

Terms of reference of the Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity

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1. Status of the Committee

- 1.1 In terms of Section 28 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, as amended, Senate is accountable to Council for the academic and research functions of the public higher education institution.
- 1.2 The Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity is a committee established by Senate in terms of the University's Statute. In terms of paragraph 33(1) of the University's Statute, Senate may establish committees in addition to the Senate Executive "to enable the Senate Executive to execute its functions".
- 1.3 The composition, manner of election, functions, procedure at meetings and dissolution of a Senate committee are determined by the institutional statute or institutional rules of the higher education institution.
- 1.4 The terms of reference of the Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity has a status similar to that of the terms of reference of other committees established by Senate, i.e. forms part of the institutional rules.
- 1.5 The Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity annually submits a report on its activities to Senate via the Senate Executive.

2. Purpose of the Committee

The University of Pretoria has a research duty that has to be performed for the benefit of science and for the communities the University serves.

The University and researchers employed by and associated with the University acknowledge that research has to take place within a particular academic value system. This academic value system implies that the University and researchers –

- should always be true to the principles of justice and credibility; and
- have an increased research responsibility and duty when research is done involving humans, animals, the environment as subjects of research, or using personal or secondary data.



To this end, the University has certain policy guidelines and procedures in place which all research staff, students and collaborators of the University must adhere to (please refer to paragraph 8, “Associated documents” below for these guidelines and procedures).

3. Background

The Committee of Senate for Research Ethics and Integrity commenced its activities in 2000 as a standing committee of Senate after approval of a proposal put forward by the Academic Planning Committee. Senate approved the establishment of this committee against the background of the need for an overall, structured organisation of research planning and integrity within the University, in addition to individual ethics committees at faculty level.

After Senate approved the establishment and composition of the Senate Research Committee on 13 May 2004, the Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity became a subcommittee of the newly established Senate Research Committee, and was renamed the Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity.

A process for the review of the terms of reference of the various Senate Committees was undertaken in 2014/15 and following on the review process, the Executive in December 2015 requested that an Ethics Committee be established as a Senate Committee functioning independently from the Committee for Research and Postgraduate Education with its own terms of reference (see Rt 456/15).

4. Organisational scope

The University has a Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practices which is applicable to all researchers at the University (i.e. research staff, students and collaborators of the University).

5. Functions and responsibilities

- 5.1 The Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity is responsible for formulating a comprehensive policy on research ethics and integrity for the University as a whole.
- 5.2 The Committee is responsible for continuously evaluating and improving the existing policy measures of the University in accordance with the statutory requirements and best practices for research ethics and integrity.
- 5.3 The various Faculty Committees for Research Ethics have the authority to consider, advise on, approve, reject and suspend research within the guidelines of the general policy.

6. Composition

- 6.1 The Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity is composed as follows (50% plus 1 must be members of Senate):
 - Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education (Chairperson)

- Chairpersons of the following faculty ethics committees:
 - Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Humanities: Research Proposal & Ethics Committee (RESPEthics Committee)
 - Faculty of Law Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Research Ethics Committee
 - Faculty of Theology Research Ethics Committee
- Chairperson of the faculty-wide Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)
- Director of the Department of Research and Innovation Support and Director of the Department of Enrolment and Student Administration who attend meetings on standing invitation.

6.2 Given the fact that this is a Senate committee, Senate must have oversight of the members of the committee who are not *ex officio* members. The name of any other Senate or non-Senate member of the committee must be submitted to Senate for verification whenever a change in such membership takes place.

7. Meetings and procedures

- 7.1 The Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity convenes at least twice annually, once a semester.
- 7.2 The Committee determines its own meeting procedures.
- 7.3 Secretariat services are provided by the Department of Enrolment and Student Administration.

8. Associated documents

- Code of Ethics for Scholarly Activities
- Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research

9. Review of terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity must be reviewed every four (4) years. However, the terms of reference current at the time of the review remains operative until it is formally amended.

10. Approval

The terms of reference of the Senate Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity was approved by Senate on 29 September 2016.

11. Document metadata

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