UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDE

GUIDE NUMBER	**RI P3**	**POLICY OWNER**	DVC: Research & Innovation
OVERSEEING COMMITTEE(S)		University Research Ethics Committee → Senex → Senate → Council	
APPROVAL DATE	27 November 2013	**REVISION DATE**	27 November 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDE

1 INTRODUCTION

Research ethics refers to the principles and practices that guide the ethical conduct of research. These should embody respect for the rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research. The rights of others include rights of privacy and confidentiality, protection from harm, giving informed consent, access to information pre- and post-research and due acknowledgement. Ethical conduct in research also includes the avoidance of inflicting animal suffering of any kind and protection of the environment (HEQC, 2005).

At UNIZULU, the principles and processes for ensuring ethical research conduct and outcomes are set out in the policy documents entitled “Policy and Procedures on Research Ethics” and “Policy and Procedures on Managing and Preventing Acts of Plagiarism”. The Guide is therefore subject to and supplemental to the Policies and its purpose is to assist researchers and students with implementing the policies through highlighting the procedures that need to be followed and by providing examples of required documentation.

The documents in this Guide have been designed to ensure compliance with the national regulatory framework and University policy. Researchers are urged to use these documents as the core instruments for ensuring ethical compliance in their research, but naturally they should also, where appropriate, adapt the contents of the documents to suit their particular circumstances.

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH GENERALLY

The following ethical principles govern the conduct of research and research-related activity at the University and will inform any compliance decisions and processes:

2.1 Research shall be conducted with scholarly integrity and excellence
2.2 Researchers shall disclose any conflict of interest
2.3 Research results that have scientific merit shall be published, in a timely and competent manner thereby recognising society’s right to have access to research findings and information
2.4 Potential benefits resulting from research shall be brought to the attention of participants and/or relevant communities
2.5 Compliance standards and procedures shall be transparent and evenly applied
2.6 Researchers must only engage in research which falls within the ambit of their expertise and which complies with acceptable ethical standards

2.7 Principal investigators must ensure that the design of their projects adheres to ethical guidelines
2.8 Principal investigators must ensure the safety of all those associated with the research
2.9 Confidentiality must be observed and no confidential data obtained may be divulged to a third party. However, parties authorized by the UZREC may scrutinize research data in the execution of their duties, provided that appropriate confidentiality is maintained
2.10 Compliance oversight should be conducted in a spirit of promoting research endeavours, and not to hinder research
2.11 The authority of regulatory authorities, professional bodies and codes shall be recognised and respected

There are of course also specific ethical principles and rules that disciplines impose, or that come to the for when research is conducted in specific areas, for example, research on humans, animals and vulnerable persons, especially children.

3 STRUCTURES FOR OVERSEEING ETHICAL COMPLIANCE

Senate has overall oversight in respect of research ethics, but has delegated this function, in terms of this policy, to the Research Ethics Committee and other committees that are accountable to that Committee.

The University's research ethics compliance structures consist of the University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) and the Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs). In due course, should the need arise, the University may consider establishing a separate Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC) and/or a Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

The committees established to implement this policy have discretion to deviate from strict application of the relevant ethical guidelines where exceptional circumstances or common sense dictate, provided that the basic principles underlying the policies are not compromised.

In some instances, depending upon the nature of the research, an expedited process can be followed. These instances are:

- Where the research involves desktop, library work or laboratory work only
- Where data will be collected but not from human participants or animals
- Where some data collection activity will take place, but the research raises minimal levels of ethical concern AND ethical clearance is urgently required
- In exceptional cases, where it is in the public interest to expedite the process

Expedited review may not be followed where the research involves human health and/or animals, children and/or vulnerable people.

4 THE ETHICAL CLEARANCE PROCESS

4.1 Processes

4.1.1 All research conducted at the University shall be approved either by the Research Committee or by the Higher Degrees Committee of Senate.

4.1.2 In those instances where an ethical clearance certificate is not submitted together with the research proposal documentation, such approval will be conditional upon ethical clearance for the research having been obtained.

4.1.3 No experimental research, empirical research or data collection by any staff member or student affiliated to the University, or at the University, in its name, or associated with the University in any way, may commence without a UZREC ethical clearance certificate indicating that such research may commence. This clause does not prevent the undertaking of preliminary research for proposal or research instrument development or literary reviews from being conducted.

4.1.4 The UZREC will normally not consider projects for approval where the data has already been collected. Exception may include instances where a researcher has relocated to the University subsequent to the collection of data or where data was collected prior to the establishment of a fully-functional ethics regime within the Institution.

4.1.5 While decision-making processes are to be transparent, it is also imperative that all research ethics committee members adhere to the necessary confidentiality and privacy requirements that might be associated with particular research projects.

4.2 The Application Documentation

A hard copy and an electronic version of all applications for ethical clearance shall be submitted to the Research Office in the first instance. This is a compulsory requirement and an application will not be processed if this requirement is not met.

The person seeking ethical approval for proposed research shall prepare the following documentation, as appropriate:

- A completed Research Ethics Protocol/Application form
- A fully-motivated project/research proposal stating and/or containing:
  (a) A description of the research, including a clear statement on whether or not the research involves any of the following: human health, animals, vulnerable people, therapeutic research involving children and/or sensitive issues regarding rights, beliefs, perceptions, customs and

cultural heritage issues

(b) The research method adopted, why it is preferable over alternative methods

(c) Plans for consulting participants and/or communities on their involvement, for keeping them informed

(d) How the research will be published and the nature of the report backs to participants and/or communities on the results of the research

(e) Whether there are any special health and safety considerations that need to be considered, for participants as well as researchers

- A participant's informed consent form
- Informed consent from parent/guardian form
- All data collection/survey instruments, e.g. questionnaires, with translation into the appropriate language(s)
- A description of any other research material that will be used, with copies/examples, e.g. information sheets, advertisements and letters
- Copyright clearance or permission to use survey instruments
- Proof of permission to access sites/information/participants
- Conflict of interest form, whether in respect of researchers, funders, or participants

4.3 Submission of the Application

STEP 1 A hard copy and an electronic version of all applications for ethical clearance shall be submitted to the Research Office

STEP 2 The Research Office records the application, assesses whether a normal or an expedited process should be followed and forwards the electronic version to the FREC Chairperson, with an indication as to which process ought to be followed

STEP 3 FRECs should meet once a month, on a stipulated date

Alternatively

Where the expedited process is followed, the FREC Chairperson distributes the documentation to FREC members electronically, obtains a FREC decision and completes the appropriate recommendation form for further processing. In other instances, the FREC Chairperson has the discretion to call an extraordinary FREC meeting or to wait for the next ordinary FREC meeting.

(The Research Office must be included in all FREC correspondence and must attend all FREC meetings.)

STEP 4 The Research Office (a) records all FREC decisions and recommendations and submits them to the Registrar's Division for presentation to the relevant Faculty Board for noting; and/or (b) collates all the material considered and either submits the material to the UZREC Chairperson for an expedited process to be followed, or submit the

material to the Registrar's Division for presentation to the UZREC at its next meeting; and/or (c) where additional information is required, request the researcher or postgraduate supervisor to provide the information to the Research Office

STEP 5 Where further information is required, the Research Office and the FREC Chairperson will finalise the matter, whereafter the standard procedures are followed.

STEP 6 The UZREC considers all applications, irrespective of whether an ordinary or an expedited process has been followed. (The UZREC sits four times a year, but special meetings may be called if there is a need to expedite processes) The UZREC may refer the matter back to the researcher or may grant ethical clearance, with or without conditions

STEP 7 The Registrar's Division informs the researcher or postgraduate supervisor of the UZREC decision

STEP 8 The Research Office issues an ethical clearance certificate and distributes the certificate to the researcher or postgraduate supervisor and the FREC Chairperson

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In drafting the forms set out in the Annexures below substantial reliance was placed on material developed by researchers at UNIZULU and at other institutions. Specifically:

- Annexures E and F are revisions of a document originally developed at the University of Stellenbosch (Ref), and used at the University of Fort Hare
- Annexure H is a replica of a document developed by Harvard University (Ref)

ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: ……..

……*(**name of researcher/person administering the research instrument)*** from the Department of ……, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project, and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to …….

2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards …….. (***state expected value or benefits to society or individuals that will arise from the research***)

4. I will participate in the project by ……. (***state full details of what the participant will be doing***)

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. (***Should there be compensation, provide details***)

7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that

   a. the following risks are associated with my participation: …….. (***state full details of risks associated with the participation***)
   b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: ……...
   c. there is a ……% chance of the risk materialising

8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of …….. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

9. I will not receive feedback/will receive feedback in the form of …… regarding the results obtained during the study.

10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by…… (***provide name and contact details***)

11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, …….. have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

……. ……

Participant's signature **Date**

RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION

(**Annexure B** must be inserted here)

INTERPRETER'S DECLARATION

(If applicable, **Annexure C** must be inserted here)

ANNEXURE B: RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION

RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION

I, ……..…..declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to

  ……..……..……..

- requested him/her to ask questions if anything was unclear and I have answered them as best I can
- I am satisfied that s/he sufficiently understands all aspects of the research so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.
- The conversation took place in isiZulu / English
- I used/did not use an interpreter

……. …….

Researcher's signature **Date**

ANNEXURE C: INTERPRETER'S DECLARATION

INTERPRETER'S DECLARATON

I, ……..…..declare that:

- I assisted ……. (**name of researcher**) to explain the information in this document to

  …… (**name of participant, parent or guardian**)

- The languages I used were English / isiZulu
- I conveyed an accurate version of what was related to me
- I am satisfied that s/he sufficiently understands all aspects of the research and the content of this document so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.

……. …….

Interpreter's signature **Date**

ANNEXURE D: PARENT AND GUARDIAN'S INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Parent or Guardian)

Project Title: ……..

……..….*(**name of researcher/person administering the research instrument)* from the Department of ……, University of Zululand has requested my permission to allow my child/ ward to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project, and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

13. The purpose of the research project is to …….

14. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

15. By participating in this research project my child/ward will be contributing towards …….. (***state expected value or benefits to society or individuals that will arise from the research***)

16. My child/ward will participate in the project by ……. (***state full details of what the participant will be doing***)

17. My child's/ward's participation is entirely voluntary and if my child/ward is older than seven (7) years, s/he must also agree to participate.

18. Should I or my child/ward at any stage wish to withdraw my child/ward from participating further, we may do so without any negative consequences.

19. My child/ward may be asked to withdraw from the research before it has finished if the researcher or any other appropriate person feels it is in my child's/ward's best interests, or if my child/ward does not follow instructions.

20. Neither my child/ward nor I will be compensated for participating in the research. (***Should there be compensation, provide details***)

21. There may be risks associated with my child's/ward's participation in the project. I am aware that

    a. the following risks are associated with participation: …….. (***state full details of risks associated with the participation***)

b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: ……...
c. there is a ……% chance of the risk materialising

22. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of …….. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my or my child's/ward's name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

23. I will not receive feedback/will receive feedback in the form of …… regarding the results obtained during the study.

24. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by…… (***provide name and contact details***)

25. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies that I or my child/ward may have.

26. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, …….. have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of my child/ward during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way to let my child/ward take part. By signing below, I voluntarily agree that my child/ward …… (**insert name of child/ward**), who is …….. years old, may participate in the above-mentioned research project.

……. …….
Parent/Guardian's signature **Date**

CHILD'S / WARD'S ASSENT

(**Annexure E** must be inserted here)

RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION

(**Annexure B** must be inserted here)

INTERPRETER'S DECLARATION

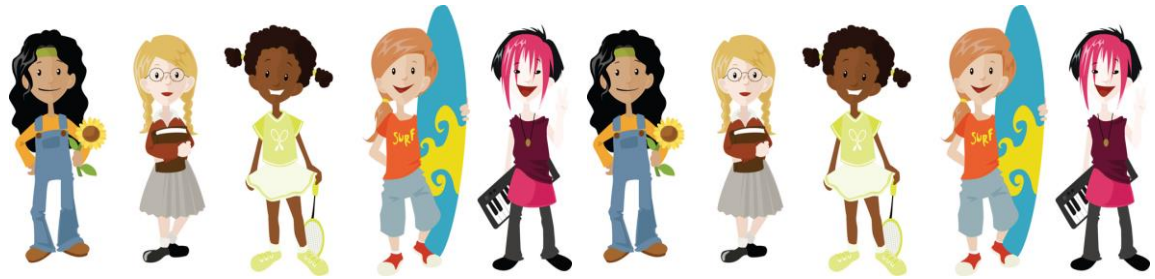
(If applicable, **Annexure C** must be inserted here)

ANNEXURE E: CHILD PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Child participant)

(Acknowledge reference to Stellenbosch and Fort Hare)



Project Title: …….. (**Simplify it if necessary**)

Researcher's name: ……

Name of participant: ……

1. Has the researcher explained what s/he will be doing and wants you to do?

YES	NO

2. Has the researcher explained why s/he wants you to take part?

YES	NO

3. Do you understand what the research wants to do

YES	NO

4. Do you know if anything good or bad can happen to you during the research?

YES	NO

5. Do you know that your name and what you say will be kept a secret from other people?

YES NO

6. Did you ask the researcher any questions about the research?

YES NO

7. Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES NO

8. Do you understand that you can refuse to participate if you do not want to take part and that nothing will happen to you if you refuse?

YES NO

9. Do you understand that you may pull out of the study at any time if you no longer want to continue?

YES NO

10. Do you know who to talk to if you are worried or have any other questions to ask?

YES NO

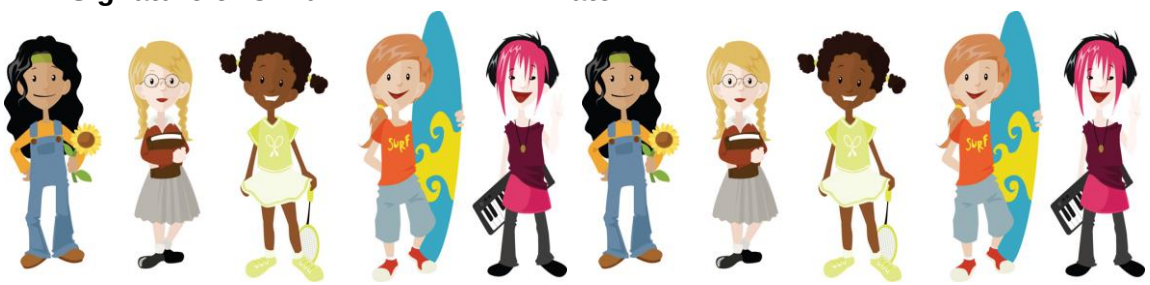
11. Has anyone forced or put pressure on you to take part in this research?

YES NO

12. Are you willing to take part in the research?

YES NO

Signature of Child **Date**



ANNEXURE F: CHILD PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT CHECKLIST

INFORMED CONSENT CHECKLIST

(Child participant)

(Acknowledge reference to Stellenbosch)

Project Title: *Insert the title of your project. Simplify it if necessary.*

Researcher's name:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER:

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about things such as ……. . Research also helps us to find better ways of doing things or helping or treating people.

What is this research project all about?
Explain your project in simple child friendly language. Adapt the information to the age of the children that you plan to include.

The duration of the research project?
Explain what is going to happen and the expected duration

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?
Answer this question in simple language

Confidentiality
Explain the procedure and need for confidentiality

If a sponsor is to be involved
Explain potential conflict of interest

Who is doing the research?
Identify yourself and explain who you work for and/or why you are doing the project

What will happen to me in this study?
Describe what the participant will be expected to do. Describe all procedures using simple terms and explain any technical or medical terms.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Explain any possible risks to the child, using simple terms. If something might be painful, state this in the assent. Explain that the child should inform his/her parents if they are sick or in pain as a result of being in the study.

Who else is involved in the study?
Explain the number of participants and where they are from

Can anything good happen to me?
Only describe known benefits to the subject. You may include any possible future benefits to others. If there are no known benefits, state so.

Will anyone know I am in the study?
Explain in simple terms that the subject's participation in the study will be kept confidential, but information about him/her will be given to the study sponsor. (NOTE: This information may not be applicable in assent forms for very young children).

Who can I talk to about the study? *List those individuals the subject can contact (including their contact details) if he/she has any questions or has any problems related to the study.*

What if I do not want to do this?
Explain to the participant that he/she can refuse to take part even if their parents have agreed to their participation. Explain that they can stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble.

ANNEXURE G: SAMPLE ACCESS LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

University of Zululand
PO Box X1001
KwaDlngezwa
3886

The Municipal Manager
……..Local Municipality
Private Bag
……..

Date

Dear Ms/Mr

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of …… at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is ……..

The proposed topic of my research is: …….. The objectives of the study are:

(a) To
(b) To

I am hereby seeking your consent to ……. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

(a) A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University
(b) A copy the research instruments which I intend using in my research

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

(Insert contact details e.g. email and telephone number)

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Signature
Name

ANNEXURE H: SAMPLE INTERVIEW SHEET/SCHEDULE

SAMPLE INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

(Acknowledge reference to Harvard)

Purpose of the research: To understand the experiences [ ].

What you will do in this research: If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one interview. You will be asked several questions. Some of them will be about [ ]. Others will be about [ ].With your permission, I will tape record the interviews so I don't have to make so many notes. You will not be asked to state your name on the recording.

Time required: The interview will take approximately [ ] hours.

Risks: Some of the questions may cause discomfort or embarrassment. OR No risks are anticipated.

Benefits: This is a chance for you to tell your story about your experiences concerning [ ].

Compensation: You will receive R[ ] in cash at the end of the interview. [omit this section if no pay is offered]

Confidentiality: Your responses to interview questions will be kept confidential. At no will your actual identity be revealed. You will be assigned a random numerical code. Anyone who helps me transcribe responses will only know you by this code. The recording will be destroyed [OR erased] [explain when, i.e., as soon as it has been transcribed. OR when my final paper has been graded, OR when my dissertation has been accepted.] The transcript, without your name, will be kept until the research is complete.

The key code linking your name with your number will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked office, and no one else will have access to it. It will be destroyed [explain when]. The data you give me will be used for [explain what, i.e., an article I am currently writing] and may be used as the basis for articles or presentations in the future. I won't use your name or information that would identify you in any publications or presentations.

Participation and withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You will receive payment based on the proportion of the study you completed. You may withdraw by informing the experimenter that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). You may skip any question during the interview, but continue to participate in the rest of the study.

To Contact the Researcher: If you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact: [researcher's name, Harvard address, phone number, and email address]. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work: [adviser's name, title, address, phone number, and email address].

Whom to contact about your rights in this research, for questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that are not being addressed by the researcher, or research-related harm: University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee [UZREC], Research & Innovation Office: 035 902 6887 or the researchers Department/supervisor.