

Policy on the Differentiation and Separateness of the Research Integrity Committee and the Research Ethics Committee

Introduction

In order to ensure the highest standards of research within our institution, it is crucial to distinguish the roles and responsibilities of the Research Integrity Committee (RIC) and the Research Ethics Committee (REC). This policy outlines the core differences and the distinct functions of each committee, ensuring clarity and efficiency in their operations.

Objectives

The primary objective of this policy is to:

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both the RIC and the REC.
- Ensure that there is no overlap in the functions of the two committees.
- Maintain transparency and accountability in all research activities.
- Promote ethical standards and integrity in research.

Research Integrity Committee (RIC)

Purpose

The RIC is dedicated to ensuring that all research conducted under the auspices of our institution adheres to the highest standards of integrity. This includes the promotion of ethical conduct, the prevention of misconduct, and the overall maintenance of trust in the research process.

Responsibilities

The RIC is responsible for:

- Investigating allegations of research misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.
- Developing and implementing policies to promote research integrity.
- Providing training and resources to researchers to encourage ethical behavior.
- Monitoring compliance with institutional and regulatory standards related to research integrity.

- Recommending sanctions or corrective actions in cases of proven misconduct.

Composition

The RIC is composed of:

- Senior faculty members with extensive research experience.
- Administrators responsible for research oversight.
- External experts in research integrity.
- Legal advisors as needed.

Research Ethics Committee (REC)

Purpose

The REC is tasked with evaluating the ethical aspects of research projects to ensure that they comply with ethical standards and protect the rights and well-being of participants.

Responsibilities

The REC is responsible for:

- Reviewing research proposals to ensure they meet ethical guidelines.
- Assessing the potential risks and benefits of proposed research.
- Ensuring informed consent processes are thorough and transparent.
- Monitoring ongoing research for ethical compliance.
- Providing guidance and support to researchers on ethical issues.

Composition

The REC is composed of:

- Ethicists with expertise in research ethics.
- Researchers from various disciplines.
- Community representatives to provide a lay perspective.
- Legal advisors as needed.

Operational Independence

Separate Functions

To maintain the integrity of both committees, it is essential that their functions remain distinct:

- The RIC focuses on the integrity of the research process and the behavior of researchers.
- The REC concentrates on the ethical implications of the research itself and the protection of research participants.

Non-Overlapping Jurisdictions

The RIC and REC will not interfere in each other's jurisdictions:

- The RIC will not review the ethical aspects of research proposals unless they pertain directly to allegations of misconduct.
- The REC will not investigate allegations of research misconduct but may refer such concerns to the RIC.

Collaboration and Communication

Regular Meetings

Although the RIC and REC operate independently, they will hold regular joint meetings to:

- Discuss overlapping concerns and ensure comprehensive oversight.
- Share updates on relevant policies and procedures.
- Enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between the committees.

Exchange of Information

To ensure that both committees are well-informed:

- The RIC will inform the REC of any findings that may affect the ethical review of a research project.
- The REC will notify the RIC of any ethical concerns that may suggest potential misconduct.

Conclusion

This policy aims to clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Research Integrity Committee and the Research Ethics Committee, ensuring that both committees can function effectively and independently. By maintaining clear boundaries and promoting collaboration, we strive to uphold the highest standards of research integrity and ethics within our institution.