

# **Research and Development Ethics Policy (General)**

## **1. Introduction**

The Ethics Committee at YashwantraoChavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and credibility in all research activities. These rules and regulations outline the ethical standards and disciplinary measures related to research, plagiarism, and intellectual property rights (IPR) at YCMOU.

## **2. Scope**

These regulations apply to all researchers, including faculty, students, and staff, involved in research activities at YCMOU.

## **3. Ethical Standards**

### **3.1. Honesty and Integrity**

Researchers must conduct their work with honesty and integrity, ensuring accuracy in reporting data, results, methods, and procedures.

### **3.2. Accountability**

Researchers are accountable for their work and should acknowledge all contributions from collaborators, funding bodies, and other resources.

### **3.3. Respect for Intellectual Property**

Researchers must respect intellectual property rights and must not engage in any form of IPR theft, including unauthorized use of ideas, data, or methodologies.

### **3.4. Transparency**

Research should be conducted in a transparent manner, with clear documentation and openness to scrutiny and peer review.

## **4. Policy on Plagiarism and Authentic Research**

### **4.1. Definition of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's words, ideas, data, or research findings without appropriate acknowledgment.

### **4.2. Preventive Measures**

- Researchers must ensure that all sources are properly cited.

- Use of plagiarism detection software is mandatory before the submission of any research work.

#### 4.3. Authentic Research

- Researchers must strive to produce original work and provide accurate representation of their findings.
- Fabrication or falsification of data is strictly prohibited.

### 5. Reporting and Investigation Procedures

#### 5.1. Reporting Plagiarism or IPR Theft

1. **Submission of Allegation:** Allegations of plagiarism or IPR theft should be submitted in writing to the Ethics Committee. Reports can be made by anyone, including students, faculty, staff, or external parties.
2. **Supporting Evidence:** The report must include supporting evidence, such as copied text, data, or documents that indicate possible plagiarism or IPR theft.

#### 5.2. Initial Scrutiny

1. **Review of Allegation:** The Ethics Committee will conduct an initial review of the report to determine its validity within 7 days of receipt.
2. **Preliminary Assessment:** If the initial review suggests potential misconduct, a preliminary assessment will be conducted to gather more information within 14 days.

#### 5.3. Formal Investigation

1. **Notification:** The accused will be formally notified of the allegations and provided with the evidence supporting the claims within 7 days of the preliminary assessment.
2. **Response:** The accused will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing within 14 days of receiving the notification.
3. **Evidence Collection:** The Ethics Committee will gather further evidence, which may include interviews with the complainant, accused, and witnesses, as well as a review of relevant documents and data. This process will be completed within 30 days.
4. **Committee Deliberation:** The Committee will deliberate on the findings and determine whether a violation has occurred within 14 days after the evidence collection phase.

#### 5.4. Duration of Enquiry and Final Verdict

1. **Total Duration:** The entire investigation process, from the initial receipt of the allegation to the final verdict, should not exceed 90 days.

2. **Extension:** If, for any reason, an extension is necessary, the Committee must seek approval from the Vice-Chancellor, providing valid reasons for the delay.

## 6. Disciplinary Actions for Violations

### 6.1. Types of Violations

Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication or falsification of data
- IPR theft

### 6.2. Disciplinary Actions

Depending on the severity of the violation, disciplinary actions may include:

1. **Warning:** A formal written warning outlining the nature of the violation and the consequences of future violations.
2. **Probation:** The researcher may be placed on probation for a specified period, during which their work will be closely monitored.
3. **Revocation of Funding:** Research funding may be revoked.
4. **Retraction of Work:** Any published work found to be in violation may be retracted.
5. **Suspension:** The researcher may be suspended from conducting research at the university for a specified period.
6. **Termination:** Termination of employment or expulsion from the university.
7. **Legal Action:** In cases involving IPR theft or severe misconduct, legal action may be pursued.

### 6.3. Appeals Process

1. **Filing an Appeal:** Researchers have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Ethics Committee within 30 days of the disciplinary decision.
2. **Review of Appeal:** The Appeals Subcommittee will review the appeal, considering any new evidence or arguments within 30 days of receiving the appeal.
3. **Decision on Appeal:** The Appeals Subcommittee will make a final decision on the appeal and notify the researcher within 14 days of completing the review.

## 7. Flow of Disciplinary Action

1. **Allegation Received:**
  - Reported to the Ethics Committee.
  - Initial review conducted within 7 days.
  - Decision to proceed with a full investigation or dismiss the allegation within 14 days.
2. **Investigation Phase:**

- Notification to the accused within 7 days.
  - Accused responds within 14 days.
  - Evidence gathering and interviews within 30 days.
  - Analysis and deliberation by the Committee within 14 days.
- 3. Outcome and Sanction:**
- Decision on the violation.
  - Recommendation of disciplinary actions.
  - Implementation of sanctions.
- 4. Appeal (if applicable):**
- Submission of an appeal within 30 days.
  - Review by the Appeals Subcommittee within 30 days.
  - Final decision on the appeal within 14 days.

## **8. Composition of the Ethics Committee**

### **8.1. Committee Members**

The Ethics Committee will consist of the following members:

1. **Chairperson:** Prof. Jaydeep Nikam
2. **Faculty Representatives:** Prof. Sanjivani Mahale and Prof. Madhuri Sonawane
3. **Legal Advisor:** Mrs. Sushmita Guchait
4. **External Expert:** Prof. Sanjay Dhole
5. **Student Representative:** – Mrs. Radhika Agale, School of online learning
6. **Administrative Officer (Secretary):** Dr. Prakash Barve

### **8.2. Chairperson**

The Chairperson will head the Ethics Committee and will be responsible for:

- Leading the investigation process.
- Ensuring that the committee operates in accordance with university policies.
- Liaising with university administration and external bodies as necessary.

## **9. Accountability and Actions Against Committee Members**

### **9.1. Timeliness**

Committee members are expected to adhere to the timeframes specified in these regulations. Delays in the process without valid reasons will be taken seriously. Action may be initiated by the Hon Vice chancellor for non adherence.