



# **NUML RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY 2018**



## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	2
1.1	Scope of the Policy .....	2
2	Ethical Principles .....	2
2.1	Principles of Research Involving Human Subjects .....	2
2.2	Principles of Data Confidentiality, Storage and Access .....	3
2.3	General Ethical Principles of Research.....	3
3	Research Ethics Committee.....	4
3.1	Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
3.2	Committee Structure .....	5
4	Application of the Policy .....	5
4.1	Procedure for Obtaining Research Ethics Clearance Certificate.....	5
	Annexure A.....	7
	Annexure B.....	8
	Annexure C.....	9



## 1 Introduction

The National University of Modern Languages (hereinafter referred to as 'University') believes in and has a firm commitment towards upholding the principles of good research conduct for research undertaken by its faculty members, students, staff, visiting faculty and other researchers conducting research with, at or on behalf of the University (hereinafter referred to as 'researchers').

The University believes that researchers have a responsibility to the society, to the institutions in which they work or study, to the funding agencies and other sponsoring bodies, to the wider academic and research community, to the people who take part in their research and towards their own safety and wellbeing. This policy document outlines the wider ethical principles expected to be followed by researchers as well as providing them a procedural framework that will assist them in fulfilling their ethical obligations pertaining to research. The policy highlights the ethical principles to be followed for research which involves the participation of human subjects or data involved with identifiable human subjects and, therefore, is not exhaustive of considerations which apply in all disciplines. However, it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify other published guidelines and principles applicable to his/her type of research and ensure compliance.

The policy is subject to oversight by the Research Ethics Committee (REC), which will be accountable to BASAR. It will be reviewed periodically and made freely available to public on the website of the University.

The policy shall come into force since the day of its approval.

### 1.1 Scope of the Policy

This policy is applicable to:

- a) All faculty members (whether permanent, contracted or visiting) employed by the University as well as other individuals engaged in research within or on behalf of the University.
- b) Students (graduate and undergraduate) undertaking research and their supervisors.
- c) Other researchers conducting research in collaboration with the university.
- d) All types of research, funded or unfunded, involving:
  - i. human participants
  - ii. data confidentiality
  - iii. other research specific ethical judgments

## 2 Ethical Principles

The Policy recognizes and advocates the use of the following ethical principles:

### 2.1 Principles of Research Involving Human Subjects

- i. Researchers must ensure protection of participants from physical and psychological harm during the research process including protection of their own physical and psychological well-being.



- ii. (a) Researchers must attain full informed consent from participants before involving them into the research process unless there is a strong rationale for no or partial consent. Consent should be attained only after informing participants of all necessary information expected to influence willingness to take part in the study also allowing them to clarify any ambiguity. Participants have the right to refuse participation in the research.  
  
(b) At any given point, participants have the right to withdraw their consent for participation. However, researcher can indicate up till what point in the study participants can withdraw consent or request data deletion.  
  
(c) In cases where the area of research is sensitive, written informed consent should be obtained from all participants.  
  
(d) Extra safeguards and consent procedures must be designed and followed when involving vulnerable participants (e.g. young children, patients, etc.) in the research project.
- iii. For research involving covert observation, current legislation on privacy must be followed. In cases of covert research in non-public settings if informed consent has not been obtained prior to the research it should be obtained post hoc wherever possible.
- iv. Researchers shall ensure that no part of their research offends any group of the society.
- v. Researchers are allowed to incentivize participation in research projects only to attract participation for the research, not to force participation or influence their responses.

## 2.2 Principles of Data Confidentiality, Storage and Access

- i. The University expects that primary research data is kept securely for a period of five years after the completion of a research project, or for such longer period as may be required by a research funder.
- ii. (a) Data relating to identifiable individuals must be held in accordance with the principles of data confidentiality and all other assurances given to participants before receiving consent to participate must also be met.  
  
(b) Researchers are expected to protect the confidentiality of the participant's identity and data throughout the research project. Data collected from identifiable individuals must be anonymized before it is made publicly available.
- iii. Researchers are required to keep complete, clear and accurate records of the data generated, the research procedures followed and results obtained either in paper or electronic form. This is not only necessary for demonstrating proper research practice, but also to justify the conduct of the research or the validity of the results obtained.
- iv. It remains the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that arrangements are in place to maintain the integrity and security of research data.

## 2.3 General Ethical Principles of Research

- i. All research should be conducted in conformity with national and international laws. 3 | Page



- ii. Researchers are to be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers.
- iii. Researchers must refrain from plagiarism, piracy or the fabrication of results and any instances of such acts will be taken seriously. All acceptable standards set by the HEC should be met.
- iv. (a) The University expects anyone listed as an author on a paper to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper, and that they can identify their contributions to it.  
  
(b) The practice of honorary authorship should be avoided.
- v. The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged.
- vi. Principal Investigators and other research supervisors should take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with sponsor, institutional, legal, ethical and moral obligations in managing research projects.
- vii. The University expects researchers to observe any appropriate standards of practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific societies and other relevant professional bodies.

## 3 Research Ethics Committee

### 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Although it is the prime responsibility of the researcher to follow the highest standards of conducting research and ensuring that his/her work conforms to the acceptable ethical standards set forth in the university policy; the deans and departmental heads are responsible for spreading the information of ethical research standards within their departments and among researchers and also to ensure compliance of this policy. Each researcher would be required to attach a research ethics clearance certificate with his/her research proposal for it to be accepted. In cases where self-certification does not suffice, Research Ethics Committee (REC) will issue a certificate after partial or full review of the research proposal. For the following cases, the researcher will have to seek review of Research Ethical Compliance from Research Ethics Committee:

- If a clear petition is submitted to Rector office against the ethical standards of a research conducted at NUML
- Significant ethical issues are raised by the research and self-certification of the measures taken to address them would not be sufficient.
- The researcher is bound to meet some external obligations (e.g. requirements of funding agency, etc.)

In the above mentioned cases, as per the directive of Rector NUML, the REC would be formed to conduct the review of Research Ethical Compliance and issue its report.



## 3.2 Committee Structure

Although the final composition of the committee will be decided by Rector NUML on case to case basis; the following structure will be followed:

- Respected Dean/HoD to Chair the committee
- Director ORIC
- Director QEC
- Subject Expert (if required)
- Legal Advisor (if required)

## 4 Application of the Policy

The prime responsibility of adhering to acceptable ethical standards lies with the researcher. However, deans and departmental heads are responsible to convey acceptable ethical standards for research in their departments and among researchers and ensure adherence to those standards. Researchers are required to obtain the Research Ethics Clearance Certificate and attach it along with their research proposals to be considered acceptable. The Research Ethics Committee (REC) will be responsible for the overall development, implementation and monitoring of research ethics policies within the University.

### 4.1 Procedure for Obtaining Research Ethics Clearance Certificate (Flow Chart/ diagram is at Annexure A)

**Step 1:** Where research involves human participants, or involves data relating to directly identifiable human subjects, researchers are required to complete a Research Ethics Review Checklist (Annexure B). The purpose of the Checklist is to urge researchers to reflect on the potential ethical implications of their research and the risk of harm that might be caused to the participants.

**Step 2:** Having completed the Checklist, if researchers (or in the case of student researchers, their supervisors) judge that no significant ethical issues are raised by their research or that adequate safeguards in relation to such issues are put in place, they may self-certify the project by signing a pre-determined self-certification form (Annexure C). This form should be submitted to the relevant Head of Department/Programme Coordinator to be kept in archive and able to be retrieved if needed. In case self-certification is appropriate, departments may devise informal procedures in order to guide researchers in the framing of necessary ethical safeguards.

**Step 3:** For the following cases, the researcher will have to seek review of Research Ethical Compliance from Research Ethics Committee:

- Significant ethical issues are raised by the research and self-certification of the measures taken to address them would not be appropriate.



- If a clear petition is submitted to Rector office against the ethical standards of a research conducted at NUML
- The researcher is bound to meet some external obligations (e.g. requirements of funding agency, etc.)

**Step 4:** The REC will review the reasons for requesting review and may undertake an expedited review of the research proposal to assess the requirements of a full review. If the research proposal confirms to set standards, the REC may issue certificate based upon expedited review. However, if critical areas are identified, a full review of the research proposal will be conducted.

**Step 5:** The report of the full review shall comprise of desk reviews from all REC members along with recommendations for ethical safeguards to be applied to the research. The result will be communicated to the researcher and the supervisor in a consultative meeting chaired by a representative of REC and in which action points will be discussed in detail. On agreement upon the recommendations put forth in the full review, REC will issue the research ethics certificate upon submission of a compliance statement from the researcher and or his supervisor.

**Note:** *The policy has been prepared by Ms Huma Rasheed, Manager Research Operations & Development, ORIC under supervision of Prof. Dr. Karamat Ali, Director ORIC.*

**(This policy is issued with the approval of the competent authority)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Amin Ullah Khan', written over a circular stamp or seal.

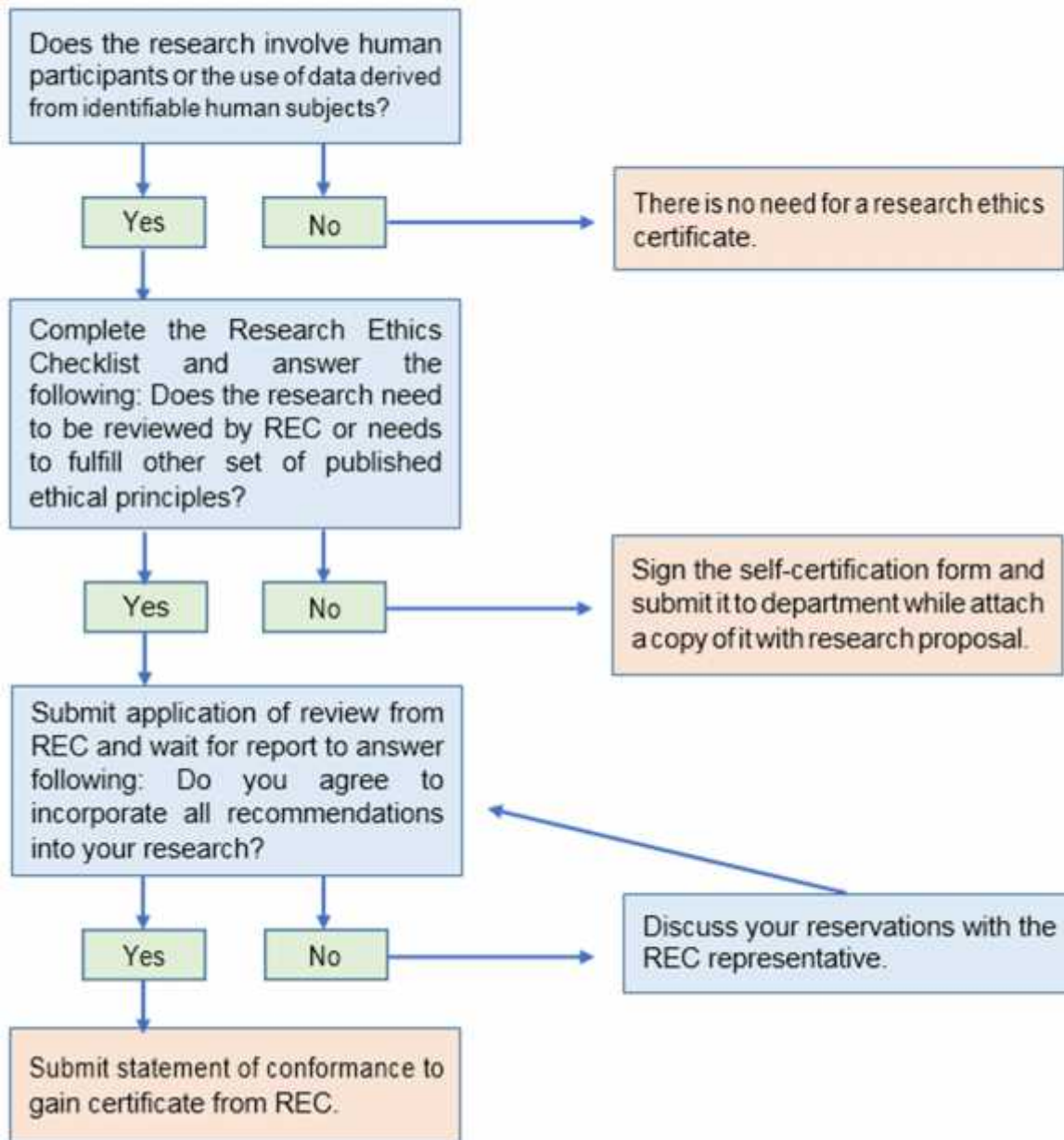
Date: 18 September 2018

**Brig. (R) Amin Ullah Khan, SI (M)**  
Registrar



Annexure A

**Workflow Diagram of the Procedure to Obtain Research Ethics Certificate**







Annexure B

**Checklist for Research Ethics Certificate**

The Checklist is designed to identify the nature of any ethical issues raised by the research. This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.			
<b>1. Name of Researcher</b>			
<b>2. Degree Programme</b>			
<b>3. Supervisor (If any)</b>			
<b>4. Title of Research</b>			
<b>5. Abstract (150-200 words)</b>			
<b>6. Funding</b>			
<b>Mark the following after careful review of your proposal:</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
a.	Does your research conform to the standards set by the Research Ethics Policy?		
b.	Does your research need to be reviewed by an external review committee?		
c.	Does your research need to comply with other ethical standards or principles not included in the research ethics policy but is a requirement for the type of research you are conducting?		
d.	Does the research raise any significant ethical issues?		
e.	Have you ensured adequate ethical safeguards in the methodology of your research?		
f.	Does the research need to fulfill any other published set of ethical standards for this specific type of research		
If you have answered Yes in question 'a' & 'e' and NO in all the remaining questions, you are eligible to self- certify your study for a Research Ethics Clearance.			
<hr/> <b>Signature of Researcher and Date</b>			



[Annexure C](#)

**Self-Certification for Research Ethics Clearance**

**Self-Certification for Research Ethics Clearance**

Please note that there are certain circumstances where Self-certification of ethics review is not appropriate. For details refer to the Research Ethics Policy, please.

If, after careful consideration, you have answered all the questions in the checklist and fulfill conditions, you may self-certify a research ethics clearance. Please attach the checklist with this certificate.

**SELF-CERTIFICATION:**

I have read and understood the NUML Research Ethics Policy and I commit to abide by the research ethics principles set forth in the policy document. I have completed the Research Ethics Checklist and confirm that:

- a. no significant ethical issues are raised by my research, or
- b. adequate safeguards in relation to such issues can and will be put in place, or
- c. the research is not subject to an external ethics review, or
- d. the research does not need to fulfill any other published set of ethical standards for this specific type of research

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor