

# Research Code of Ethics Policy

## 1. Preamble

SGT University is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of honesty, responsibility, and moral behaviour in all of its research endeavours. This policy offers a thorough ethical framework and emphasize the importance of strong code of ethics for research in a variety of fields in compliance with national and international standards, such as Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines, University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations, and the World Health Organisations (WHO) code of ethics.

## 2. Application and Scope

This policy applies to:

- Faculty members (regular/visiting/adjunct)
- Research scholars (PhD, postdoctoral fellows)
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students engaged in academic or funded research
- Collaborators, consultants, industry partners, and funding bodies involved in university research

## 3. Fundamental Ethical Guidelines

The following guidelines must be adhered to by researchers:

- **Integrity:** Make sure that data is generated, analysed, reported, and reviewed honestly.
- **Accountability:** Take ownership of your actions and results, both personally and professionally.
- **Transparency:** Keep all facets of research design and dissemination open and transparent.
- **Respect for Persons:** Preserve participants' dignity, privacy, and informed consent.
- **Justice and Equity:** Encourage inclusivity and fairness in benefit sharing and subject selection.
- **Confidentiality:** Preserve private information and maintain anonymity when necessary.
- **Environmental and Social Responsibility:** Make sure research doesn't negatively impact the environment or society.
- **Plagiarism Prevention:** Ensure the originality of the work by properly citing sources and avoiding any form of academic dishonesty.
- **Research Ethics Education:** Researchers and scholars should pursue ongoing ethics training to stay updated on best practices, standards, and guidelines.

## 4. Research Oversight Structure

### a) Institutional Human Ethics Committee (IEC)

- Reviews and approves all research involving human participants.
- Ensures informed consent, risk-benefit assessment, and protection of vulnerable populations.

## **b) Institutional Animal Ethics Committee (IAEC)**

- Reviews all animal-based research to ensure humane treatment and ethical use.

## **c) Research Ethics Monitoring Cell (REMC)**

- Monitors compliance with the Research Code of Ethics.
- Conducts periodic audits and training sessions.
- Investigates and resolves complaints related to ethical breaches.

## **5. Conflict of Interest (COI) Management**

All researchers must:

- Disclose any **financial, personal, or academic conflicts** that may affect their objectivity.
- Submit a **COI declaration form** at the time of project initiation, publication, or funding approval.
- Refrain from participating in decisions where an active conflict exists.

## **6. Authorship and Collaboration Guidelines**

- Authorship must be based on **substantial contribution** to design, data collection, analysis, or writing.
- Ghost authorship and honorary authorship are prohibited.
- Multi-institutional collaborations must include ethical compliance clauses in **MoUs** or contracts.
- All collaborators share responsibility for maintaining ethical standards.

## **7. Data Integrity, Retention & Sharing**

- All research data must be **accurate, verifiable, and securely stored**.
- Data must be retained for a **minimum of five years** post-publication or completion.
- Sharing of data must comply with consent agreements, confidentiality norms, and copyright regulations.

## **8. Prohibited Research Misconduct**

The following are considered serious ethical violations:

- Plagiarism (copying without attribution)
- Data fabrication or falsification
- Undeclared conflicts of interest
- Breach of confidentiality
- Inhumane treatment of research subjects
- Non-compliance with approved protocols

## 9. Penalty Framework for Misconduct

Offense	First Violation	Repeated / Severe Violation
Plagiarism	Written warning and training	Withdrawal of degree or termination
Data Falsification	Project suspension	Legal action and funding ban
Ethical Non-Compliance	Protocol rejection	Institutional blacklisting

## 10. Whistleblower Protection & Grievance Redressal

- An anonymous and confidential **reporting mechanism** is established via the REMC.
- No retaliation shall be taken against whistleblowers acting in good faith.
- All complaints are investigated by a **Grievance & Ethics Review Sub-Committee**, and outcomes are documented.

## 11. Education and Capacity Building

- All researchers must complete **mandatory annual training** on research ethics, data, and publication practices.
- Orientation sessions are conducted for new researchers and ethics committee members.
- Online self-learning management modules will be made available through the university's LMS.

## 12. Sustainability and Inclusivity in Research

- Encourage projects aligned with **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Promote inclusive research involving **marginalized, rural, and indigenous communities**, ensuring benefit-sharing and ethical representation.

## 13. Policy Review and Updates

- The Research Code of Ethics shall be reviewed annually by the REMC and IQAC.
- Updates will be made to reflect new legal standards, global best practices, and feedback from stakeholders.