



**VIVEKANANDA GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
JAIPUR**

**POLICY ON
CODE OF ETHICS FOR RESEARCH**

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Research Centre

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1. Introduction

The Policy on Code of Ethics for Research (COER) at Vivekananda Global University (VGU) represents a series of recommendations and commitments that establishes behavioural expectations that an organization has from its researchers. This document aims to establish a set of rules, applicable to all staff and researchers that undertake scientific research activity at VGU. This document, in its capacity as an instrument of self-regulation, is accepted by VGU, and is subject to the commitments and ethical principles to which the researchers are bound. This Code of Ethics policy is aimed at prevention of malpractices in research works carried out by the faculty members, scholars and students of VGU.

Need for a Code of Ethics

- a) Research and development comprise of systematic work undertaken to enhance and the treasure of knowledge of people, culture and society, and its use to invent new applications for sustainable well-being.
- b) The reputation of VGU relies on standards and ethics that it propagates in rendering research activities. The COER intends to outline expected behavior from faculty members, researchers and research scholars in dealing with the academic community, contemporaries and public, while being sincere and diligent, to uphold the mission of the University and instill greater trust among all stakeholders.
- c) All stakeholders of research at VGU are expected to be committed to pursuit of truth, honesty, and integrity to uphold the vision-mission of the University, and to safeguard and promote public interest during research activities. VGU encourages a culture of scientific ethics, ensuring that its principles are known and practiced at all levels of the organization. The COER lays out procedures to identify, manage, assess, prevent and correct, wherever necessary, any possible violation of the basic principles of scientific and research integrity.

Who must comply with the Code of Ethics

- a) VGU has adopted the COER policy and expects all who are the part of it to do likewise.
- b) The COER policy encompasses those activities which are directly related to acquisition of new knowledge, including, but not limited to, use of human and financial resources for undertaking scientific research activities like planning and conducting experiments; data processing and analysis; and dissemination and management of human, animal, and material resources. It also affects the nature of interaction with third parties and requires them to follow a code of ethics compatible with the university's code.
- c) Any activities that fall outside VGU's field of science and research are excluded from the scope of this code. VGU has other policies that deal with the ethical aspects of other activities undertaken by the university like labour relations, promotion of gender equality, prevention of sexual harassment, prevention of occupational hazards, conduct of managers, transparency, management of conflicts of interest, ethics in public procurement, etc.
- d) The Code binds the researchers at VGU to strict measures of integrity and the highest ethical standards.

2. Objectives of Research Work

The objective of the research work must be well defined and free from bias in the design of methodology, data analysis and data interpretation. The objectives may be of fundamental interest, or it may aim to benefit the society, community, nation or the environment.

3. Integrity and Honesty

The researcher must be honest in presenting the research objective, reporting methods and procedures, and conveying interpretations. Research must be reliable and its communication fair and full. Researchers must be independent and impartial and any communication with other researchers and public must be open and honest. All researchers have a duty of care towards humans, animals, environment, and the objects of the study. They must also show fairness in providing references and giving credit to others for their work in the research.

4. Institutional Responsibilities

VGU is committed to ensure that all activities that encompass the university, especially those related to research, are of the high standards upholding legal, ethical and safety norms. The institutional responsibility inherently is an individual's professional responsibility on behalf of the university. The university thus:

- a) Formulates research governance framework via policies and procedures.
- b) Creates a robust management system that ensures compliance with set standards, resolving disputes and preventing misconduct, also creates processes for apt decision making and grievance redressal.
- c) Provides needed infrastructure, resources, support and services.
- d) Facilitates training, research orientation and development programs.
- e) Provides appropriate mentoring to enable skill up-gradation and required support for development of research environment.

5. Supervision, Training and Mentorship

Supervisors are responsible to facilitate research activities by upholding integrity, sound governance and ethical practice; and instil a culture of honesty, co-operation, and professionalism. A supervisor is expected to exhibit competence in providing training necessary to garner improved research result and acceptance by the stakeholders. The research supervisor must maintain a professional supervisor-supervisee relationship and assign credit appropriately.

It is the prerogative of the University to lay policies to ensure all researchers receive training opportunities, subsequent supervision, and assistance to enable research of the highest standards. The academic departments must facilitate training programs for the coursework (research methodology, regulatory requirement, equipment use, confidentiality, data management, record-keeping, data protection and publication). The academic departments must also ensure appropriate use of licensed research resources and IPR; and prepare concerned administrative and technical personnel for accurate record-keeping and providing technical assistance for research.

A research mentor, a knowledgeable, open-minded, supportive and a good listener, in the context of the code, is expected to serve as a catalyst, a role model, and a coach that facilitates progressive research, beneficial for all researchers, the university and the society at large.

6. Good Practice of Research

The principles of integrity and the violation thereof, have a universal character. Some of the practices and attributes that researchers must possess and exhibit, that are deemed key for undertaking good research are:

- a) **Data:** Store all primary and secondary data in secure and accessible form, documented and archived for a substantial period.
- b) **Responsibility:** Handle all research subjects related to human, animal and non-living elements with respect and care. The health, safety and welfare of a community or collaborators must not be compromised. Protocols that govern research involving human subjects must not be violated.
- c) **Trust and Fairness:** Exhibit mutual trust to encourage free exchange of ideas. Researchers must ensure fairness in institutional standards, practices, procedures and interactions between members of the research groups.
- d) **Publication:** Publish result in an open, transparent and accurate manner, at the earliest, unless intellectual property considerations justify delay. All authors, unless otherwise specified, shall be fully responsible for the content of publication. Guest authorships and ghost authorships are not acceptable. The criteria for establishing the sequence of authors must be agreed by all. Contributions by collaborators and assistants must be acknowledged, with their permission. Intellectual contributions of others must be acknowledged and correctly cited. Publication of the same or substantial parts of the same work in different journals is acceptable, only with the consent of the editors of the journals and with proper reference to the first publication. Financial and other support for research must be acknowledged. All authors must declare all conflicts of interest.
- e) **Transparency:** Report data collection methods; analyse and interpret data; and make findings widely available, including to the general public.

7. Research Funding

Following care must be exercised by a researcher with reference to research funding:

- a) Fulfil promises made during application of research funding.
- b) Familiarise themselves with terms and conditions of the funding agreement (grant or contract), to ensure complete and correct understanding of the implications of the terms.
- c) Agree to and accept terms and conditions of the research funding organization. Once the funding has been accepted, researchers must ensure that they observe and fully comply with the terms and conditions of any grant or contract
- d) Adhere to all financial regulations and procedures including those related to procurement of materials, equipment and other resources, hiring research project staff and other expenses.
- e) Properly account for grant or funding received and co-operate with any financial monitoring and audit.

8. Ethical Values for Research Scholars

Upholding ethical values are vital to good research. Some ethical values include:

- a) Punctuality, dedication and sincerity in all academic work.
- b) Synthesizing research data collected as per the procedures laid down.
- c) Reporting research results following standard practices.
- d) No manipulation or misrepresentation of publication status.
- e) Need to keep undertakings and agreements honestly.
- f) Avoiding casual attitude and negligence towards research work.
- g) Maintaining quality in paperwork and recording research activities, such as literature review, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, drafted manuscripts and its communication with UGC recognized journals.
- h) Respecting patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property.

9. Academic Freedom, Integrity and Responsibility

The University renders academic freedom to all researchers to pursue knowledge and conduct advanced research without unreasonable interference or restriction from any quarters, norms, laws, institutional regulations or public. The researcher must exercise the freedom diligently and care must be taken to avoid violations of widely recognized academic research standards.

10. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The vision of IPRs is to encourage new creations, including technology, artwork and inventions, that might increase economic growth. Intellectual Property (IP) is a product of innovative, diligent, creative and intellectual effort. IPRs are legal rights that provide creators protection for their original works, inventions, appearance of products, artistic works, scientific developments, etc. VGU motivates and aids in successful utilization of IPRs.

Types of Intellectual Property (IP):

- a) **Copyright:** A copyright owner has the exclusive right to sell, publish and reproduce work created by the author. It covers tangible forms of creation and original work; and does not protect ideas. Works covered by copyright range from books, music, paintings, sculpture and films to computer programs, databases, maps and technical drawings.
- b) **Patent:** A patent provides the patent owner with the right to decide how or whether the invention can be used by others. In exchange for this right, the patent owner makes technical information about the invention publicly available in the published patent document. For an invention to receive a patent, it must meet the requirements of novelty, non-obviousness and usefulness. Once an invention has been patented, the patent owner has the right to commercialize the patent, including buying and selling the patent or granting a license to the invention to any third party under mutually agreed terms.

- c) **Trademark:** A trademark can come in the form of text, phrase, symbol, sound, smell, and/or colour scheme. Unlike patents, it can protect a set or class of products or services, instead of just one product or process.
- d) **Trade secret:** Trade secrets are IP rights on confidential information which may be sold or licensed.

11. Publication and Authorship

- a) All researchers must publish and disseminate the results of their research in an open, honest, transparent and accurate manner via all appropriate media such as journal papers, books, reviews, software, data repository and conference proceedings.
- b) The authors must be able to identify their contribution in any publication. They must be familiar with its content and accept personal responsibility for it.
- c) The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who have directly or indirectly assisted the research must be properly acknowledged, with their permission.
- d) Funding agencies of research must be acknowledged.
- e) Researchers have full responsibility to ensure that any inconsistencies or errors in their published material are rectified on time.
- f) The stipendiary research scholars must observe the conditions, if any, set by funding or other bodies regarding the publication of the research.

12. Research Misconduct

Misconduct in academic research implies, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research; and deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practice in carrying out research. It includes failure to follow an agreed protocol resulting in unreasonable risk or harm to people or the environment and facilitating misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others.

Misconduct includes following acts:

- a) **Plagiarism:** Deliberate copying of ideas, text, data or other work without permission and acknowledgment. Plagiarism is appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit. Representing any part or parts of another's work as one's own is considered plagiarism and may be a violation of the Principle of Ethics.
- b) **Fabrication:** Making up results and recording them as if they were real.
- c) **Falsification:** Manipulating research processes or changing or omitting data.
- d) **Abuse of IPRs:** Failure to observe legal norms regarding copyright and the moral rights of authors.
- e) **Abuse of Research Resources:** Failure to observe the terms and conditions of institutionally licensed research resources.
- f) **Misinterpretation:** Deliberate attempt to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others.
- g) **Sabotage:** Preventing others from completing their work. This includes damaging or stealing library books, or wilfully disrupting other's experiments, or endangering institutional access to licensed research resources by knowingly failing to observe their terms and conditions.

13. Professorial Misconduct

Professorial acts that are arbitrary, biased or exploitative. It includes the following acts:

- a) **Misconduct in Formal Examinations:** Having access or attempting to gain access during an examination to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorized electronic devices, or any other material, except such as may have been supplied by the invigilator or authorized by the academic department.
- b) **Use of Alcohol and Drugs:** Use of alcohol or unethical drugs which are not part of research comes under professional misconduct.
- c) **Gambling:** Engaging in or offering games of chance for monetary or other forms of gain in violation of government rules and Penal Codes.
- d) **Harassment:** Any verbal, visual, written or physical conduct that may create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. It must be avoided and prevented. Nobody should be subjected to any harassment because of factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, creed, national origin, disability or political affiliation.
- e) **Health and Safety:** Every research scholar must take care of their health and safety. They must also ensure others' health and safety while executing work within the campus. Fire safety, safety while using chemicals in the University, safety while driving vehicles on the campus are all essential requirements of the University's Code.

14. Mechanism For Detecting Plagiarism

Plagiarism detection or content similarity detection is a process of locating instances of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement within a research work or document. The University's system of plagiarism detection must be followed by all research scholars. Available plagiarism detection tools must be used for detecting plagiarism in research

documents. VGU has access to URKUND, which is accessible via the web link <https://www.orkund.com> and personal login id through the university's R&D cell.

15. University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

A university research ethics committee (UREC) is formulated with a purpose to evaluate the ethical acceptability of a research before any candidate is enrolled and during the process of research work conducted. It also examines and advises on related financial and scientific implications of the research works at the university.

UREC helps to ensure well-being, safety and protection of people who participate in research and takes due care of involvement of varied aspects of the society in the research works taken up at the university. An ethics review and favourable opinion ought to be sought before any research begins and ongoing research to be continually monitored. UREC shall be independent from sponsors, funders, investigators and from undue social and organizational influences (e.g. political, institutional, professional or commercial). The committee shall ensure that the interest of research participants is protected. UREC shall have a proper and balanced membership with people belonging to various backgrounds. The UREC members must be free from any declared conflicts of interest, and this shall be checked on case-to-case basis also.

UREC at VGU is composed as per and governed by the University UREC policy.

15. Roles and Responsibility of UREC

UREC plays an important role in safeguarding the ethical standards and scientific merit of research. The obligations placed on the committee are as follows

- a) The committee must ensure that the rights of research participants are protected. This is achieved by ensuring that individuals receive sufficient information, which can be easily understood, and appropriate strategies are in place to protect participants from potential adverse consequences of the research.
- b) The committee has an obligation to the society which provides the resources for research and will ultimately be affected by the results.
- c) The committee has an obligation to the researcher. The research proposal should be treated with respect and consideration.

Follow-up of ongoing research

UREC must evaluate approved research at regular intervals, the frequency of which is dependent on the research advisory committee and is based on the level of risk the project poses to societal issues and researchers.

Accountability

UREC must demonstrate accountability towards researchers and its constituting authority. It must be transparent in its decision making, including official announcement of meetings.

Composition of UREC

UREC is composed of members who together have the qualification and experience to ensure proper review of the ethical, scientific, medical and financial aspects of a study. Members are appointed for a fixed term by VGU Research Board. The committee ought to have a multidisciplinary and multi sectoral membership, its composition is to be gender balanced, and should reflect the social and cultural diversity of the communities from which research participants are most likely to be drawn. It should include individuals with backgrounds relevant to the areas of research the committee is most likely to review. The committee may choose to invite outside experts (as special invitee) who are not on a case-to-case basis.

UREC must consist of minimum 5 members and maximum 11 members and shall function for a tenure of 5 yrs. from the date of appointment.

Composition of UREC

S. No.	Members of UREC	Eligibility
1	Chairperson	A well-respected person from any background with a minimum experience of 20 yrs. of evaluating and conducting research works in multidisciplinary domains.
2	Member Secretary	Dean (R &D) VGU, Jaipur
3	Legal Expert	A legal professional with an experience of minimum 8 yrs. of practice with a degree in law from a recognized university.
4	People of social repute (1-3 persons)	Literate people of social repute, who may be a representative of the community and aware of the local language, cultural and moral values of the community
5	Member (1-5 persons)	An individual with a minimum experience of 5 years as an Academician / Philosopher / Research Professional / Social Scientist. An individual with social / behavioral science / philosophy qualification and training and/or expertise and is sensitive to local cultural and moral values.

