

## A'Sharqiyah University Policy

### RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

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<b>Policy name</b>	Research Ethics Policy		
<b>Policy number</b>	RS0007		
<b>Contact Person</b>	Dean of College of Law		
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Board of Trustees		
<b>Date first approved</b>	March 29, 2016	<b>Last substantive review</b>	February 2, 2021
<b>Policy Review Cycle</b>	Biennial	<b>Next review</b>	February 1, 2023

### 1. Definitions

<b>Terms / Abbreviations</b>	<b>Definition</b>
ASU	A'Sharqiyah University
Non-Human Life Systems / Natural	Living creatures other than humans that might be living in the sea, forest or other environments.
PI	Principal Investigator
Research	Refers to funded or unfunded research project
Researcher	An individual involved in a research work
RG	Research Grant
Sentient species	Species that can experience pain
UREBC	University Research Ethics and Biosafety Committee
UREC	University Research and Enterprise Committee

### 2. Purpose

To encourage ethical research considerations, with the highest levels of standards in terms of integrity and practice.

### 3. Scope

This policy covers all research activities that are conducted by staff and students at ASU. This policy also applies to all disciplines within the University, or activities sub-contracted on its behalf.

#### 4. **Policy Statement**

This policy covers the general principles of ethics that apply to research at ASU.

##### **Research Using Human Subjects**

- In undertaking their research activities, all ASU students and staff have a duty to respect people, their dignity and autonomy. People who are research subjects shall be requested to provide their consent before participating in the research.
- It is important to carefully design the intended study and highlight its associated risks and benefits. Research risks need to be justified by the benefits that are expected from the intended research.

These principles apply to research with humans. The main aim is the welfare and protection of individuals and groups who are the subject of the research. ASU researchers are expected to have high standards of integrity when carrying their research.

##### **Consent**

Before undertaking research, researchers should, whenever possible, consider the following:

- Ensure that their participants understand the nature of the intended research and what is expected from them. The participants should be made aware that they can withdraw from the research at any time.
- Researchers are expected to use a language that their participants can understand and relate to when obtaining their consent.
- Researchers are expected to ensure that participants such as students or subordinates are protected from any adverse consequences if they decide to decline or withdraw from participation in the intended research.
- When embarking on research that involves children or vulnerable people, special care should be taken as they are unlikely to be able to provide consent or understand the purpose or nature of the research.
- Researchers must not attempt to offer monetary or other types of inducements to obtain consent, especially in situations where the research could have some elements of risk to the participants.

##### **Confidentiality**

If participants prefer to remain anonymous, they can do so and researchers must respect their right to anonymity.

##### **Deception**

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Deception in research is an unacceptable behavior when conducting research such as:

- Researchers should never attempt to deceive participants by masking information or data relating to some aspects of the research that could influence their will to participate (especially when involving physical risks, discomfort, or other unpleasant emotional outcomes).
- Researchers are expected to demonstrate high ethical standards and should never attempt to modify or falsify results and findings that are true.
- When conducting research as part of a team, it is expected that the research results (if published) will bear the names of the research team members. It is not allowed to claim credit or publish the research work attributed to a team by one single person without the written consent of the other team members. There could be legal implications for research team members who try to claim credit for work that involves the contribution of other people. Similarly, no name of any individual should be added to the authorship list unless that individual contributed to the research work.

### **Observational Research**

Research based on observation must respect the confidentiality and comfort of the human subjects. Consent is required from the participants in observational research. Moreover, Observational research should only be permitted when participants expect to be scrutinized by unknown individuals. If hiding the identity of the researcher is vital for the research validity, participants' consent can be substituted by the relevant supervisor's approval.

### **General Framework**

In all cases of research that involves humans, researchers must consider the following:

- Approval is sought and obtained before embarking on the research from the ASU's Research Ethics and Biosafety Committee (UREBC).
- UREC will also consider appeals against decisions by the UREBC.
- A prior approval from the relevant supervisor is required in researches that involve students to guarantee the consistency of the research with the ethical standards listed in this policy.

### **Ethical Considerations when Conducting Research Involving Animals and Non-Human Natural Life Systems**

The following principles will apply to conducting research involving animals and other non-human natural life systems at ASU:

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- A license needs to be obtained (if legally required) in exceptional circumstances if the experimentation is likely to cause distress to animals.
- The researcher will need to demonstrate respect for all kinds of life including those in lower forms. Where possible, species that are sentient should be substituted by non-sentient species or by other alternatives to animals.
- A strict adherence to the defined local and international welfare standards of animal husbandry is required.
- Due to the particular sensitivity associated with animal research, ASU will deal with any concerns or complaints about the welfare of animals that are in its custody. Staff and students at ASU as well as members of the community who have doubts about the wellbeing of animals will be able to raise their concerns directly to UREBC.
- Researchers should ensure that the project has minimal negative effects on the wider community and the environment, and should protect wildlife and the habitat, and take responsibility for how waste is used and disposed of.

### **General Framework**

UREBC is responsible for approving and monitoring all research procedures on animals and natural life systems. It is also responsible for giving advice and assistance to ASU researchers who carry out their research in this field. In other, U

- Before embarking into any type of research projects that involve animals or any non-human natural life systems, ASU researchers (staff and students) must get an ethical approval from UREBC.
- UREC will also consider appeals against decisions made by UREBC.
- Where a research into animals intended by an individual student, the research must first be approved by the research supervisor (or PI in case of RG) whose responsibility will be to make sure that the intended research is in accordance with the mentioned research ethics.

After receiving the ethical approval from UREC at ASU, some researches necessitate an approval from an outside body (e.g., an approved government agency), the research proposal will need to be submitted to that outside body for approval as well.

- When conducting research, researchers must always take into account the ethical implications of the study and its effects on animals and natural life systems.
- Researchers should conduct research in a manner that minimizes any potential risks to well-being, health, dignity, and value.

## 5. Key Stakeholders

Faculties and other teaching staff, researchers, collaborating/visiting academics technicians, administrative staff and students.

## 6. Procedures and Guidance

As stated above.

Members who wish to apply or conduct research activity must seek prior for ethical approval from the UREBC through their College Dean. There is a Research Ethical Approval Form (**RE01**) which should be completed for this purpose.

If the research project deals with human or/and animals, then the applicant should refer to the Manual of Research Ethical Codes/ ASU (**RE02**)

If the research involves use of chemicals, biochemicals, microbial materials and laboratory work, then for lab safety the applicant should refer to Manual for Lab Safety Guide to Biology, Chemistry and Microbiology Labs (**RE03**)

## 7. References

1. University of Leicester (May 2019), Research Ethics Policy, retrieved from: <https://le.ac.uk/-/media/uol/docs/research/integrity/research-ethics-policy-may-2019.pdf>
2. International Maritime College Oman (15 May 2019), Research Ethics Policy, retrieved from: <https://imco.edu.om/ar/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf>
3. Sultan Qaboos University, Centre for Preparatory Studies, The Central Research & Conference Committee (22 October 2020), Research Ethics Clearance Form, retrieved from: [https://www.squ.edu.om/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=T7a\\_s3-qhbg%3D&portalid=35](https://www.squ.edu.om/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=T7a_s3-qhbg%3D&portalid=35)
4. Queen Margaret University, Application for Ethical Approval for a Research Project, retrieved from: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/7739/ethical-approval-formversion-211.doc>

## 1. Revision History

Version	Author/ Reviewer	Revision(s) made and justifications	Date
1	University Learning and	Text was simply rephrased.	27 June 2017

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	Teaching Committee		
2	DVC	Annual Review	17 July 2018
3	DVC/UREC	Substantive Review	23 June 2019
4	DVC/UREC	Substantive Review	8 June 2020
5	Director of Research and Graduate Studies	<p>The revision of the Research Ethics Policy is to apply the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To change the contact person from the Chair of UREC to the Chair of University Research Ethics and Biosafety Committee (UREBC).</li> <li>• To edit the definitions section by adding more items and abbreviations.</li> <li>• To replace the term Research Ethical Committee (REC) with UREBC.</li> <li>• To add a section of Procedures and Guidance.</li> <li>• To remove the appendices from the policy document and attach them as separate documents.</li> <li>• Few other editions and additions in some paragraphs have been done as extra clarification.</li> <li>• To add the section of references.</li> </ul>	9 May 2021