

# NELSON MANDELA

## UNIVERSITY

### INSTITUTIONAL REGULATORY CODE (IRC) (Policies, Procedures, Rules etc.)

*To be completed by initiator of policy/policy owner*

<b>1. TITLE:</b>	CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS AT NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY
<b>2. APPROVING AUTHORITY:</b> <small>(Committee or Management Official)</small>	Council
<b>3. FIELD OF APPLICATION:</b> <small>(All persons to whom policy applies)</small>	All staff and students engaged in research activities
<b>4. COMPLIANCE OFFICER(S):</b> <small>(Persons responsible for ensuring policy implementation)</small>	Research project leaders, study leaders, promoters, HODs, Deans, DoR and DVC:RTP
<b>5. STATUS OF POLICY/PROCEDURE etc.</b> <small>(New/Revised):</small>	New
<b>6. REVIEW DATE:</b> <small>(Date for review of policy. Policy owner responsible for initiating review.)</small>	3 years 1 January 2012
<b>7. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION</b> <small>(State the stakeholder group/s consulted during policy formulation/revision)</small>	Senate, RTI Committees
<b>8. DESIGNATION OF POLICY OWNER:</b> <small>(Person responsible for maintaining policy)</small>	DVC: RTP/Director of Research

*For office use only*

<b>SUBJECT</b> (Broad policy field):	Research, Innovation & Engagement
<b>SUBJECT NUMBER:</b>	400
<b>CATEGORY</b> (Policy sub-field):	Research Ethics
<b>CATEGORY NUMBER:</b>	404
<b>IRC NUMBER:</b>	404.01
<b>POLICY DOCUMENT NUMBER:</b>	D/776/05 (Formerly D/520/05)
<b>DATE OF APPROVAL:</b>	9 December 2005
<b>RESOLUTION REFERENCE:</b> <small>(Minute/directive date, or other....)</small>	C05.5.4.1
<b>POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DATE:</b> <small>(Date on which policy becomes effective)</small>	1 January 2006

# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS AT THE NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY**

## **1. Preface**

This document gives expression to the values that apply at the Nelson Mandela University and to which all researchers commit themselves in their research. It should be read together with other relevant policies and procedures e.g. terms of reference of the Ethics Committee.

In this document the term researcher should be understood to include support personnel and students in the research process. The concept of research, as it is used here, should also be seen to include all research-based services and activities such as consultation, contract research, and training of postgraduate students and the development of technology. In this research code the term study is used as a synonym for any research project or contract, whether initiated by Nelson Mandela University or conducted on behalf of a client or sponsor.

## **2. Values/Mission**

Nelson Mandela University undertakes and promotes research in order to find workable solutions to both human as well as technological problems thereby helping to establish a just and healthy society. In the execution of this task Nelson Mandela University strives for the fair distribution and responsible utilization of the resources and benefits of its research and its other research-based services in the interest of the Eastern Cape and South African society as a whole. Nelson Mandela University thus endeavours to conduct research:

- with scientific integrity and excellence, but also
- with a sense of societal, cultural and religious sensitivity and responsibility, and at all times
- with due regard for the dignity of the individual and basic human rights as well as
- being mindful of animal rights and any potential impact on the natural environment.

## **3. Principles and scope**

In the pursuit of this ideal Nelson Mandela University subscribes to the principles of

- i. scientific responsibility and critical involvement,
- ii. integrity and honesty,
- iii. of human dignity and

- iv. of freedom of expression including freedom and transparency – principles which interact with one another, and which should always be understood in terms of their interrelationship and mutual coherence. In the research context these principles find expression in the relationship between the researcher and
- the University,
  - the research community,
  - society,
  - the environment,
  - the participants in the research, and
  - the sponsors/clients of the research.

#### **4. Context (clarification of stakeholders)**

##### **4.a *The researcher and the University***

Researchers should at all times adhere to the official research policies and procedures of Nelson Mandela University and relevant ethics committee(s).

Researchers should at all times acknowledge that the University is a value-driven and people-centred institution.

##### **4.b *The researcher and the research community***

Research is carried out in a scientifically responsible manner at all times. The researcher (research team) accepts responsibility for the design, methodology and execution of the research; plans the study in such a way as to optimize the validity of the findings; reports the limitations of the findings, and indicates, where applicable, possible alternative interpretations.

The right of fellow researchers to select from a variety of substantial paradigms, methods and techniques is acknowledged.

In the communication of their findings, researchers subscribe to the principles of honesty, comprehensiveness and exposure to public scrutiny. The limitation of exposure to public scrutiny as a result of contract research and non-disclosure agreements will in no way affect the principles of honesty and comprehensiveness.

The authority of the professional codes of specific disciplines is recognized and honoured.

Researchers may not misuse their positions as researchers for personal gain contrary to any relevant policies.

##### **4.c *Nelson Mandela University and society***

Nelson Mandela University is committed to conduct research that will contribute either indirectly or directly to the welfare and quality of life of South Africans.

Nelson Mandela University strives at all times to serve South Africa rather than any sectional interests.

Nelson Mandela University is sensitive to all forms of inequality and injustice in society and, through its research and other forms of service, attempts to contribute to the improvement of the lot of less advantaged and deprived South Africans.

#### **4.d *The researcher and the natural environment***

All researchers should evaluate the potential impact of their research on the natural environment, and declare that possible impact, however unlikely. Where remedies are required, such plans should form part of the research design and execution.

#### **4.e *The researcher and participants in the research process***

In the planning and execution of a study, the researcher always takes into consideration the ethical acceptability and the foreseeable consequences of the research, especially as this indirectly or directly affects human beings and animals.

Should conflict arise between the interests of the researcher and the interests of individual participants, the principle holds that the interests of the latter take precedence. The researcher should be constantly aware that the research may prejudice the situation and position of the research participant. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should never be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of other personal, social and cultural values.

Before participation in research is requested, a clear and fair agreement is reached with the participants. Where appropriate, the researcher informs participants about all aspects of the research – including its aims and implications – which might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate. The researcher takes care at all times to obtain the informed consent of the participants.

The researcher respects the right of individuals to refuse to participate in research, and to withdraw their participation at any stage.

If covert research, requiring forms of deception to obtain research data, is approved, proper feedback and debriefing methods should be included in the research design.

The researcher protects participants against foreseeable physical, psychological or social harm or suffering that might be experienced in the course of, or as a result of, the research. The researcher is particularly concerned about the rights or interests of more vulnerable participants, such as children and the aged. When there is a risk of harm, the participants or their

guardians are duly informed beforehand. When research has unforeseen and undesirable consequences, the researcher is responsible for identifying, and where possible, for undoing these consequences, and where not possible, to support the participant in “dealing” with it.

Information obtained in the course of research that may reveal the identity of a participant is treated as confidential unless the participant agrees to such disclosure.

#### 4.f ***The researcher and the sponsors/clients of research***

Research that is undertaken on behalf of sponsors or clients is subject to the usual conventions of contract research. These conventions include the following:

The researcher has the right to receive an explicit research mandate from the sponsor/client in which the conditions and terms of the research or service (research problem, time framework, etc.) are set out clearly.

After acceptance of the commission, a written agreement or contract between the researcher(s) and the client/sponsor should be concluded.

The researcher accepts that the sponsor or client has the right to request information on the execution of the research or service from the researcher at any stage in the course of the research. However, interference by sponsors or clients that may jeopardize the scientific integrity of the study or prejudice the interest of the participants in the research should not be permitted.

Information that may reveal the identity of individual participants in the research will not be supplied to the sponsors or clients of the research, except with the written permission of such participants.

If the client or sponsor requests confidentiality in the reporting of research results, the researcher should consider the request in the light of all the principles contained in the research code. The researcher should negotiate the possibility of publication of findings in scientific journals with the sponsors or clients of the research even if such publication should occur after a period of embargo. In certain cases the researcher might even determine that the confidentiality of the findings is essential to protect the interests of the participants in the research.

Nelson Mandela University will not conduct research on behalf of secret organizations or organizations which cannot account for the application of a particular outcome of research.

### 5. **Ethics Committee**

Individual researchers must at all times accept ethical and scientific responsibility for the research they conduct or manage and must see to it that research proposals are channeled through the proper channels at Nelson Mandela University which might include the RTI Committee and its Ethics

Subcommittee. Each Committee will develop its own terms of reference and procedures.

PvBREDA/CvL/2005.04.25

Updated PvB/CvL/2005.08.01

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Amended by Senate 2005.10.19 (edited DCT)