



- Accredited with 'A+' Grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 2nd Cycle
- MMS Program Accredited by National Board of Accreditation (NBA)
- ISO 21001:2018, 50001:2018 and 14001:2015 Certified

RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDELINES

All education, research and innovation endeavors at TIMSR should aim to be of a high standard. To achieve the high-quality research outcome, the following policies pertaining to research ethics has been undertaken. A Research Ethics Committee (REC) has been constituted to design and implement policies regarding ethics pertaining to research projects, publications, intellectual property, innovation, funding proposals and any other activity or act in which research is involved. This guideline (which will be referred as Code of Research Ethics i.e. CRE) offers provisions pertaining to ethical issues.

1. Establishment of Research Ethics Committee (REC)

The REC Cell comprises of the following members:-

- (i) Coordinator – Faculty of TIMSR
- (ii) 2 Members - Faculties of TIMSR

2. Responsibilities

Oversee the application of the Code of Research Ethics (CRE) for the responsible practice of research. The REC should also suggest modifications in policy and CRE on periodic basis.

Step-by-step process can be added explaining how faculty and students can apply for ethical approval, including whom to contact and expected timelines.

Role of REC in terms of actionable are as follows: -

- guiding researchers on ethical matters / categorizing the research in the risk band (refer sub section 7,1),
- reviewing and offering (dis)approval to those research falling under high risk category,
- sensitize faculty and students about ethical aspects of doing research.

3. Terms of Office

- Members of the REC serve for terms of up to two years.
- An appointed member may be appointed to serve for additional terms as per the approval of Director, TIMSR.

4. Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the REC shall be the nearest whole number above 50% of the membership of the REC.

5. Reporting

The REC will report to the Director - TIMSR by way of its minutes.

6. Code of Research Ethics (CRE)

This code expresses the ethical values of all faculties and students engaged in academic and/or research activities at TIMSR, who have committed themselves to:

- 6.1 Uphold the values of freedom, democracy, equality, human dignity and respect for diversity;
- 6.2 Strive for distinguished scholarship, excellence in teaching, reputable research and innovation through leading, challenging, creating and exploring knowledge.
- 6.3 Accomplish the above individually, through collective efforts and partnerships with communities.
- 6.4 The purpose of the Code of Research Ethics (CRE) is to guide staff and students engaged in academic and research activities to:
 - (i) respect the human dignity and rights of all stakeholders.
 - (ii) promote shared ethical values and fulfill all academic/research activities according to such values.
 - (iii) uphold and promote individual, group and institutional integrity when in the process of fulfilling the roles as Professors, Guides, Researchers, Mentors and Advisors.
 - (iv) create trust in the institution and the practice of business and management.
 - (v) the pursuit of truth through free inquiry and open dialogue.

- (vi) just and fair treatment of human beings, other living beings, the environment, and human remains.
- (vii) complying with the highest standards of scientific and management research.
- (viii) making no misrepresentation in the dissemination of research information and findings and not fabricating data or information.
- (ix) designating authorship of consulted research sources clearly, accurately and justly and assigning authorship of research publications accurately and justly.
- (x) committing no form of plagiarism.
- (xi) practicing or promoting no form of unfair discrimination in research.
- (xii) disclosing the usage of Artificial Intelligence tools in their research work

7. Ethical Approval

All research activities undertaken by faculties and students of TIMSR should adhere to provisions stated in Section-6 of these guidelines.

The REC will facilitate researchers in obtaining ethical approval of their research study. All research involving human participants must be assessed for ethical risks and approved accordingly.

7.1 Risk Classification System

Research projects are classified into three categories based on the level of risk to participants:

i) High Risk Projects

High risk projects involve significant potential for physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm to participants. Such projects include, but are not limited to:

- a. Research involving vulnerable populations (children, minorities, individuals with cognitive impairments, economically disadvantaged groups)
- b. Studies examining sensitive topics such as illegal activities, sexual behavior, substance abuse, or traumatic experiences

- c. Research that may cause significant psychological stress or emotional distress
- d. Studies involving deception that cannot be immediately debriefed
- e. Research that may result in social stigmatization or damage to reputation
- f. Collection of highly sensitive personal, financial, or health information
- g. Studies with potential legal implications for participants
- h. Research involving coercion or reduced autonomy in decision-making

ii) Medium Risk Projects

Medium risk projects involve some potential for harm or discomfort to participants, but with manageable risks when proper safeguards are implemented. Such projects include:

- a. Interviews about moderately sensitive business practices or workplace issues
- b. Research involving employees discussing organizational problems or management practices
- c. Studies examining financial decision-making
- d. Consumer research involving personal spending habits or financial situations
- e. Research on workplace stress, job satisfaction, or organizational conflicts
- f. Studies requiring more than minimal time commitment from participants
- g. Research involving audio or video recording of participants
- h. Studies collecting identifiable personal information that requires confidentiality protection

iii) Low Risk Projects

Low risk projects involve no more than minimal risk to participants, where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Such projects include:

- a. Anonymous surveys on general business topics
- b. Research using publicly available data or secondary datasets

- c. Observational studies in public spaces without intervention
- d. Analysis of publicly available financial reports or business documents
- e. Studies involving standard business simulations or educational exercises
- f. Research on general attitudes toward business practices, products, or services
- g. Non-sensitive interviews with professionals about industry trends or best practices

7.2 Ethical Approval Requirements

- i. All high and medium risk projects are recommended to obtain full ethical approval before commencing research activities. The REC will facilitate them in obtaining the ethical approval.
- ii. Low risk projects are EXEMPT from formal ethical approval requirements, provided they meet the following eligibility criteria:
 - a. The research collects data anonymously with no possibility of identifying individual participants, either directly or through combination of data points.
 - b. The research does not involve sensitive subjects including but not limited to: illegal activities, financial difficulties, personal conflicts, discrimination, harassment, health issues, or other topics that could cause distress.
 - c. Participants are adults with full capacity to consent, and the study does not specifically target or include vulnerable groups.
 - d. The research requires minimal time and effort from participants (typically less than 30 minutes) and does not involve invasive procedures or techniques.
 - e. For secondary data research, all data sources are publicly available, or the research uses existing anonymous datasets with proper permissions.
 - f. Participation is entirely voluntary with no coercion, undue influence, or adverse consequences for non-participation.
 - g. The research employs standard, non-invasive methods commonly used in business research (surveys, public observations, document analysis).

- h. If the personal data captured is not to be used to take any decision specific to a respondent or Data Principal (as per The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, Data Principal is defined as the individual to whom the personal data relates and where such individual is— (i) a child, includes the parents or lawful guardian of such a child; (ii) a person with disability, includes her lawful guardian, acting on her behalf.)

7.3 Ethical Committee Approval Process

If your research falls under high or medium risk category, then the researcher has to apply to REC to obtain the approval. The application is attached as an annexure 1 to this policy document. Please email the completed and signed application to the REC Coordinator, ensuring all other REC members are copied on the communication.

REC will call a meeting to discuss and process the request and deemed appropriate will offer approval. REC should convey its decision in 6 working days to the applicant.

8. Miscellaneous Guidelines

The REC has right to formulate other necessary guidelines relating to ethical aspects pertaining to publication, research grants, graduate research supervision, etc.

The REC will be responsible for suggesting changes on continual basis in Code of Research Ethics (CRE) and policies in line with The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and regulations in this regard.

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Place: Mumbai

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