellectual contribution without disclosure

4.6 Mandatory Disclosure

a. Material use of AI in research, analysis or manuscript preparation shall be disclosed according to UMT and publisher requirements.
b. All research outputs must include a confirmation of originality and responsibility

4.7 Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

a. UMT follows HEC Anti-Plagiarism Policy
b. Plagiarism in any form is strictly prohibited
c. All research must undergo similarity checking prior to submission
a. Proper citation and referencing
b. No fabrication or falsification of data
c. Supervisor accountability for verification
d. Self-plagiarism is also prohibited, prior published work must be properly cited
e. Similarity thresholds must comply with HEC guidelines and applicable journal requirements
f. Ghostwriting and contract cheating are strictly forbidden and subject to disciplinary action

4.8 Data Management and Research Security

Responsible management and protection of research data is integral to research integrity. UMT requires:

a. All research data to be stored securely and backed up appropriately

b. Research data to be retained for a minimum period as specified by funding agencies or regulatory requirements (generally 5 to10 years)

c. Data sharing to comply with applicable privacy laws, ethical approvals, and participant consent

d. Confidential or sensitive data to be encrypted and access-controlled

e. Ownership of research data generated at UMT to remain with the institution unless otherwise specified by funding agreements

f. Researchers must maintain detailed and accurate records of research methodology, data collection, and analysis

g. Unauthorized disclosure, transfer, or destruction of research data constitutes research misconduct

4.9 Collaborative and International Research

When conducting collaborative or international research, UMT researchers must:

a. Establish clear written agreements on roles, responsibilities, intellectual property, and authorship prior to commencement

b. Ensure that all partners adhere to ethical standards at least equivalent to those required by UMT

c. Obtain ethical approval from all relevant institutions and regulatory bodies

d. Comply with the laws and regulations of all countries involved

e. Disclose all funding sources and sponsorship arrangements

f. Manage cross-border data transfers in accordance with applicable data protection laws

4.10 Publication Ethics and Authorship

4.10.1 Authorship Criteria

Authorship must be based on substantial contribution. All authors must have:

a. Made significant intellectual contributions to conception, design, execution, or interpretation

b. Participated in drafting or critically revising the work

c. Approved the final version for submission

d. Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work

4.10.2 Prohibited Authorship Practices

a. Gift/honorary authorship: inclusion of individuals who did not contribute

b. Ghost authorship: exclusion of individuals who made substantial contributions

c. Coercive authorship: pressure to include senior individuals without merit

4.10.3 Duplicate and Redundant Publication

a. Submission of the same manuscript to multiple journals simultaneously is prohibited

b. Prior publication of the same content without disclosure and permission is prohibited

c. Salami slicing (dividing one study into multiple minimal publications) is discouraged and must be disclosed

4.11 Conflict of Interest in Research

All researchers must identify and manage conflicts of interest that may affect the objectivity and integrity of research. This includes:

a. Financial interests in companies that may benefit from research outcomes

b. Personal relationships with study participants, collaborators, or competitors

c. Professional roles that may create competing obligations

d. Prior commitments or relationships with funding agencies

All actual or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed to the supervisor and RESC at the outset of the research and updated as circumstances change.

4.12 Legal Compliance

All research must comply with:

a. Institutional regulations
b. Requirements of funding agencies and collaborators
c. Applicable national laws including the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), data protection guidelines, and biosafety regulations
d. International conventions and treaties applicable to research conduct
e. Export control regulations when research involves controlled materials or technologies

5 Responsibilities of Stakeholders

5.1 Governance Structure - Research Ethics & Support Committee (RESC)

A formal Research Ethics and Support Committee as established and shall be responsible for:

a. Policy implementation and oversight
b. Ethical approval and review of research proposals
c. Monitoring compliance and maintaining institutional records
d. Evaluation of ethical risks
e. Investigation of ethical violations and recommendation of corrective actions
f. Liaising with external regulatory bodies (HEC, COPE, funding agencies)
g. Publishing an annual report on the state of research ethics at UMT

5.2 Faculty and Researchers

a. Ensure ethical compliance in all research
b. Obtain approvals before starting research
c. Maintain originality and integrity
d. Disclose AI use
e. Report suspected research misconduct through appropriate channels
f. Mentor and guide junior researchers in ethical conduct

5.3 Supervisors

a. Guide and monitor ethical conduct
b. Verify originality and compliance
c. Ensure all supervised research undergoes required ethical approvals before commencement
d. Be responsible for the academic work submitted under their supervision

5.4 Participants

a. Adhere to ethical standards
b. Avoid plagiarism and misuse of AI
c. Complete mandatory ethics training before commencing research
d. Disclose any conflict of interest to the supervisor

5.5 Institution

a. Provide training and awareness

b. Ensure monitoring and enforcement
c. Allocate adequate resources for ethics infrastructure and oversight
d. Protect whistleblowers and those who report misconduct in good faith

5.6 Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanism

To ensure effective implementation:

a. Centralized database of:
    i. Ethical approvals
    ii. Violations
    iii. Retractions
b. Annual Research Ethics Report by Office of Research
c. Compliance linked with:
    i. Research funding
    ii. Incentives
    iii. Promotions
d. Confidential reporting mechanism for ethical concerns
e. Periodic (at least biennial) review and audit of the ethical approval and oversight process
f. Integration of research ethics compliance into faculty performance appraisal
g. Benchmarking against peer institutions and international standards

6 Violations and Corrective Actions

UMT adopts a progressive and fair approach:

6.1 Minor Violations

a. Advisory notice
b. Training requirement

6.2 Moderate Violations

a. Formal warning
b. Temporary monitoring
c. Restriction from certain research privileges

6.3 Major Violations

a. Formal investigation
b. Institutional disciplinary action (as per HR policies)
c. Withdrawal of benefits or roles (if applicable)
d. Referral to external bodies (HEC, funding agencies, law enforcement) where warranted
e. Permanent record in researcher's employment file for major misconduct findings
f. Emphasis shall be on correction, capacity-building, and ethical improvement, especially in cases of genuine error. All investigations shall be conducted with due process, impartiality, and confidentiality.

7 Preventive Measures and Capacity Building

a. Mandatory ethics training programs
b. Pre-submission review mechanisms
c. AI awareness sessions

d. Plagiarism screening before submission
e. Capacity-building workshops
f. Orientation sessions on research ethics for all incoming researchers and postgraduate students
g. Annual Research Ethics Week to promote awareness and best practices
h. Online ethics training modules available through UMT's learning management system
i. Recognition and awards program for exemplary ethical research conduct.



