



## CODE OF ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH ETHICS

### 1. PREAMBLE

This code expresses the ethical values of all staff engaged in academic and/or research activities at the University of Johannesburg, who have committed themselves to:

- 1.1 uphold the values of freedom, democracy, equality, human dignity and respect for diversity;
- 1.2 strive for distinguished scholarship, excellence in teaching, reputable research and innovation through leading, challenging, creating and exploring knowledge;
- 1.3 put intellectual capital to work by offering access to a wide spectrum of vocational and academic programmes;
- 1.4 accomplish the above through individuality, collective effort and partnerships with its communities.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Code of Academic Ethics and Research Ethics is to guide staff engaged in academic and research activities to:

- 2.1 respect the human dignity and rights of all stakeholders;
- 2.2 promote human well-being;
- 2.3 to promote shared ethical values and fulfil all academic/research activities according to such values;
- 2.4 uphold and promote individual, group and institutional integrity when in the process of fulfilling our roles as Managers, Lecturers, Researchers, Mentors and Advisors;
- 2.5 engender trust in the institution and the practice of science;
- 2.6 legitimise discussion of ethical issues;
- 2.7 to facilitate appropriate ethical decision making.

### 3. THE STATUS AND USE OF THIS CODE

- 3.1 The Senate Committee for Academic Ethics is the Custodian of the UJ Code of Academic and Research Ethics, develops policy, fulfils advisory and oversight roles, and functions as a conduit for appeals against decisions of faculty ethics committees. Faculty ethics committees are responsible for the implementation of the code. They must also facilitate compliance with the code in all academic and

research activities and they are accountable to the relevant Faculty Board for the way they perform their duties.

- 3.2 This code provides guidelines to faculty committees of academic/research ethics for the identification, evaluation and handling of ethical issues.
- 3.3 When academic employees assume their duties they are familiarised with, and endorse this code.
- 3.4 The guidelines and provisions of the UJ Code embody a continuous commitment to quality care. The UJ Code must therefore be interpreted within the context of the policy and guidelines for quality care as laid down by the relevant Senate Committees and the relevant faculty academic-related committees.
- 3.5 This code can be augmented from time to time to deal with other aspects of academic/research duties.
- 3.6 Any matter not covered in this code must be dealt with through new interpretations and applications of the scope and spirit of the existing values and principles of the code.
- 3.7 All faculty policies and supplementary codes must be aligned with the contents of this code.

## **4. VALUES**

### **4.1 Constitutional Values**

This code of ethics:

- 4.1.1 is embedded within the core values of our constitutional democracy, as reflected in the Bill of Rights; and
- 4.1.2 reflects both the spirit and the letter of the law of the country.

### **4.2 Human Rights and Academic Work**

We have a responsibility to familiarise ourselves and comply with those human rights that have direct bearing on our academic work. Examples of such rights are (refer to Constitution of 1996) the right to:

- 4.2.1 equality and non-discrimination (section 9);
- 4.2.2 human dignity (section 10);
- 4.2.3 life (section 11);
- 4.2.4 freedom and security of the person (section 12);
- 4.2.5 privacy (section 14);
- 4.2.6 freedom of religion, belief and opinion (section 15);
- 4.2.7 freedom of expression (section 16);
- 4.2.8 access information (section 32);
- 4.2.9 just administrative action (section 33).

### **4.3 Fundamental Values of Academic Activity**

We undertake our work according to the following fundamental values:

- 4.3.1 the pursuit of truth through free inquiry and open dialogue;
- 4.3.2 the optimum development of human potential by means of our intellectual expertise;
- 4.3.3 a commitment to excellence in everything we do;
- 4.3.4 just and fair treatment of human beings, other living beings, the environment, and human remains.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 Accurate Information**

We are transparent in the provision of accurate and sufficiently detailed information to students, academic peers, administrative and managerial colleagues, and other stakeholders whose work depends on such information, in accordance with generally accepted academic and scientific practice, and the South African Freedom of Access to Information Act.

### **5.2 Competence and Expertise**

As many people depend on our competence and expertise in

- designing and teaching courses;
- generating, executing and presenting research; and
- making expertise available to stakeholders,

we optimally develop and employ our competence and expertise.

### **5.3 Development of Human Potential**

We accept responsibility to develop the human potential of students and colleagues through, among other things:

- 5.3.1 providing state of the art course contents;
- 5.3.2 using the best available and most appropriate teaching methods;
- 5.3.3 developing and sharing quality research;
- 5.3.4 complying with generally accepted ethical standards to enhance people's well-being and to avoid harmful conduct.

### **5.4 Giving Credit**

We are just and fair in giving others appropriate credit for their contributions, performance and achievements, whether in:

- 5.4.1 evaluating students' work;
- 5.4.2 peer reviewing colleagues' work;
- 5.4.3 awarding promotion, funding and prizes;
- 5.4.4 deciding authorship;
- 5.4.5 appraising character or performance.

### **5.5 Power**

We are aware of the power involved in research, teaching, mentoring and managerial relationships and activities, and undertake to use power generated, inter alia by expertise, experience, excellence, academic rank, and managerial level, in accordance with the rights of other people involved.

### **5.6 Well-being**

We accept responsibility, in conjunction with relevant others, for our personal well-being so that we can provide quality service in our various roles through optimum self-efficacy.

## **6. SUPPORTING CODES**

All academics need to take into account other codes of ethics that might be relevant to their work, i.e. international codes of ethics negotiated by regional or global organisations and codes of ethics accepted by national and international academic organisations.

## **7. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

- 7.1 The design and methodology of research undertaken by a member of staff or student, that makes use of research and subjects like people, human remains, other living beings and the environment, must be submitted to a faculty committee for Academic Ethics for evaluation and approval, especially if legislation, professional councils or institutions affected by the research require it.
- 7.2 In the submissions of Master's and doctoral students to faculty boards and the submission of research topics to Supervisors, students must affirm in writing that the foreseeable ethical implications of the proposed research will be considered and thoroughly taken into account.
- 7.3 When students hand in research essays, mini-dissertations, dissertations and theses they must declare that their research has complied with the UJ Code, and where applicable, the code of their faculty.

## **8. THE PRACTICE OF SCIENCE**

Researchers aspire to the highest degree of integrity in their research through:

- 8.1 complying with the highest standards of scientific research;
- 8.2 acknowledging and carefully indicating the limitations of their methods and findings;
- 8.3 making no misrepresentation in the dissemination of research information and findings;
- 8.4 not fabricating data or information;
- 8.5 designating authorship of consulted research sources clearly, accurately and justly and assigning authorship of research publications accurately and justly;
- 8.6 committing no form of plagiarism; and
- 8.7 practising or promoting no form of constitutionally recognised unfair discrimination in research.

## **9. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY**

- 9.1 Data or information must be gathered and recorded in such a way that it can be made available at any time (after completion of the project) to other interested parties without violating anonymity or undermining confidentiality.
- 9.2 In exercising their rights to academic freedom and freedom of scientific research, researchers are accountable to the community for the way in which they exercise those rights.
- 9.3 Researchers will judiciously consider potentially destructive consequences of their research activities, outcomes or outputs on the human or natural environments and will avoid such research projects, or assiduously reduce the risk of such consequences through their research activities.
- 9.4 Researchers will promote the open flow and exchange of science and scholarship in and through their research activities, save where commercially confidential research projects require a temporary restriction of the flow of sensitive information until legal protection has been secured with the assistance of the University's Intellectual Property office.

## **10. RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPONSORS**

- 10.1 The methods, contents and results of research that has been funded (fully or partially) by external funders, must be fully disclosed. Full particulars of the person or institution from outside the University who funded the research must be provided in the published results of the research.

- 10.2 Researchers are to be honest with sponsors of their research about their qualifications and their research expertise and skills. Researchers must ensure that sponsors require nothing of their research that is contrary with internationally acknowledged standards for ethical research.
- 10.3 Researchers will only utilise a sponsor's funds for purposes explicitly approved by the sponsor.

## **11. RELATIONSHIPS WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH OBJECTS**

- 11.1 Researchers should, at all times, respect research participants' right to freedom, dignity, privacy (including the right to remain anonymous) and bodily and psychological integrity.
- 11.2 Researchers may use people as participants of research only if they have given their proven informed consent for their participation in the research, or, in the case of persons younger than eighteen years, if their guardians have given such informed consent.
- 11.3 Researchers should treat non-human living beings with care, respect and an awareness of their vulnerability and defencelessness;
- 11.4 Researchers should undertake research in a manner that does the environment no harm and that creates no pollution.

Amended Code approved by Senate on 22 October 2007