جلوبال يونيفرستي كوليج
Global University College

# Global University College (GUC)

## Research Ethics Committee: Terms of Reference and Constitution

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### 1. Purpose

1.1 The GUC Research Ethics Committee has been established to ensure that all research involving human participants and/or human data conducted under the auspices of GUC adheres to the highest ethical standards, complies with relevant laws and regulations in Ajman, and protects the rights, dignity and welfare of both research participants and researchers.

1.2 The GUC Research Ethics Policy should be read in the context of this Research Ethics Committee's terms of reference. The Research Ethics Policy sets the context under which research proposals should be considered and provides guidance on ethical principles in research with human participants, data protection and privacy, training and support, and breaches of the policy.

### 2. Scope

2.1 The GUC Research Ethics Committee applies to all research undertaken by both GUC staff and students. Students conducting research involving human participants as part of their studies for a major project must have their project approved by the GUC Ethics Committee.

2.2 The Research Ethics Committee will review and approve, as appropriate:

- All major staff and student research project proposals involving human participants and/or their data.
- Ensure that where participants are employed by an organisation, the organisation has given consent for its employees to be involved in the research project.
- Research proposals involving potentially sensitive topics, for example, illegal activities, vulnerable populations, etc.

2.3 Where small-scale research projects (other than major projects) are conducted by students as part of their module studies and supervised by a member of GUC academic staff, it is the responsibility of the member of academic staff to ensure that the small-scale research meets ethical standards. At the bachelor's level, this category also includes projects involving secondary data collection. However, any projects at master's level, including those using only secondary data, will require formal ethical approval.

## 3. Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the GUC Research Ethics Committee are to:

(a) Review and approve, as appropriate, research proposals using human participants to ensure that they meet ethical standards.

(b) Provide ethical guidance and oversight on research involving human participants and/or sensitive human data.

(c) Promote a culture of high standards of ethical research practice across GUC.

(d) Ensure compliance with national and international ethical regulations and guidelines.

(e) Advise GUC on policy development and implementation concerning research ethics.

## 4. Ethical Principles in Research with Human Participants

4.1 The seven ethical principles detailed in the Research Ethics Policy govern research involving human participants and human data. These are informed by the Declaration of Helsinki (https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/), The Belmont Report (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25951677/), and UAE national research ethical guidelines.

## 5. Authority of the Committee

5.1 The GUC Ethics Committee has the authority to:

- Approve, require modifications to, or reject research proposals on ethical grounds.
- Suspend or withdraw ethical approval if non-compliance or a breach is identified.
- Request regular updates or monitoring reports from researchers.

## 6. Forms to Use and Submit to the Committee

6.1 Proposals for research on human participants and, where appropriate, involving an organisation's employees should complete the following forms and be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration and approval. These forms are provided in the Annexes and are as follows:

(a) Ethics Review Checklist for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Research

(b) Participant Consent Form

(c) Organisational/Company Consent Form

6.2 Forms (a) and (c) must be completed and submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for research project approval *before* the research can be undertaken. The Participant Consent Form must be completed and signed by each participant taking part in the research. The researcher must retain all completed and signed Participant Consent Forms related to the research.

**7. Constitution of the Committee**

7.1 The membership of the Research Ethics Committee will comprise:

- Chair (Associate Dean or Programme Lead)
- Two members of the teaching staff

7.2 Where a member of the Committee is supervising student research proposals, the member of the Committee cannot take part in the consideration and approval of the research proposal. In such instances, a different Chair or member of the teaching staff will need to be added to the Committee for such items.

**6. Administrative Matters**

6.1 The GUC Research Ethics Committee will meet as required depending on the timing of student projects on their programme of study.

6.2 Decisions will be made by a majority vote, where voting is necessary.

6.3 All meetings of the Research Ethics Committee will be formally minuted and minutes held in a secure electronic database.

6.4 All Committee discussions and documentation are confidential.

**7. Related GUC Policies**

7.1 The following GUC policies relate to the Research Ethics Committee:

- Research Ethics Policy
- Data Protection Policy and associated documents
- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety and Risk Assessment Policy

7.2 These can be found in the GUC's learning management system.

**8. Annexes**

Annex 1: Ethics Review Checklist for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Research

Annex 2: Participant Consent Form

Annex 3: Organisational/Company Consent Form