

RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY 2025

Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), The University of Larkano



THE UNIVERSITY OF LARKANO

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First Research Ethics Policy

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Acknowledgment

The Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) at The University of Larkano extends its deepest gratitude to **Dr. Sanaullah Mastoi, Director ORIC**, for his unwavering dedication and relentless efforts in advancing research excellence. His commitment to fostering a culture of ethical and innovative research has been instrumental in shaping this initiative.

We further express our sincere appreciation to **Prof. Dr. Muhammad Usman Keerio, Vice Chancellor, The University of Larkano**, for his visionary leadership and steadfast support. Under his guidance, ORIC has made significant strides in strengthening research integrity and academic excellence.

A special note of thanks is also extended to all committee members and contributors whose valuable insights and feedback have played a crucial role in refining this research ethics policy. Their collaborative spirit and intellectual contributions have enriched this endeavor, ensuring a robust and forward-looking framework.

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1. Disclosure

The **Research Ethics Policy** of **The University of Larkano** strictly adheres to the prevailing laws of **Pakistan** and the guidelines set by the **Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan**. This policy does not cover or permit any activity prohibited under national laws.

The **Research Ethics Policy** and the approvals granted by the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** do not extend to permissions required for human or animal involvement by **collaborative institutions**. It is the responsibility of the **researcher** to obtain necessary approvals from relevant authorities and to comply with all applicable ethical standards.

All research conducted at **The University of Larkano** must align with the **university's rules and regulations**. Researchers are obligated to abide by the laws of **Pakistan** and any **international or institutional regulations** of collaborative partners.

The **principal researcher** bears sole responsibility for adhering to the **generally accepted principles and practices** of research ethics. The **research supervisor or project head** is accountable for ensuring ethical compliance and providing necessary guidance throughout the research process.

Researchers must uphold **intellectual property rights** and ensure the responsible use and dissemination of research findings in accordance with **ethical and legal frameworks**.

Scope

This **Research Ethics Policy** applies to **all research activities** conducted within **The University of Larkano**, including research collaborations with national and international institutions.

Policy Review

The **Research Ethics Policy** will be **periodically reviewed and updated** to ensure alignment with the **evolving ethical standards** and **HEC Pakistan** guidelines.

2. Introduction

The **Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (hereinafter referred to as ORIC)** at **The University of Larkano** is committed to promoting ethical research practices in all research activities conducted at or in collaboration with the university. ORIC acknowledges that research plays a crucial role in advancing knowledge and benefiting society; however, it also recognizes the ethical responsibilities associated with research involving human and animal subjects.

The **Research Ethics Policy** of **The University of Larkano** is designed to align with the **Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan's** standards, as well as national and international ethical guidelines. This policy framework ensures **integrity, transparency, and accountability** while safeguarding the rights, welfare, and dignity of research participants, researchers, and the wider community.

The **Ethical Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, operating under ORIC, is responsible for developing, updating, and enforcing the **Research Ethics Policy**. It oversees the review and approval process for research proposals, ensuring compliance with ethical research standards. The IRB also plays a vital role in **monitoring research activities** to maintain ethical integrity throughout the research lifecycle.

ORIC recognizes that research ethics is a **continuous process** that requires commitment, vigilance, and adherence to evolving ethical standards. This policy serves as a guiding document for **faculty, staff, students, and external research collaborators** to ensure that all research activities conducted under the auspices of **The University of Larkano** uphold the **highest ethical standards**.

This document outlines the **objectives and scope** of the **Research Ethics Policy** and provides guidelines for the **formation and role of the IRB**. Additionally, it details the **key ethical components** that govern research practices at **The University of Larkano**, ensuring compliance with both national and international research ethics frameworks.

3. Objectives and Scope

Objectives

- To uphold ethical standards in all research activities conducted at the University of Larkano.
- To protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of research participants.
- To ensure compliance with HEC Pakistan’s ethical research guidelines.
- To establish an effective Institutional Review Board (EIRB) for ethical oversight.
- To provide a structured approach for handling research misconduct and ethical violations.

Scope

This policy applies to all research activities involving human and animal subjects, data management, authorship, conflict of interest, and research integrity. It includes research conducted by faculty, staff, students, and external collaborators affiliated with the University of Larkano.

4. Ethical Institutional Review Board (EIRB)

4.1 Formation Guidelines

The EIRB is responsible for reviewing and approving all research activities to ensure adherence to ethical standards. The board has been constituted with the approval of the Vice Chancellor and comprises the following members:

- **Convener:** Dr. Sanaullah Mastoi (Director ORIC)
- **Members:**
 - Deans (All)
 - Focal Person (Social Science Campus)
 - Director QEC (Quality Enhancement Cell)
 - Director Postgraduate Studies
 - Representatives from Neighboring Universities:
 - SZABIST (Head of Research Centre)
 - Director QEC, Director ORIC (Sukkur IBA)
 - Director ORIC (University of Sindh)
 - **Secretary:** A designated faculty member (appointed by EIRB)

The structure of EIRB follows the statutes of the University of Sindh, as per syndicate resolutions.

4.2 Role of EIRB

- Reviewing and approving research proposals for ethical compliance.
- Ensuring informed consent is obtained from participants.
- Conducting risk assessments to safeguard research subjects.
- Monitoring ongoing research for adherence to ethical guidelines.
- Providing guidance on ethical research practices.
- Maintaining records of all reviewed projects.

5. Research Ethics Guidelines

5.1 ORIC's Intervention

- All research proposals must be routed through ORIC for approval.
- Ethical clearance is mandatory before commencing research.

5.2 Compliance with National and International Laws

- All research must adhere to Pakistani legal frameworks and international ethical guidelines.
- Researchers must comply with HEC's research policies and directives.

5.3 Informed Consent

- Researchers must obtain voluntary and informed consent from participants.
- Participants should be informed about research objectives, risks, and benefits.

5.4 Confidentiality and Privacy

- Data must be securely stored and anonymized when necessary.
- Participants' identities should be protected.

5.5 Research Integrity

- Researchers must ensure honesty, accuracy, and transparency in their work.
- Fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation of data are strictly prohibited.

5.6 Plagiarism and Intellectual Property

- The HEC plagiarism policy will be strictly followed.
- Plagiarism reports must be attached to all research proposals and publications.
- Intellectual property rights will be protected as per university guidelines.

5.7 Conflict of Interest

- Researchers must disclose any financial or personal interests that may impact their research.

5.8 Ethical Treatment of Animals (if applicable)

- Research involving animals must follow humane treatment guidelines.

5.9 Publication and Dissemination

- Researchers must accurately report methods and results.
- Ethical authorship guidelines must be followed.

6. Research Misconduct and Violation Policy

- Cases of ethical violations or research misconduct will be reviewed by the Advanced Studies and Research Board (AS&RB).
- Misconduct cases will be addressed according to university regulations and HEC directives.

7. Review and Revision

- This research ethics policy will be periodically reviewed and updated in alignment with HEC guidelines and international best practices.

Approved by:

Dr. Muhammad Usman Keerio

Vice Chancellor

The University of Larkano

Date: 12/02/2025

Prepared by:

Director ORIC

University of Larkano

Annexures:

- Annexure A: Research Ethics Approval Form.
- Annexure B: HEC Plagiarism Policy.
- Annexure C: EIRB Guidelines.

Annexure A:

Research Ethics Approval Form



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OFFICE OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION

Ethical Institutional Review Board (EIRB)

Research Ethics Approval Form

1. Research Information

- Title of Research Project: _____
- Principal Investigator (PI): _____
- Department/Faculty: _____
- Email: _____
- Contact Number: _____
- Co-Investigators (if any): _____
- Research Duration: _____
- Funding Source (if applicable): _____

2. Research Details

- Objectives of the Research: _____
- Methodology: _____
- Participants (if human subjects are involved):
 - Estimated Number: _____
 - Selection Criteria: _____
- Data Collection Methods: (Check applicable)
 - Surveys/Questionnaires
 - Interviews
 - Observations
 - Experimental Procedures

- Secondary Data Analysis
- Others (Specify): _____
- **Does the study involve vulnerable populations?** (e.g., minors, pregnant women, prisoners, disabled individuals)
 - Yes
 - No
 - If Yes, provide justification: _____
- **Will the study involve animal subjects?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - If Yes, provide ethical considerations: _____

3. Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent Process:** _____
- **Confidentiality Measures:** _____
- **Potential Risks and Mitigation:** _____

4. Declaration by Principal Investigator

I confirm that the research will be conducted in compliance with the ethical guidelines of **The University of Larkano**, the **Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan**, and all applicable national and international research ethics standards.

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Research Supervisor (if applicable): _____ **Date:** _____

5. EIRB Review and Approval

- **Decision:** [] Approved [] Revisions Required [] Not Approved
- **Comments:** _____
- **Signature of EIRB Convener:** _____ **Date:** _____

Annexure B:

HEC Plagiarism Policy

Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan Plagiarism Policy

1. Definition of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions of another author without proper acknowledgment.

2. Policy Guidelines:

- All research work, including theses, dissertations, publications, and research reports, must undergo plagiarism detection using HEC-approved software.
- The acceptable **similarity index** should not exceed **19%**, with no more than **5% from a single source**.
- Any form of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, fabrication, or unauthorized use of copyrighted material, is strictly prohibited.

3. Penalties for Plagiarism:

- **Minor Offense:** Written warning and re-submission of work.
- **Major Offense:** Academic penalties, including disqualification from a degree or termination of employment for faculty members.
- **Severe Offense:** Legal action and blacklisting from future research funding.

4. Reporting and Investigation:

- All cases of plagiarism must be reported to the **Plagiarism Standing Committee** at the respective institution.
- The accused individual has the right to respond and defend their work.

5. Compliance Requirements:

- Researchers must submit a plagiarism report along with their research proposals and publications.
- Supervisors and research committees must ensure plagiarism-free work before submission.

For detailed policy, refer to **HEC's official website:** www.hec.gov.pk

Annexure C: EIRB Guidelines

Ethical Institutional Review Board (EIRB) Guidelines

1. Purpose of EIRB:

The **Ethical Institutional Review Board (EIRB)** is responsible for ensuring that all research activities conducted at **The University of Larkano** meet the highest ethical standards and comply with national and international research ethics policies.

2. Responsibilities of EIRB:

- Review and approve research proposals before data collection begins.
- Ensure **informed consent** is obtained from research participants.
- Assess **potential risks** and ensure necessary safeguards are in place.
- Monitor **ongoing research projects** for ethical compliance.
- Maintain **records of all approved and rejected proposals**.
- Provide **guidance and training** on research ethics.

3. Application Submission Process:

- Researchers must submit a complete **Research Ethics Approval Form (Annexure A)** to ORIC.
- All applications must include a **plagiarism report (Annexure B)**.
- The **EIRB committee** will review applications and provide feedback within **two weeks**.
- Any required revisions must be addressed before final approval is granted.

4. Ethical Review Categories:

- **Exempt Review:** Studies with minimal risk (e.g., anonymous surveys).
- **Expedited Review:** Research involving minor ethical concerns.
- **Full Board Review:** Research involving high-risk populations or sensitive topics.

5. Non-Compliance and Violations:

- Any research conducted without **EIRB approval** will be considered a **violation of university policy**.
- Ethical misconduct will be referred to the **disciplinary committee** for action.

For further inquiries, contact **ORIC, The University of Larkano** at www.uolrk.edu.pk