Al-Quds University
Code of Good Practice in Research

Al-Quds University aims to maintain the highest standards of integrity in its research activity. Ethical standards are given paramount importance in the University's Research Policy and Strategy and inspire/ influence its research culture: "All research should be conducted within an ethical framework consistent with the traditional principles of academic freedom".

The code of good practice is relevant to all individuals involved in research, irrespective of the subject of research, entry route into research or any other consideration, and including:
- Researchers;
- Students;
- Heads of Department/Division/Centre
- Deanship of research and its sub-committees

All are expected to observe the highest standards of research integrity and to embed good practice in all aspects of their work.

Al-Quds University will establish a structure to promote ethical research practice, emphasizing on integrity and rigor, seek to sustain a culture in which the following general principles are understood and observed:

PRINCIPLES

- Honesty.
- Openness.
- Safety
- Leadership / Supervision and Cooperation.
- Training and Skills.
- Documentation: Recording and storage of primary data samples.
- Best Practice in the Ownership.
- Ethical Practice in Research and Publication.

Honesty

At the core of all research endeavour, regardless of discipline or institution, is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including experimental design, generating and analyzing data, applying for research funding, publishing results and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of formal collaborators and other researchers. All individuals in the University's employment must refrain from plagiarism, deception or the fabrication or falsification of results and committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence. Researchers are required to declare conflicts of interest.

Openness

Whilst recognizing the need for researchers to protect their own research interests in the process of planning their research and obtaining their results, the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and the public. Once results have been published, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials lo others, on request (provided that this is consistent with any ethics approvals and consents which cover the data and materials and any intellectual property rights in them).

Safety

Ensure the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, participants, patients, animals, researchers and others.
Risks assess report and address any concerns relating to the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of those involved in research. Research

should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

Ensure that all research projects comply with appropriate health and safety legislation and regulation, and have sufficient insurance and indemnity prior to the research being conducted.

Leadership and Cooperation

The culture and tone of procedures within any organization must be set by those in authority. Within the University it is the responsibility of the President and University Officers, the Deans of schools, Heads of Departments, senior staff and principal investigators to ensure that a research climate of mutual cooperation is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice. Within a research group, responsibility lies with the group leader. These individuals should create a research environment in which all members of a research team are encouraged to develop 'their skills and in which the open exchange of ideas is fostered. They must also ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers and research students are provided.

Training and Skills

The University provides training and opportunities for development for researchers, and resources to enable them to conduct research to the required standards. Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary skills, training and utilise the related resources to carry out research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields, and identify and undertake appropriate training and development to carry out their research. Responsibility for 'ensuring that new researchers and students understand and adopt best research practice as quickly as possible rests with all members of the research community, but particularly with Heads of Departments and group leaders.

<u>Documentation: Recording Results and Storing Primary Data</u>

Throughout their work, researchers are required to keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed, approvals granted and of interim and final results. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of research or the results obtained. Data generated in the course of research most be held securely in paper or electronic format. The University requires such data in areas which it will define or which the funding agency defines, to be securely held for a period of two years after the completion of a research project (or as required by the funding agency).

<u>Best Practice in Ownership:</u>

- **Publication:**

It is normally a condition of research funding that the results are published in an appropriate form, usually as papers in refereed journals. This has long been widely accepted as the best system for research results to be reviewed (through the refereeing process) and made available to the wider research community. The University requires, as a minimum, that anyone listed as an author on a paper should accept responsibility for ensuring that s/he is familiar with the contents and can identify their contribution to it. The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable.

- **Acknowledging the role of collaborators and other participants**

In research, the contributions of formal collaborators and other researchers who contribute to the research must be properly acknowledged.

- **Integrity in submitting research proposals and manacling research projects**

Principal Investigators must take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy and completeness of information contained in applications for funding and in managing research projects, to ensure compliance with all sponsor, institutional, legal, ethical and moral obligations.

- **Conflict of Interest**

It is the responsibility of researchers, group leaders, senior staff and Deans to identify and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest, whether financial, personal, ethical, legal, or other, so that this does not become a complicating or actionable issue, and to comply with the University's policies on intellectual property, conflict of interest and consultancy and external work.

Ethical Practice

- **Research Involving Human Participants or Biological Samples.**

Ethical approval is required from the appropriate University and Hospital Research Ethics Committees and from other regulatory bodies as relevant. Researchers should also ensure the informed consent and confidentiality of personal information relating to the participants in research and that the research fulfils any legal requirements.

- **Research Involving Animals**

Ethical approval is required from the appropriate University Research Ethics Committee and the research must comply with all legal requirements. Researchers should consider, at an early stage in the design of any research involving animals, the opportunities for reduction, replacement and refinement of animal involvement.

<u>Research Misconduct</u>

Research misconduct is least likely to arise in an environment where good research practice (e.g. documentation of results, peer review, regular discussion and seminars) is encouraged and where there is adequate supervision at all relevant levels. It is the responsibility of Heads of departments to clearly convey the standards and protocols for Research in their Schools (e.g. supervisors' responsibilities including frequency of contact, scrutiny of primary data development needs of research trainees) and to ensure that adherence to these standards is integral to the life of the School.

The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct. Any member of the University who believes that an act of research misconduct has occurred or is occurring should, in a responsible and appropriate manner, notify the Dean of the concerned School If, for any reason, this is not possible; the individual should contact the Dean for Research.

Failure to conduct research ethically lawfully or in compliance with this Code may be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action including summary dismissal at the suit of the University.