



# SHAHEED BENAZIR BHUTTO UNIVERSITY

## RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

### 2025

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PREAMBLE:

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad (SBBU-SBA), is committed to fostering research that upholds the highest standards of integrity, academic honesty, and ethical responsibility. This policy guides all research involving human participants, animal subjects, sensitive data, and materials that present ethical considerations, ensuring alignment with national and international standards.

### 1.2 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to researchers working at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad (SBBU-SBA), regarding the research ethics compliance, processes and procedures; with an aim to safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of all research participants and ensure that animals, if used for research, are treated humanely.

### 1.3 SCOPE:

This policy applies to:

- All faculty (permanent, contractual, visiting) of SBBU-SBA
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking research
- External collaborators conducting research with or on behalf of SBBU-SBA
- All research involving:
  - Human participants
  - Animal subjects
  - Confidential data
  - Other ethical considerations

### 1.4 PRINCIPLES:

While several international guidelines on research ethics have been developed, the key is that ethics is governed by certain key principles, which need to be consciously applied:

- Volunteer participation of research participants should be ensured, free from undue influence or any coercion, and their dignity, rights, dignity and autonomy (when possible) should be respected and protected appropriately.
- Research should provide value and must be sufficiently meaningful that outweighs any harm and risk. Maximum benefit of the research should be aimed by Researchers, while at the same time potential risk of harm to participants and researchers must be minimized. Potential risk and harm of all types must be robustly mitigated through appropriate precautions.
- Appropriate information about methods, purpose and research intention should be provided to the Research personnel and participants – specifically about the role of their participation in the research, and what benefits and risks are involved (if any).
- Preferences such as anonymity of individuals or groups as research must be respected, especially those concerning the confidential nature of information and all types of personal data must be respected.
- Implementation of recognized standard of integrity must be ensured, while designing research, and must be rigorously reviewed. Quality and transparency should be reflected in research design.
- All conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicitly spelled out, and the independence of research should be clear from the proposals.

## 1.5 ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES:

This document has been prepared in accordance with the following national and international guidelines and regulations for researches involving human subjects (primary or secondary), health and other private data, biobanks and biomaterials:

- Personal Data Protection Bill 2018 – Draft, Ministry of IT
- ESRC Framework for research ethics
- World Health Organization: A Practical Guide for Health Researchers
- World Health Organization: Standards and operational guidance for ethics review of health related research with human participants
- The Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS): International ethical guidelines for health-related research involving humans
- The World Medical Association (WMA): The Declaration of Helsinki- Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects
- World Medical Association (WMA): The Declaration of Taipei on Ethical Considerations Regarding Health Databases and Biobanks

## 2. CORE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 INFORMED CONSENT:

Participation must be voluntary, with clear, documented consent.

### 2.2 MINIMIZATION OF HARM:

Researchers shall mitigate physical, psychological, social, legal, and economic risks.

### 2.3 CONFIDENTIALITY:

Participant data must be protected, anonymized, and securely stored.

### 2.4 TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY:

No fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism will be tolerated.

### 2.5 RESPECT FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS:

Enhanced safeguards for children, elderly, disabled, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged.

### 2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY:

Research must not damage the environment or public property.

## 3. RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (RERC)

### 3.1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review research proposals
- Issue Research Ethics Clearance Certificates (RECC)
- Monitor ongoing research compliance
- Recommend ethics training

### 3.2 COMPOSITION

- Convener: Dean/Professor
- Director ORIC
- Director QEC
- Director PGS
- Editor
- SBBU Research General  
Subject Expert (as needed)  
Legal Advisor (as needed)  
External Member (preferably from health sciences or ethics board)

## 4. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

4.1 Procedure for Obtaining Research Ethics Clearance: (Flow Chart/ diagram is at Annexure A)

### Step 1 :

Researcher completes the Research Ethics Review Checklist.

### Step 2:

If no significant concerns — submit Self-Certification Form with proposal to Department Head.

### Step 3:

If significant concerns — submit proposal to RERC for full review.

### Step 4:

- RERC issues decision:
- Approval (RECC granted)
- Conditional Approval
- Rejection

## 5. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Completed Ethics Checklist
- Research Proposal
- Informed Consent Forms (in participants' language)
- Data management plan
- Plagiarism report (<19%)
- PI's CV (if external collaborator)
- Conflict of interest disclosure
- Prior approvals (if applicable)



## 6. PLAGIARISM POLICY

SBBU SBA adheres to the HEC Plagiarism Policy. Violations result in sanctions ranging from reprimand to expulsion/termination. Supervisors ensure initial checks; final plagiarism report is mandatory before submission.

## 7. APPEALS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION


Appeals against RERC decisions must be filed within two weeks to the Vice-Chancellor, whose decision after expert consultation will be final.

## 8. REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Policy reviewed biennially by RERC; updates published on university website.

## 9. Approval

Approved by the Worthy Vice Chancellor & Applicable to ongoing & future research.



**DR. ARMAN KHANZADA**

Director ORIC



**MR. MUSHTAQUE SOHAIL SOOMRO**

REGISTRAR



**PROF. DR MADAD ALI SHAH**

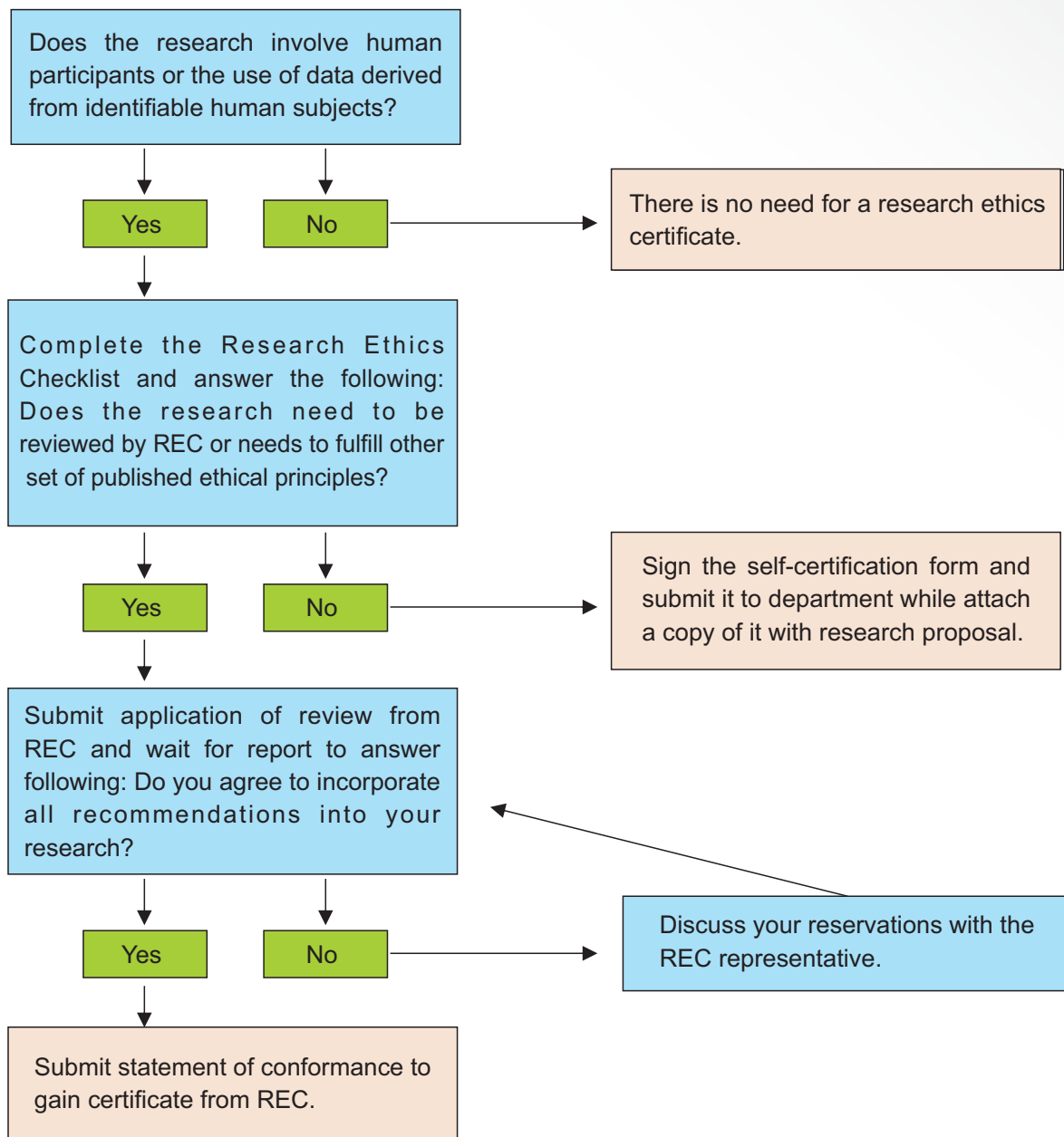
Vice Chancellor

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University

Shaheed Benazirabad

## ANNEXURE A

### Workflow Diagram of the Procedure to Obtain Research Ethics Certificate





## ANNEXURE B

## Checklist for Research Ethics Certificate

The Checklist is designed to identify the nature of any ethical issues raised by the research. This check list must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

1. Name of Researcher	
2. Degree Programme	
3. Supervisor (If any)	
4. Title of Research	
5. Abstract (150-200 words)	
6. Funding	

Mark the following after careful review of your proposal:		Yes	No
a.	Does your research conform to the standards set by the Research Ethics Policy?		
b.	Does your research need to be reviewed by an external review committee?		
c.	Does your research need to comply with other ethical standards or principles not included in the research ethics policy but is a requirement for the type of research you are conducting?		
d.	Does the research raise any significant ethical issues?		
e.	Have you ensured adequate ethical safe guards in the methodology of your research		
f.	Does the research need to fulfill any other published set of ethical standards for this specific type of research		

If you have answered Yes in question 'a' & 'e' and NO in all the remaining questions, you are eligible to self-certify your study for a Research Ethics Clearance.

Signature of Researcher and Date



## ANNEXURE C

## Self-Certification for Research Ethics Clearance

Self-Certification for Research Ethics Clearance	
<p>Please note thatt here are certain circumstances where Self-certification of ethics review is not appropriate. For details refer to the Research Ethics Policy, please.</p> <p>If, after careful consideration, you have answered all the questions in the check list and fulfill conditions, you may self-certify are search ethics clearance. Please attach the check list with this certificate.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SELF-CERTIFICATION:</b></p> <p>I have read and understood the SBBU Research Ethics Policy and I commit to abide by the research ethics principles set forth in the policy document. I have completed the Research Ethics Check list and confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. no significant ethical issues are raised by my research, or</li> <li>b. adequate safeguards in relation to such issues can and will be put in place, or</li> <li>c. there search is not subject to an external ethics review, or</li> <li>d. the research does not need to fulfill any other published set of ethical standards for this specific type of research</li> </ul>	
<hr/> Signature of Researcher	<hr/> Signature of Supervisor