



**POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS  
(RESEARCH POLICY V)**  
REF: CO/06/2906/07

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## **A: POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. Purpose statement**

The purpose of this sub-policy is to provide a framework in which research at the University may occur with due regard to internationally recognised ethical norms and standards, ensuring the protection of the interests of all stakeholders.

This Policy aims to promote awareness of and compliance with ethical principles, guidelines and procedures in the conduct of research activities, thereby clarifying for researchers their ethical obligations. The vision, principles and core values of the University are based on commitment to the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. This Policy should be interpreted accordingly. The University is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in a research community that is committed to the principles of integrity, trust, collegiality and justice.

This Policy is an explicitly stated ethical framework for the University community within which all research should be conducted, while being mindful of the goal of developing an enabling environment for all learners and scholars in the pursuit of their studies in accordance with the principles of academic freedom.

### **2. Introduction and background**

This sub-policy aims to promote awareness of and compliance with ethical principles, guidelines and procedures, while not unduly hindering the conduct of research.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is a research-led University. It is also a University with a rich history of engagement with society, the environment and more broadly with the world of knowledge. It is also committed to be accountable in the sense that it is an institution that is firmly located in the social fabric within which it finds itself. It is of significant importance therefore that UKZN has a formally adopted research policy relating to an ethical framework within which it and its staff and students engage in research activities. This is not meant to hinder the unfettered seeking of knowledge. It is a framework within which this may occur in a way which protects the integrity of all stakeholders in the research enterprise.

This sub-policy refers to the following documents:

- Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010)
- UKZN's "Code of Conduct for Research"
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996
- Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993

### **3. Abbreviations used**

AREC	Animal Research Ethics Committee
BREC	Biomedical Research Ethics Committee
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

IBC	Institutional Biosafety Committee
REC	Research Ethics Committee
RSG	Research Strategy Group

#### **4. Scope**

The sub-policy applies to all staff, students and affiliates of the University who are involved in research on or off the campuses of UKZN, or are engaged in research at or in collaboration with the University. In addition, any person not affiliated with UKZN who wishes to conduct research with UKZN students and/or staff or on the University premises is bound by this research ethics policy. Each member of the University community is responsible for the implementation of this Policy in relation to scholarly work with which she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be in violation of this Policy.

This sub-policy provides guidelines/direction on the University's position in respect of the ethical conduct of research by University staff, students and affiliates, both within and external to the University.

#### **5. The Policy**

##### **5.1. University Specialist Research Ethics Committees**

5.1.1. The University has three specialist Research Ethics Committees (RECs): the Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC), the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC). They function directly under the auspices of the DVC (Research) and University Research Strategy Group (RSG) where their respective Chairs have representation and are responsible for effecting ethics approval of research proposals. Other specialist committees may be created by the RSG when the need arises.

5.1.2. Review of research proposals takes into account academic freedom and its responsibilities while providing accountability and quality assurance to scholars and society in general. Such review also provides assurance that, where relevant, the environment will not be damaged and indeed be protected and maintained to the best of the researcher's ability. Research related documents will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Any requests for review of these documents outside the respective Committees will have to be forwarded to the appropriate Committee Chair for authorisation. Each specialist Research Ethics Committee functions in accordance with the Terms of Reference and comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures that have been approved by the RSG, which in turn is accountable to Senate.

5.1.3. Research where the biological, clinical, psychological and social processes in human beings and animals are studied and/or where harm or damage to the environment is a possibility, requires ethics review and clearance prior to commencement of the project and in particular prior to field work and/or data collection. The researcher is responsible for consulting with the appropriate Committee(s) to ascertain whether the proposed research requires ethical clearance or not.

5.1.4. All students, members of staff and other persons who, although not affiliated to the University but are involved in research at/or in association with the University, must familiarise themselves with and sign an undertaking to comply with the University's "Code of Conduct for Research" (Appendix A) and the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) which was endorsed by Senate in 2012.

5.1.5. Ethical protocols/applications submitted in isiZulu will be accommodated to ensure that the University's Language Policy is upheld as per procedures outlined in Appendix B.

### **5.2. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)**

The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guidelines require that an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) be established to screen research proposals involving recombinant DNA molecules. This is not only mandatory for institutions seeking NIH funding but it is also critical to the safe conduct of research of this nature and to the fulfillment of an institutional commitment to the protection of staff, the environment, and public health.

### **5.3. The Responsibility of the University**

The University will facilitate the ethical conduct of scholarly research by developing and providing capacity building programmes in research ethics for researchers and members of the specialist RECs. Formal ethics certification is required of all researchers conducting research at or in association with the University, through a process of research ethics education, testing and certification. The REC Chairs and the University Dean of Research will be responsible for approving and making available suitable research ethics training programmes for REC members and researchers.

The University takes responsibility to ensure that all laboratories and other physical resources for research are maintained and meet all necessary accreditation requirements to allow for ethical and effective research.

### **5.4. The Selection and Conduct of Research**

5.4.1. The choice of a research topic and the conduct of research in accordance with University policy is the responsibility of the individual researcher. In addition to this policy, other University policies, regulations or guidelines including but not limited to, the Intellectual Property Policy, Grants and Contracts Policy and other professional codes may apply where appropriate.

5.4.2. Where collaborative or team research is being conducted, the Principal Investigator is obliged to ensure that members of the research team are aware of the contents of this Policy and of other applicable local, national and international ethical norms governing the conduct of research. The Principal Investigator should take all possible steps to ensure that the provisions of this Policy are complied with by the research team.

5.4.3. Where research is to be conducted by students for academic credit, the supervisor will inform the student of her/his obligations in respect of the ethical conduct of research. In addition, the supervisor will ensure that the student understands her/his obligations in accordance with the University Research Ethics Policy and will take all possible measures to ensure that the student's research is conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Policy, and with other applicable ethical norms, and that the student has signed the University Code of Conduct for Research (**Appendix A**).

### **5.5. Research Honesty and Integrity**

5.5.1. Researchers are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity as outlined in the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to the following, is a serious offence:

- (a) Falsification of data
- (b) Plagiarism
- (c) Fabrication
- (d) Non-declaration of conflict(s) of interest
- (e) Misuse of research funds
- (f) Any other form of dishonesty in research that undermines the integrity of the research and which may bring the University into disrepute

5.5.2. This Policy is not intended to censure the actions of the individual who has made an honest error, or who exercises *bona fide* judgment, or interprets data or designs experiments in a way that may reasonably be the subject of an honest difference of opinion.

### **5.6. Environment**

All research must be conducted taking into account Section 24 of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa which requires that research should not result in an environment that could lead to harm to health or well-being. The environment must be protected, for the benefit of present and future generations. Pollution and ecological degradation must be avoided in order to:

- promote conservation; and
- secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

### **5.7. Biohazard**

Personnel working in research laboratories at UKZN must be protected from possible harm resulting from exposure to hazardous biological or chemical materials.

### **5.8. Code of Conduct for Research**

#### **5.8.1. Guiding principles**

The pursuit of knowledge is the pursuit of truth. It is to be carried out with:

- Honesty and integrity
- Safe and responsible methods

- Fairness and equity for the participants

#### **5.8.2. Requirements for observance**

This code applies to all individuals participating in research under the auspices of the University. This includes:

- Academic Staff
- Staff providing technical or administrative support to research activity
- Staff employed through research grants or contracts administered by the University
- Staff of Research Centres and Units
- Graduate or undergraduate students participating in research
- Any other individual, such as honorary appointees and visiting researchers making use of any University resource

Where appropriate, the code specifies formal procedures and regulations. Nevertheless, it recognises that, in ethical questions, it is not possible to legislate for every eventuality. The over-riding principle is an expectation that all researchers are expected to act with integrity in the interests of the University and to be scrupulous in conducting their affairs.

#### **5.8.3. Breaches of the code**

Failure to observe the requirements of the Code may be grounds for disciplinary action under the Conditions of Service applying to staff of the University or under the Student Disciplinary Code as appropriate.

#### **5.8.4. University Research Strategy Group (RSG)**

The DVC (Research) in consultation with the RSG has Senate delegated responsibility for developing, monitoring and maintaining all University ethics policies and procedures, including research ethics. In particular it has four specialist committees (AREC, BREC, HSSREC and IBC) which are charged with the responsibility of approving and monitoring research proposals and programmes that require specific ethical clearance.

#### **5.8.5. Management of research data and records**

The University is committed to openness in research. The data on which published research is based must be available for evaluation by the broader research community. Agreements, under which data is kept confidential for a period in order to protect intellectual property rights, must conform with this code.

#### **5.8.6. Publication**

The University encourages the widest dissemination of research results by appropriate publication. Pressure to publish is an integral part of academic life with a strong bearing on the career and standing of the researcher. It is important that this pressure does not lead to ethical problems. Such problems are generally related to one of three causes:

- Failure to give appropriate credit to the work of others;
- Taking more personal credit for collaborative work than is justified by one's contribution; and

- Overuse of a limited body of work to provide more publication credit than is justified.

#### 5.8.6.1. Authorship

The principles in this section of the code are based on part of the Vancouver Protocol, originally developed at a meeting in Vancouver by a group of editors of medical journals. Many of the principles of the Vancouver protocol are of wider application and are presented in the Guidelines.

#### 5.8.7. Peer review

The world of academic publishing is dependent on the willingness of researchers to give freely of their time to referee papers submitted to journals and to recommend on their publication. The University encourages its members to participate in this process. Such refereeing is done under conditions of confidentiality and is privileged.

#### 5.8.8. Redundant publication

Redundant publication is the unnecessary publication of similar material in different places.

5.8.8.1. Publication of the same, or substantially the same, article in different places is not acceptable. This does not prevent the later reprinting of an article for a different readership or in an edited compilation by agreement with the editor(s) or publisher(s) involved.

5.8.8.2. Researchers should consider carefully the most effective way to publish a particular research result or set of research results. This should be done with regard to the best way to communicate the results and not to maximise the publication count.

5.8.8.3. The release to the media of research results that have not been peer reviewed is not acceptable. Generally, research results should always be published in a peer-reviewed journal before being released to the news media. In the case of very important results, and with the concurrence of the editor of the journal in which they are to be published, such results may be released to the press in advance. This does not prevent the publication of news items about ongoing research, or about problems that are being investigated, provided that these are not used as the medium for the release of new findings that have not been peer reviewed.

#### 5.8.9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unattributed and uncredited use of the ideas and work of others whether this is in published work or in unpublished documents. It is not just the word-for-word reproduction of the work of another without attribution. Such reproduction certainly constitutes plagiarism and may also be an illegal breach of copyright, but plagiarism is also the use in any form of another's original ideas without attribution. There is a range of culpability. As ideas become absorbed into common knowledge, it may become difficult to determine their source. For this reason the highly publicised cases tend to be concerned with the direct reproduction of another's work as one's own. Nonetheless, researchers must

continually be alert to the possibility that they may be unconsciously using the ideas of others. Care must be taken therefore to acknowledge all sources. Electronic plagiarism-checking technology should be used wherever possible to check draft manuscripts and research publications. All research must conform to UKZN's Plagiarism Policy and Procedures (approved by Senate and Council on the 6 November and 2 December 2013, respectively).

#### **5.8.10. Research misconduct**

##### **5.8.10.1. Definition of research misconduct**

The following definition of research misconduct is from the Federal Policy on Research Misconduct issued by the Office of Science and Technology Policy of the Government of the United States of America and is compatible with the Singapore Statement on Research Misconduct. The University of KwaZulu-Natal endorses these definitions.

#### **I. Research Misconduct Defined**

*Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.*

1. *Fabrication* is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
2. *Falsification* is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
3. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
4. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

#### **II. Findings of Research Misconduct**

A finding of research misconduct requires that:

1. There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community;
2. The misconduct be committed intentionally, or knowingly, or recklessly; and
3. The allegation be proven by a preponderance of evidence.

**Notes:**

1. Research, as used herein, includes all basic, applied, product-related and demonstration research in all fields of research. This includes, but is not limited to, research in economics, linguistics, medicine, psychology, social sciences, statistics, and research involving human subjects or animals.
2. The research record is the record of data or results that embody the facts resulting from scientific enquiry, and includes, but is not limited to, research proposals, laboratory records, both physical and electronic, progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, and journal articles.

Research misconduct as so defined is a serious disciplinary offence. It is classified as misconduct under the Conditions of Service applying to University staff and under the Student Disciplinary Code. In cases where investigation leads to a recommendation for disciplinary action, this will be taken under the provisions of whichever of these codes is applicable.

#### 5.8.10.2. Dealing with research misconduct

Research misconduct is rare. Most researchers operate according to the highest standards, and, as a consequence, there is generally a high level of trust between them. Individuals are naturally reluctant to entertain any suspicion about the activities of a colleague. A serious case of research misconduct may lead to the end of a research career, and may reflect badly on colleagues and on the university. If suspicion does arise it can lead to considerable agony of mind on the part of a potential whistleblower in deciding how to proceed.

#### **5.8.11. Conflict of interest and conflict of commitment**

The University encourages its members to interact with the wider community, by undertaking sponsored research, consulting and engaging in other activities, which may benefit the University, the public or the individual. Such activities must be consistent with principles of openness, trust and free enquiry. In such activities it is sometimes difficult to reconcile the responsibility of the individual to the University and to the external organisation. The guiding principle is that each member of the University has a commitment to act in the best interests of the University, and must not allow external activities or financial interests to interfere with that commitment.

5.8.11.1. A conflict of interest occurs when a member of the University has an opportunity, whether real, potential, or perceived, to place his or her personal interests, or the interests of external organisations, ahead of the interests of the University.

5.8.11.2. In the academic environment there are many opportunities for conflicts of interest to occur. Not all can be covered by formal procedures. All members of the University are expected to conduct their

affairs in such a way that they can stand close scrutiny and are in accordance with scrupulous ethical and moral standards. In cases of doubt, advice should be sought from the RECs, Research Office and/ or the RSG before proceeding.

#### 5.8.11.3. Conflict of commitment

A conflict of commitment occurs when the commitment of a member of the University to external activities affects his/her ability to meet his/her University commitments. Generally, University researchers have commitments to their teaching, their research programmes, their research supervision obligations and their administrative duties. It is expected that these commitments will be fully met, not just in the formal requirements of university policies and practices, but also in the spirit of the University vision of excellence. In undertaking external activities, members of the University should take into account the possibility of conflict of commitment.

#### **5.8.12. Safety**

The University, in common with all other organisations in South Africa, is subject to the provisions of the Occupation Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993. All questions relating to this Act and its application should be directed to the Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Risk Management Services, Ext 2818.

## B. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. The Responsibility of the University

The necessary administrative support to the specialist RECs and IBC for the implementation of policies and procedures will be provided via the Research Office. A separate document, entitled *Implementation of the UKZN Ethics Policy*, contains detailed information in this regard. Effectively, the University Dean of Research who reports to the DVC (Research) will oversee and manage the administrative aspects of the portfolio. Administrative staff who will report to the Manager will provide support to the following specialist RECs and the IBC:

- AREC
- HSSREC
- BREC
- And any other specialist university-wide sub-committees established in terms of the constitution of the RSG.

All applications for ethical approval are to be forwarded for processing to the relevant specialist RECs.

### 2. Biohazard

Personnel must comply with the Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993. Personnel must be appropriately trained to work with hazardous biological or chemical materials and be accredited as such. Managers of laboratories where hazardous biological or chemical material is used will need to inform the Occupational Health and Safety Practitioners on their campuses. Appropriate safety measures must be established for the use of hazardous material in each laboratory.

### 3. Code of Conduct for Research

3.1. All researchers working at UKZN must complete a statement confirming that they are familiar with the Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to observe it.

3.1.1. Contracts of affiliation between the University and independent research institutes should ensure that the independent institutes adhere to a comparable code of ethics.

#### 3.3. Advice and help

Advice and help in interpreting the code may be obtained from the Chairpersons of the current specialist research ethics committees (AREC, BREC, HSSREC and IBC).

#### 3.4. Special Committees

##### 3.4.1. Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC)

All biomedical research including experiments involving human participants require prior ethics clearance. Application must be made on the appropriate form to BREC.

### **3.4.2. Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC)**

The University guidelines for animal welfare are contained in the [Guide to Animal Ethics](#). University staff intending to make any use whatsoever of animals in their work, whether in research or for teaching purposes, are required to apply to AREC for ethics clearance by submitting an application on the appropriate form to AREC.

### **3.4.3. Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (non-Biomedical) (HSSREC)**

Research involving human participants but is non-biomedical requires ethics clearance from HSSREC. Application is to be made on the appropriate application form to HSSREC.

### **3.3.4. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)**

Projects involving hazardous biological or chemical materials will be reviewed by the IBC in addition to the usual ethics review.

### **3.3.5. Data storage and maintenance**

3.3.5.1. It is the responsibility of the researcher to arrange for safe storage of all data and specimens on which research is based. Costs of such storage should be included in the budgets of research programmes.

3.3.5.2. Electronic data sets should have adequate arrangements for back-up. Ensuring this is the responsibility of the researcher.

3.3.5.3. The primary data should be stored in the School in which the project is based. The intention of this is to ensure safety and integrity of the data set. The overall responsibility for this rests with the Dean and Head of School.

3.3.5.4. Data on which any research publication is based should be retained in the School for at least five years after publication.

3.3.5.5. If a researcher leaves, the University and the researcher are jointly responsible for ensuring that satisfactory arrangements are made for maintenance of the data set. If there is no contractual arrangement to determine what is to be done with the data, then possible arrangements are:

- The data set is retained in the University. The researcher has access to the original data set and may keep copies.
- The data set is transferred to the research institution to which the researcher is moving, provided that adequate facilities are available for conservation and storage.
- If no publications based on the data set have appeared within the last five years it may be destroyed.

### **3.3.6. Confidentiality of data**

3.3.6.1. Researchers are entitled to keep data sets confidential before publication.

3.3.6.2. After publication, when the research is in the public domain, the anonymised data should, upon request, be available to other researchers by the Principal Investigator. It is recognised that there may be technical or cost problems which prevent it being freely available, but the principle is that there

should be the opportunity for checking any data on which material in the public domain is based.

3.3.6.3. In no way do the requirements for data availability override the right to confidentiality and privacy of individuals or organisations who are the subjects of research.

### **3.3.7. Publication**

The guidelines cover many aspects of publication but cannot cover every eventuality. Researchers should always satisfy themselves that (i) they have given full credit to the work of others, whether by citation, acknowledgement, or co-authorship, (ii) that they are prepared to take responsibility for all aspects of collaborative work, and (iii) that the work that they are submitting for publication is original and worthy of publication.

3.3.7.1. The main principles of the Vancouver Protocol that should be followed are:

- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.
- One or more of the authors, as corresponding author, should take responsibility for the integrity of the work as a whole.
- Credit as an author should be based only on participation in each of the following aspects of the work:
  - Substantial contribution to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
  - Either drafting the article or commenting critically on the draft; and
  - Approving the final version, to the extent that each author is prepared to take joint responsibility for it.
- The acquisition of funding, the collection of data, or the general supervision of the research group, do not, by themselves, justify authorship. Such contributions should be listed in the acknowledgements.
- The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the authors, proposed at an early stage of drafting the paper and finalised, depending on actual contributions, before submission to the publisher.
  - In most fields of research the first author is recognised as having made the most significant contribution. This is the preferred style unless the conventions of the field of research require another ordering.
  - In joint publications of a graduate student and his or her supervisor, the graduate student should be first author unless the supervisor's contribution goes well beyond material on which the graduate student has worked.

#### **3.3.7.2. Citation and acknowledgement**

It is important in all publications, including such documents as research proposals, to cite all sources properly. The form of citation is usually specified by the journal in which the article is published. In the absence of discipline-specific specification, for University publications, the Harvard or APA systems are preferred.

Citations serve two purposes:

- To direct the reader to further information

- To give due credit to the source of ideas, quotations or data

Any of the following require appropriate citation of the source:

- Direct quotations of published material – longer quotations may require a release from the copyright holder
- The description, summarising or paraphrasing of any previous work
- Use of previously published data, presented in any form, such as graphs, calculations, or tables. Use of such data also requires permission in the form of clearance from the holder of the copyright
- Ideas that originate from other published or unpublished sources

### 3.3.7.3. Acknowledgement of financial support

The University gives a substantial amount of support to research, indirectly by paying the salaries of researchers and providing an infrastructure for research, and directly by grants or awards. Outside bodies provide substantial direct research support. Collaborations between researchers may lead to indirect support for a research publication from several different institutions. It is important that all such support is appropriately acknowledged.

- Direct acknowledgement of the University's indirect support through salary or basic infrastructure is not necessary but any papers resulting from such support must give the University's address as the author address
  - The author address shall be the University address for work done entirely while an author is at the University. This applies even if the paper has been published after the author has left the University.
  - If the work has been done at more than one institution then the addresses of each institution should be used as the author address, either as alternate addresses, or with the main address being that of the institution at which most work was done and a footnote for the addresses of other institutions.
  - University staff are paid and receive other benefits during sabbatical leave. The author address for work done while on sabbatical leave should include the University address.
- Direct support for research in the form of grants should be acknowledged at the end of the paper in the form required by the grant-giving body.
  - University productivity awards and similar university funding need not be acknowledged specifically.

### 3.3.8. Peer Review

Referees should be meticulous about the following:

- Referees undertake to complete their work expeditiously. If they cannot complete the review in a reasonable time they should ask the editor to select another referee.
- No use should be made of any of the ideas or results in the work under review until it has been published.
- Care should be taken to avoid a conflict of interest. If the referee is following a very similar line in his/her own work the work under review should in no circumstances be held up. If the referee is in any doubt of his/her impartiality, the work should be returned to the editor with the request that another referee be found.

- It is acceptable to consult a colleague for technical advice, provided that there is agreement that this is done on the same basis of confidentiality as is required of the referee. Such consultation should be disclosed to the editor.

### **3.3.9. Dealing with research misconduct**

3.3.9.1. It is important to emphasise that the University is committed to the following principles:

- Any allegation of research misconduct must be dealt with expeditiously. If such misconduct is established there is an absolute responsibility to expose it.
- A finding that research misconduct has occurred will be dealt with openly, and all steps to correct its effects will be taken.
- The rights of any researcher accused of misconduct must be protected.
- The rights of any individual reporting suspicions of such misconduct in good faith must be protected.

3.3.9.2. An individual who suspects that research misconduct may have occurred is strongly encouraged to discuss the problem in confidence, with the chairperson of the appropriate specialist ethics committee: AREC, BREC or HSSREC, who will confidentially provide counseling to determine whether the concerns fall within the definition of research misconduct.

3.3.9.2. Because the consequences of research misconduct are so severe, there are several stages in the process for investigating it:

1. Should an individual believe that research misconduct may have occurred the facts should be reported to the DVC (Research).
2. The DVC (Research), after considering the complaint, should in the first instance and after due consultation with relevant authorities, consider whether informal resolution of the matter is appropriate. If so, appropriate steps must be taken and documented as appropriate.
3. If the alleged research misconduct involves allegations of plagiarism, in the absence of other types of alleged research misconduct, the matter must be dealt with according to the UKZN Plagiarism Policy and Guidelines. If there are allegations of plagiarism in addition to other forms of research misconduct, it should be dealt with according to this (Research Ethics) policy.
4. Should informal resolution not be appropriate, based on the severity of the complaint or other information presented to the DVC (Research), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall, in consultation with the Employee Relations Division, Internal Audit or the University Proctor, as appropriate, and without delay, appoint a committee of investigation to establish the facts of the matter and to recommend whether there is a *prima facie* case to be answered. The committee shall:
  1. Inform, in confidence, those directly affected by the investigation of its nature. This will include the appropriate line manager or supervisor of the individual involved.
  2. Conduct an investigation to establish the facts.

3. Report to the DVC (Research) within one month of establishment of the committee. This should either be a final report or a motivation to extend the investigation for a limited period.
4. The final report shall recommend:
  - Whether there is a *prima facie* case for disciplinary action.
  - What immediate action, if any, must be taken to rectify any irregularity. Full details of such action shall be made available to all interested parties inside and outside the University, either immediately, or, if necessary, after the completion of a disciplinary case.
5. On receiving the report, the DVC (Research) will, without delay, take appropriate action, based on the recommendations of the committee, referring the matter for disciplinary action, if necessary.
6. After the completion of any disciplinary case a full report of the facts of the case and the actions that have been taken to rectify the situation will be documented. The decision to make these findings public will rest with the DVC (Research).
7. All steps will be taken to protect the interest of *bona fide* individuals reporting misconduct.

### **3.3.10. Conflict of interest and conflict of commitment**

#### **3.3.10.1. Conflict of interest**

If a member of the University has any reason to believe that some activity constitutes, or has the possibility of constituting, a conflict of interest involving research, it is required that a disclosure statement (Appendix C) be lodged in the Research Office. The disclosure statement involves:

- A statement of the nature of the conflict
- A proposal from the staff member of how the conflict of interest is to be managed
- A procedure for the management or elimination of the conflict agreed with the Dean and Head of School, College Dean of Research, or line manager as appropriate. This procedure may demand public disclosure, varying levels of oversight, and may include prohibition of the activity.

To assist members of the University in the process for disclosure there is a disclosure form. This also provides a check list to help establish the nature of the conflict. Some examples to help members of the University decide on the necessity of disclosure are provided. Failure to disclose the existence of a conflict of interest may constitute dishonesty in terms of the University's disciplinary code and may lead to disciplinary action. The emphasis is on self-regulation.

#### **3.3.10.2. Conflict of commitment**

Members of the University are required to abide by the University Policy governing Private Remunerative Work.

## **4. Acknowledgement of University and Other Support of Research**

Research support by the University or any other body must be appropriately acknowledged in any publication resulting from the research.

## **5. Disputes between Co-researchers**

Disputes between co-researchers must be resolved in accordance with the University policies on dispute resolution. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration must be resorted to prior to any litigation. The University Human Resources Division may be contacted in this regard.

## **6. Disciplinary Action**

In the event of a researcher contravening the research ethics principles and practices as espoused in this Policy any necessary disciplinary action will be dealt with by the University's existing disciplinary structures.

### **Useful additional material**

These links are listed to provide additional reading. The responsibility for content is that of the organisations maintaining the sites.

- SA Department of Health Research Ethics Guidance (2004):  
[http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Notices2011/SA\\_DOH\\_Ethics\\_Guidelines\\_sflb.sflb.ashx](http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Notices2011/SA_DOH_Ethics_Guidelines_sflb.sflb.ashx)
- SA Department of Health Guidance in Good Clinical Practice in Research (2006):  
[http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Notices2011/SA\\_GCP\\_2006\\_sflb.sflb.aspx](http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/Notices2011/SA_GCP_2006_sflb.sflb.aspx)
- NIH Policies and Procedures for Promoting Scientific Integrity US (2012):  
<http://www.nih.gov/about/director/sci-int-nov2012.pdf>
- *On being a scientist – Responsible conduct in research*, National Academy Press, Washington DC 1995.
- *Joint NHMRC/AV-CC statement and guidelines on research practice*, Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee.
- *A Guide to Research Ethics for Staff and Students*, compiled by the Unilever Ethics Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal
- US *Office of Research Integrity* US Department of Health and Human Services <http://ori.hhs.gov/>
- A comprehensive strategy on how to minimize research misconduct and the potential misuse of research in EU funded research.  
[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/misconduct-misuse\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/misconduct-misuse_en.pdf)
- *Report of the Review of the Role and Functioning of Institutional Ethics Committees*. A Report to the Minister of Health and Family Services, March 1996, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, Department of Health, Education and Welfare Publication No (OS) 78-0012, US Government Printing Office Washington, 1978

- International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects, CIOMS, Geneva, 2002. Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO)  
[http://www.cioms.ch/publications/layout\\_guide2002.pdf](http://www.cioms.ch/publications/layout_guide2002.pdf)
- *Laboratory Biohazards Policy for Research Facilities and Personnel* Texas Tech University Health Sciences Centre
- *Policy and procedures on Ethics in Research.* The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, August 1994
- *Human Research Ethics Committee* Central Queensland University.  
<http://www.cqu.edu.au/ppmanual/committees/humanresearch.pdf>
- *Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects* Simon Fraser University. <http://www2.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm>
- *About Ethics at CDU.* Charles Darwin University.  
[http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/ethics/ethics\\_about.html](http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/ethics/ethics_about.html)
- *Current Students –Postgraduate Research.* The University of New South Wales  
<http://www.unsw.edu.au/currentStudents/postgradResearch/res/cspgrpol icyproc.html>
- *Joint NHMRC/AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice.* Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.  
[http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public\\_statements/publications/girespra](http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public_statements/publications/girespra)
- *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity* (2010):  
<http://www.singaporestatement.org/>
- *Procedure for the investigation of research misconduct* (2008):  
<http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/procedure-for-the-investigation-of-misconduct-in-research/>
- *The ethics of research involving animals* (2005):  
<http://www.nuffieldbioethics.org>

#### **Links to Professional Conduct statements**

- American Chemical Society  
[http://portal.acs.org/portal/fileFetch/C/WPCP\\_011689/pdf/WPCP\\_011689.pdf](http://portal.acs.org/portal/fileFetch/C/WPCP_011689/pdf/WPCP_011689.pdf)
- American Mathematical Society  
<http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/code-of-conduct.pdf>
- Association for Computing Machinery  
<http://www.acm.org/about/code-of-ethics>
- Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers  
<http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html>

## **Appendix A**

### **RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY UNDERTAKING**

I ..... hereby acknowledge that I am familiar with the provisions of the University of KwaZulu-Natal Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to comply with its requirements.

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

Staff/Student Number: .....

## **Appendix B**

The following procedure will be followed to accommodate ethical applications submitted in isiZulu:

1. At least one member of the Ethics Committees (Animal Research Ethics Committee, Biomedical Research Ethics Committee, and Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee) should be proficient in isiZulu and English to assess the protocols.
2. All ethical applications (irrespective of the Committee submitted to) will be screened by the Chair or Deputy Chair who is fluent in isiZulu and who will advise on whether an expedited approval can be granted (no risk or low risk protocol) or whether the protocol is high risk and needs to undergo a Full Committee Review.
3. If a Full Committee Review is needed, the proposal will be translated into English and be reviewed as per existing protocols (proposal to be reviewed by two committee members). The University Language Planning and Development Office provides translation services which will be used.

## Appendix C

### DISCLOSURE FORM – CONFLICT OF INTEREST INVOLVING RESEARCH

Any member of the University staff, including staff employed in posts funded by outside bodies, is required to disclose to the Dean and Head of School, or other appropriate line manager, any actual or perceived conflict of interest that may arise in the course of his or her research work. Such disclosure may be made on this form or as an equivalent written submission. After completion, the disclosure must be lodged in the Research Office. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may lead to disciplinary action.

Name of staff member making disclosure	
Staff number	
School	
Name of staff member to whom disclosure is being made	

#### Check list:

Circle "Yes" or "No" for each question. Benefits marked with an asterisk are prohibited.

#### Financial Interest:

Do you or a close member of your family have any financial interest in or affiliation with an institution, company, or individual that:

Funds or sponsors your research?	Yes	No
May benefit directly or indirectly from access to or use of University resources?	Yes	No
May benefit directly or indirectly from the purchase of major equipment by the University for this project?	Yes	No
May benefit directly or indirectly by inappropriate delays or controls on the dissemination of the results of the research?	Yes	No

#### Will you or a close member of your family receive any:

* Discounts or concessions or other financial benefits from a company or individual with which an order is placed? <i>(The award of air miles associated with the purchase of air tickets and other travel expenses is permitted and does not require disclosure, provided that mechanisms are in place to ensure that itineraries and fares are appropriate to the travel requirements. The normal mechanism would be a counter-signature on the order by the line manager.)</i>	Yes	No
* Discounts or concessions or other financial benefits from a company or individual that is awarded a contract?	Yes	No

#### Perception of Nepotism:

Will any close member of your family be employed from funds under your control?	Yes	No
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**Clinical Trials:**

Does the research involve a clinical trial being conducted by an individual, company, or organisation that has a significant financial interest in the results of the trial?	Yes	No
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**If the answer to any of the above is "Yes" then:**

1. **Outline the nature of the conflict.**
2. **Describe the sense in which the situation is of benefit to the University and the research programme.**
3. **Propose a mechanism for the management of the conflict.**

--

**Agreed Procedure for the Management of the Conflict:**

To be completed by the Dean and Head of School or other appropriate Line Manager

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**Certification:**

I certify that I have disclosed everything relevant to the Dean and Head of School/Line Manager. I undertake to act according to the Management Plan above.

Signature of Researcher: .....  
Date: .....

I have applied my mind to the situation described above and will monitor compliance with the Management Plan.

Signature of Dean and Head of School:.....  
Date: .....