



POLICY ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Policy Owner	Chairperson: Senate Research Ethics Committee
Division/Unit/Department	Senate Research Ethics Committee
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Approved by	Senate
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** Together with the Policy on Academic Misconduct and the Policy on Research Ethics this policy replaces the Code for Academic and Research Ethics.*

¹ Approval must be by the same structure that approved the initial policy.

1. PREAMBLE / RATIONALE

- 1.1. This policy governs the regulation, oversight and administration of research integrity at the University of Johannesburg (“the University”).
- 1.2. The policy arises from the need to provide an institutional structure and oversight of research integrity in order to ensure that research conducted at the University meets local and international norms and standards for integrity involving humans, animals and the environment.
- 1.3. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Policy on Research Ethics, the Policy on Academic Misconduct and the Authorship Policy.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for administration, governance and quality management of research integrity. The framework aims to:

- 2.1. Describe and detail the responsibilities of researcher affiliates and the Office for Research Integrity with regard to research integrity oversight of undergraduate, postgraduate and non-qualification research in order to foster:
 - 2.1.1. Respect for the fundamental human rights of all stakeholders with whom they engage.
 - 2.1.2. Responsible conduct of research.
 - 2.1.3. Trust in the institution and in its pursuits of creating, curating and dispensing with knowledge across all its disciplines.
- 2.2. Strengthen awareness, training, support for and oversight and governance of research integrity across all Faculties.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all research conducted by researcher affiliates (defined below) of the University including undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoctoral and non-qualification research.

4. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- 4.1. **Research integrity** means conducting research in a way that maximises the confidence and trust of others in the research methods and results. The focus of research integrity is the conduct of the researcher in achieving this level of confidence and trust.
- 4.2. **Researcher affiliate** means undergraduate and postgraduate students, postdoctoral research fellows, full-time and part-time staff, visiting academics and research associates or any other person engaging in research and affiliating themselves to the University in the process.
- 4.3. **Faculty** means Faculty, College or School at the University.
- 4.4. **Research** means a systematic process of collecting and analysing data in order to increase the understanding of a phenomenon with which the researcher(s) are concerned or interested.
- 4.5. **Research ethics** means the application of ethical principles to the conduct of research to protect research participants.
- 4.6. **Research ethics committee** means an independent committee that reviews research and has the responsibility of granting ethical approval and monitoring research after approval. Where a Faculty structure involves ethical review and approval at Departmental level, this policy applies equally to these committees.

- 4.7. **Research participant** means a person who has consented to participate in research (unless otherwise specified following ethical review by a REC). For the purposes of this policy, this includes non-consenting participants where the research involves animals rather than humans.
- 4.8. **Ethical approval** means the outcome of a process of ethical review by a research ethics committee indicating that research has complied with the required ethical norms and standards.
- 4.9. **Fabrication** means the invention of data or results and recording or reporting of them.
- 4.10. **Falsification** means the manipulation of research materials, equipment or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the data or results are not accurately represented in the research record.
- 4.11. **Plagiarism** means the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, presentations, words or any compilation of such (whether published or unpublished) without appropriate credit through recognised methods of referencing. Plagiarism also includes the use of substantive text, images, or other outputs generated through artificial intelligence applications without declaration. The use of one's own work without appropriate referencing constitutes a form of plagiarism. Plagiarism further includes paraphrasing the work of others by selectively altering words or phrases, changing the order of words, or closely following the structure of one or more arguments. Where the original source is cited through a recognised method of referencing, it remains important that the text makes it clear that the original source is being cited or paraphrased. Where any reference to 'plagiarism' is used, it should not be confused with the assignment and transfer of intellectual property rights set out in the any agreement or the University's Policy on Intellectual Property.
- 4.12. **Qualification research** means research conducted in fulfilment, or partial fulfilment, of a qualification.
- 4.13. **Data** means information of some kind, usually in a relatively raw (unprocessed or unanalysed) form that arises from a data collection research activity or process. This includes (but is not limited to) output from measuring instruments of any description in electronic or printed form, completed questionnaires or survey instruments, hand-written or typed notes, audio or video recordings, digital images or photographs, x-rays or other images, transcripts, sketches or diagrams, charts and spread sheet or other electronic content derived from a primary data source.

5. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

This policy aligns with the good governance principles of ethical compliance, the responsible exercise of duties, mitigation of risk and quality assurance. It embodies the University value of ethical foundation, comprised of honesty, transparency, accountability and fairness. Similarly, this policy aligns with the principles of the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity² (see Annexure A) which include honesty, accountability, professional courtesy and fairness, and good stewardship in research activities.

² World Conference on Research Integrity. Singapore Statement. 2010. Available from: <https://www.wcrif.org/downloads/main-website/singapore-statements/223-singapore-statement-a4size/file>

6. RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH, QUESTIONABLE RESEARCH PRACTICES AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Researcher conduct exists across a spectrum ranging from responsible conduct of research (RCR) through questionable research practices (QRPs) to research misconduct. All these definitions span the entire research lifecycle from conception to final reporting. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

6.1. Responsible Conduct of Research

The ideal research behaviour that aligns with the values of honesty, accuracy, efficiency and objectivity (the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (see Annexure A) also includes accountability, professional courtesy and fairness, and good stewardship). There is no one universal definition of RCR and it may draw on a mix of statute, academic policy, academic regulations, codes of conduct, personal values and character. While compliance with research ethics policy and operating procedures is clearly part of RCR, research ethics is mainly concerned with the protection of research participants. RCR encompasses research ethics compliance but also extends to behaviours and conduct of researcher affiliates beyond such compliance. There is a direct relationship between research integrity and RCR – research conducted responsibly has integrity.

6.2. Questionable Research Practices

QRPs are practices of researcher affiliates representing deviations from RCR but not fitting the definition of research misconduct and generally regarded as being not as serious. Often, QRPs are practices aimed at improving the chances of getting research accepted for publication by engaging in deceptive data analysis or selective reporting of results. Dishonest practices in authorship (e.g. guest authorship) and non-declaration of conflicts of interest are other forms of QRP.

6.3. Research Misconduct

Research misconduct refers to a breach of research integrity brought about by any direct, intentional action or omission on the part of a researcher affiliate. Traditionally, research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism (these are defined above). Research misconduct is a subset of the broader concept of academic misconduct, confined to research activities.

7. RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The responsibility for research integrity is shared amongst researcher affiliates, research integrity-related support structures and various research integrity oversight structures within the University.

- a) *Researcher affiliates* have a responsibility to be knowledgeable of and uphold the principles of research integrity in this policy and in the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, along with the Code of Conduct for Research, at all stages of their research activities.
- b) *Research integrity-related support structures* have a responsibility to foster awareness and an ethos of research integrity across the institution and to provide opportunities for research integrity training to researcher affiliates.
- c) *Research integrity oversight structures* have a responsibility to provide an efficient and accessible mechanism for (i) ethical approval of research where required and (ii) reporting and management of alleged research misconduct in a responsible and transparent manner.

8. STRUCTURES

The following structures play a role in the oversight of research integrity:

8.1. Faculty Research Ethics Committee

The Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Board and is responsible for the independent review and oversight of all matters related to research ethics of all staff and students within the faculty subject to the Policy on Research Ethics. Each FREC is represented on the University Senate Research Ethics Committee.

8.2. Faculty Higher Degrees Committee

The Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Board that has the delegated responsibility for the management of non-ethics-related aspects of all higher degrees at Faculty level subject to the Higher Degrees Policy.

8.3. Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee (FAMC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Board and is responsible for dealing with all cases of alleged academic misconduct at faculty level subject to the Policy on Academic Misconduct.

8.4. Senate Research Ethics Committee

The Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC) is a subcommittee of Senate which oversees and promotes all matters related to research ethics. The committee plays an oversight role for policy formulation and implementation regarding research ethics and advises Faculty Higher Degrees Committees, the Senate Higher Degrees Committee and the Office for Research Integrity on matters of research ethics.

8.5. Senate Higher Degrees Committee

The Senate Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC) is a subcommittee of Senate and considers in detail recommendations from the faculties on higher degree-related matters and advises Senate accordingly.

8.6. Senate Academic Misconduct Committee

The Senate Academic Misconduct Committee (SAMC) considers cases of alleged academic misconduct referred to it by any FAMC after the FAMC has compiled a report on the allegation according to its SOP. The SAMC makes final decisions on allegations of academic misconduct and may impose penalties on those found guilty.

8.7. Office for Research Integrity

The Office for Research Integrity is responsible for driving initiatives and processes related to support, training and awareness of research integrity at University level. It also supports existing structures in Faculties with investigations regarding allegations of research misconduct working closely with Faculty Research Ethics Committees and the Senate Research Ethics Committee in this regard.

8.8. University Compliance Office

The University Compliance Office assists institutional structures to implement and embed compliance processes in their daily processes and practices and assists the University's leadership to fulfil their responsibility in line with the best practice, to effectively manage the compliance risks in their respective divisions.

8.9. Student Ethics and Judicial Services

The Student Ethics and Judicial Services (SE&JS) is responsible for the administrative processes related to student discipline. This unit aims to foster an ethical and value-based culture among students.

8.10. UJ Whistleblower Hotline

The UJ whistleblower hotline is an independently managed hotline available to all employees and stakeholders to report any unethical behaviour, fraud, corruption, wrong-doing, or irregularities within the University.

8.11. UJ Postgraduate School

The UJ Postgraduate School (PGS) focuses on assisting all postgraduate students and postdoctoral research fellows with matters related to postgraduate studies including training and development.

9. PROCEDURES

Procedures related to research integrity include (i) procedures related to research ethics compliance and (ii) procedures related to allegations of research misconduct. These are described below.

9.1. Research Ethics Compliance: Procedures

- 9.1.1. Researcher affiliates must submit an application for ethics approval or an application for a waiver of ethics review, if applicable, to the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee.
- 9.1.2. Submission of applications should be done in accordance with the UJ Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedures of the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee.
- 9.1.3. Ethics approval must be applied for prior to the starting date of the research, as approval cannot be granted retrospectively.
- 9.1.4. It is the responsibility of the researcher affiliate to ensure that the application form and all necessary supporting documents are fully completed and submitted on time.
- 9.1.5. Should any amendments be made to a project after research ethics approval has been granted, the specific procedure for dealing with amendments as set out on the Faculty Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures, should be followed.

9.2. Allegations of Research Misconduct: Procedures

- 9.2.1. Allegations of research misconduct can be made anonymously by using the UJ Whistleblower Hotline and will be investigated as described in the Policy on Academic Misconduct.
- 9.2.2. Allegations of research misconduct not made anonymously as described in 7.2.1 are dealt with as described in the Policy on Academic Misconduct.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH

- 10.1. The Code of Conduct expresses the research integrity principles and values and a commitment to responsible conduct of research expected of all researcher affiliates while conducting research activities.
- 10.2. The Code of Conduct should be acknowledged in writing by all research affiliates either periodically (for staff or post-doctoral research fellows) or at the beginning of research-related qualifications (for students).
- 10.3. Researcher affiliates commit to:
 - 10.3.1. Uphold the ethical values of the University including those of human dignity, equality and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.
 - 10.3.2. Uphold the principles of the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity which are honesty in all aspects of research, accountability in the conduct of research, professional courtesy and fairness in working with others and good stewardship of research on behalf of others.
 - 10.3.3. Demonstrate utmost integrity in research activities, conduct research responsibly and maintain high standards of academic honesty.
 - 10.3.4. Exercise good judgement at all stages of the research process and not engage in questionable practices.
 - 10.3.5. Diligently fulfil responsibilities listed in the Singapore Statement of Research Integrity (see Annexure A), specifically 1-11 and 14.
 - 10.3.6. Refrain from any acts of research misconduct, such as, but not limited to:
 - 10.3.6.1. Any acts of falsification of research data.
 - 10.3.6.2. Any acts of fabrication of research data.
 - 10.3.6.3. Any acts of plagiarism.
 - 10.3.7. Abide by the Policy on Research Integrity, the Policy on Research Ethics, the Policy on Academic Misconduct and the Authorship Policy when engaged in research activities.

11. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years or when the need for change arises. Any policy changes will be discussed with relevant stakeholders.

12. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- a) Code for Academic and Research Ethics (*to be replaced by this policy, the Policy on Academic Misconduct, the Policy on Research Ethics and the Authorship Policy*).
- b) Policy on Academic Misconduct
- c) Policy on Research Ethics
- d) Charter Template for Research Ethics Committees
- e) SOP Template for Research Ethics
- f) Authorship Policy
- g) Higher Degrees Policy

Approval History Table	
Name of Approval Body (Committee)	Date Approved
Senate Research Ethics Committee	8 May 2025
Senate	12 November 2025

Singapore Statement on Research Integrity

Preamble. The value and benefits of research are vitally dependent on the integrity of research. While there can be and are national and disciplinary differences in the way research is organized and conducted, there are also principles and professional responsibilities that are fundamental to the integrity of research wherever it is undertaken.

PRINCIPLES

Honesty in all aspects of research
Accountability in the conduct of research
Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others
Good stewardship of research on behalf of others

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Integrity:** Researchers should take responsibility for the trustworthiness of their research.
- 2. Adherence to Regulations:** Researchers should be aware of and adhere to regulations and policies related to research.
- 3. Research Methods:** Researchers should employ appropriate research methods, base conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report findings and interpretations fully and objectively.
- 4. Research Records:** Researchers should keep clear, accurate records of all research in ways that will allow verification and replication of their work by others.
- 5. Research Findings:** Researchers should share data and findings openly and promptly, as soon as they have had an opportunity to establish priority and ownership claims.
- 6. Authorship:** Researchers should take responsibility for their contributions to all publications, funding applications, reports and other representations of their research. Lists of authors should include all those and only those who meet applicable authorship criteria.
- 7. Publication Acknowledgement:** Researchers should acknowledge in publications the names and roles of those who made significant contributions to the research, including writers, funders, sponsors, and others, but do not meet authorship criteria.
- 8. Peer Review:** Researchers should provide fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations and respect confidentiality when reviewing others' work.
- 9. Conflict of Interest:** Researchers should disclose financial and other conflicts of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness of their work in research proposals, publications and public communications as well as in all review activities.
- 10. Public Communication:** Researchers should limit professional comments to their recognized expertise when engaged in public discussions about the application and importance of research findings and clearly distinguish professional comments from opinions based on personal views.
- 11. Reporting Irresponsible Research Practices:** Researchers should report to the appropriate authorities any suspected research misconduct, including fabrication, falsification or plagiarism, and other irresponsible research practices that undermine the trustworthiness of research, such as carelessness, improperly listing authors, failing to report conflicting data, or the use of misleading analytical methods.
- 12. Responding to Irresponsible Research Practices:** Research institutions, as well as journals, professional organizations and agencies that have commitments to research, should have procedures for responding to allegations of misconduct and other irresponsible research practices and for protecting those who report such behavior in good faith. When misconduct or other irresponsible research practice is confirmed, appropriate actions should be taken promptly, including correcting the research record.
- 13. Research Environments:** Research institutions should create and sustain environments that encourage integrity through education, clear policies, and reasonable standards for advancement, while fostering work environments that support research integrity.
- 14. Societal Considerations:** Researchers and research institutions should recognize that they have an ethical obligation to weigh societal benefits against risks inherent in their work.