Research Ethics Policy

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Policy Owner:	Deanship of Scientific Research

1. Purpose

- This policy works in concurrence with UBT Research Code of Ethics and underpins the principles for conducting research at UBT. It provides guidelines for good practice in research, and describes the requirements for research ethical review and how research misconduct is dealt with across the institution.
- The UBT Research Code of Ethics on the other hand sets out how researchers in all disciplines at UBT should behave and work and the sort of obligations they have to comply with to ensure compliance and **research** integrity. (should and have are not the same in the same statement. So many ands are used as well).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, researchers, staff, employees and students including those

working part-time or those visiting researchers, who conduct research within, or on behalf of UBT.

3. Definitions & Acronyms

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Research:	is defined according to the internationally accepted OECD Frascati Manual as "creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge.
Research Funding:	covers all forms of external funding in support of research and enterprise activities including research grants and contracts, philanthropic donations, consultancy and industrial research contracts and grants in kind providing access to external expertise, facilities, equipment etc
Principal Investigator:	is an individual responsible for the preparation, conduct, and administration of a research grant, cooperative agreement, training or public service project, contract, or another sponsored project.
Research Ethics:	Research ethics is the protection of human and animal subjects in the planning, conduct and reporting of research
Research Data:	refers to all recorded information, obtained during a research process, regardless of form or the media on which it may be recorded

4. Responsibilities

● The University, its faculty, staff, students, researchers and collaborators all share in the responsibility for promoting and verifying good research practice and for creating an ethos of professionalism and integrity.
● UBT must develop and widely disseminate transparent Research Code of Ethics, policies and procedures pertinent to research ethical standards by which all researchers shall abide.

● All university researchers whether full -time or part-time are responsible for ensuring they

meet the required ethical and research practice standards appropriate for their research whether the research was funded or not funded. It is the responsibility of all researchers (including students) to obtain the necessary ethical approval(s) when required and for meeting any external obligations, in order to proceed with their research.

● Some colleges within the university may also undertake a peer ethical review process applied prior to submitting their application to the University Research Ethics Committee to determine potential research ethics implications and the next step forward.

● Moreover, research projects which involve financial costs require sound financial management. UBT expects all researchers to uphold the highest standards of financial integrity and transparency when dealing with all financial, budget related and contractual aspects of research. (to be removed).

● Students engaging in research at UBT as part of their degree must discuss in detail with their main supervisor all aspects related to research standards and the expectations as per the university Research Code of Ethics. For such research, the supervisor will act as the Principal Investigator and will be responsible for ensuring ethical standards are met and for ethical review and/or management approval(s) are sought by the student as applicable.

● The Scientific Council is in charge of overseeing the adherence to the Research Code of Conduct and for establishing and reviewing policy guidelines for the proper conduct of Ethic. The Council is also responsible for regularly reviewing and updating this Code to ensure it continues (to be reviewed) to reflect the needs of the university based on its research priorities and in accordance with any changes in internal or external regulations that may occur. Formal approval of any changes made to the Code is required by the University Council and the Board of Trustees.

● The Scientific Council forms under its jurisdiction a Research Ethics Committee which is responsible for reviewing applications for research ethics review as well as for handling and investigating university wide cases of research misconduct.

● The Deanship of Scientific Research is responsible for creating awareness and as applicable offer training opportunities to familiarize the UBT research community with UBT's Research Code of Ethics, guidelines and good practices.

● Deans of Colleges and Heads of Departments hold management responsibility for disseminating information to all staff of their individual responsibilities under this policy and UBT Research Code of Ethics, and for ensuring that all research with ethical implications undertaken in their college/ department complies with these.

5. Policy Principles

- **Integrity:** Research must be conducted with both integrity and objectivity. No prejudice and bias must occur when designing experiments and/ or observations, analysing data, and interpreting findings. Fabrication, falsification or plagiarism of the ideas, data, or research findings of any other party is a violation of this policy and of UBT's Research Code of Ethics as detailed under section 6.2 of this policy.

- **Transparency:** Researchers at UBT must ensure clarity about the research process and phases as well as about the data on which the research was based, how the data were collected, what and how results were obtained, analysed and used. In the instance, where parts of the research or data are not to be made public, the researcher must provide a clear rationale of why this is not possible.

- **Excellence:** UBT strives for excellence when conducting research and aims to design, produce and disseminate the highest quality of original research that adheres with internationally accepted ethical standards.

- **Originality:** UBT researchers must strive to produce originality in their research, while at the same time they must also properly understand, and give credit to, the research results of other scientists. They must respect, from both an ethical and a legal standpoint, the intellectual property of other researchers.

- **Safety:** Researchers at UBT must ensure the safety and well-being of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, participants, patients, animals, researchers and others as applicable within the type and scope of research undertaken now and in the future at UBT.

6. Policy Statement

- The University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigor and integrity in the conduct of its research. It expects all those involved in research to observe these standards and to embed good practice in all aspects of their work. Generally, good research practice refers to the ways in which research is planned, designed, undertaken, funded and conducted; how results are recorded and reported, and how the outcome of the research work is disseminated, applied and leveraged.
- The term 'Research' within the context of this policy is defined as original investigation undertaken in order to acquire knowledge and understanding; it covers different types of activity including, but not limited to basic research, applied research, experimental development and service evaluation where the results are likely to lead to shared practices and improvements.

- All research whether undertaken by a group or by individuals must have a single named 'Principal Investigator' who shall take responsibility for research ethical review and for ensuring compliance with this policy and with the UBT Research Code of Conduct.

6.1 Research Ethics Review

- Where there are potential research ethics implications, an application for ethical review must be completed and submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee through the Deanship of Scientific Research. The Research Ethics Committee reviews the submitted proposals in terms of ethical issues they raise and not the scholarly or scientific merits of the research.

- All applications for research ethics review are dealt with at university level (University Research Ethics Committee)

- A research may require ethical clearance if it involves collection of individual-level information/ data relating to human subjects (including deceased human subjects) or if the collection of data involves any risks to the researchers' safety, or to the safety of any other person involved in the research. It is also required for research involving socially sensitive topics

- Ethical approval shall (better to be use highly required) be obtained prior to the start of any research which has the potential for ethical implications. The university Research Ethics Committee may allow in certain circumstances part of the research to commence, prior to full approval being granted, for those aspects of the research which do not relate to the ethical implications.

- The Research Ethics Committee scrutinize and reviews applications in relation to:
    - ✓ Aims of project/benefits to participants/society
    - ✓ Research design and methodology
    - ✓ Participant selection
    - ✓ Informed consent
    - ✓ Data collection and analysis
    - ✓ Risk analysis undertaken
    - ✓ Data protection and secure storage as well as dissemination
    - ✓ Input form the peer ethical review process (as applicable)

- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to request modifications or clarifications of any applications and proposals received for review. The decision of the Research Ethics Committee is one of the following:
    - ✓ approve the application.
    - ✓ approve the application subject to modifications or conditions which must be fulfilled
    - ✓ not to approve the application

- Supervisors of students' research in which there are potential research ethics implications are responsible for ensuring that the Research Ethics Application meets required standards in terms of research design, methodology and the identification of ethical issues.

- Where a Research Ethics Application for ethical review must be provided to an external ethical review body, and the University does not have the remit to provide its own review and approval, a researcher may not proceed until external approval or favourable opinion has been gained and this approval has been confirmed by the University.

- Researchers conducting research fieldwork whether within KSA or overseas will be required to follow UBT protocols as approved by the relevant Research Ethics Committee. In the instance of research requiring travel, a travel insurance cover in line with the University policy requirements must be obtained.

6.2 Research Misconduct
The University considers misconduct in research to be completely unacceptable. All Researchers must adhere to the principles of good practice outlined in this policy and in the Research Code of Conduct.

6.2.1 Types of Research Misconduct

The following list of types of research misconduct is not intended to be exhaustive:

a) **Fabrication** - includes the creation of data or other aspects of research or making up results and recording them as if they were real.

b) **Falsification -** includes inappropriate manipulation of research materials, processes, equipment or changing, omitting or supersession data or results without a valid justification.

c) **Plagiarism** - includes the misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission.

d) **Misrepresentation** – this includes misinterpretation of data such as the suppression of relevant findings, or knowingly presenting a faulty data interpretation; undisclosed duplication of publication; misrepresentation of qualifications and/or experience or involvement (i.e claims to authorship and/or attribution of work where there has been no significant contribution, or the denial of authorship).

e) **Breach of duty of care** – this includes, whether deliberately or by gross negligence (i.e. Inappropriate conduct in peer review of research proposals or results; breach of any confidentiality provision; disclosing improperly the identity of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, etc.)

f) **Misuse of Data-** this refers to the wilful, dishonest, accidental, ignorant, biased, careless or any combination of these uses of data within the research.

g) **Failure to meet ethical, legal and/ or professional obligations**- this includes failure to meet the standards and guidelines of relevant professional bodies.

h) Conflict Of Interest- a conflict of interest occurs when professional judgement regarding an interest (i.e. research, is unduly influenced by another interest such as a financial gain or gain in personal status). Conflicts of interests are an inherent and unavoidable part of the academic research environment and can be effectively managed by disclosure and transparency. Researcher conflicts of interests are an example of research misconduct when they are undisclosed. Researchers must familiarise themselves with and comply with the UBT Policy on Conflict of Interest.

6.2.2. Reporting & Investigating Misconduct
● Any complaint of misconduct in research concerning a university member of faculty, staff or student must be made to the Chair of the Scientific Council. The Council will form an 'ad-hoc' committee to investigate the complaint and determine whether a misconduct has occurred.

● Where there is evidence that an allegation of research misconduct is made with deliberate or malicious intent, the allegation may be considered as a disciplinary matter and may be dealt with through the related university disciplinary policies and procedures. A complainant may be given an opportunity to respond if the allegation is not accepted and if the complainant believes that they have been misunderstood or key evidence overlooked.

6.2.3. Research Misconduct Penalties

The following represent a list of penalties or actions taken in the case of misconduct in research following the completion of an investigation; supplemental actions may be agreed in addition to any disciplinary or legal procedures:

- o Retraction or correction of articles in published materials;
- o Withdrawal/repayment of Research Funding;
- o Notification of misconduct to regulatory bodies, funders, professional bodies or other employing organizations
- o Adding a note of the outcome of the investigation to a researcher's formal record for any future requests for references
- o Undertaking of a public statement necessary to protect the good name and reputation of the University
- o Addressing and remedying any research misconduct that may have taken place
- o Reporting on any procedural or organisational issues which should be reviewed by the institution
- o Remedial training, mentoring and monitoring when the person(s) involved continue to work or study at the University

7. Related Documents

This include the following: (in hierarchical order) , legislation, policies, other procedures and standards, guidelines, forms and other useful resources

Document No.	Document Name	Document Type	Location
	Research Code of Conduct	Charter	
	Faculty Handbook	Handbook	
	Student Disciplinary Policy	Policy	
	Faculty/ staff Disciplinary Policy	Policy	
	Research Data Policy	Policy	
	Research Grant policy	Policy	
	IP and Copyright Policy	Policy	

8. Version Control & Revision History

Version control	Date released	Approved by	Summary of changes

9. Approvals

[Council/Board]	[Chair Name]	[Signature]	[Date]
University Council	**Prof. Osama Jannadi**		**20 June 2022**
[Council/Board]	[Chair Name]	[Signature]	[Date]