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## 1. Purpose

This policy provides a framework for professional practices and decision making on ethical issues with regards to the use of human subjects in (i) teaching and learning, and (ii) research and innovation at British University Vietnam, hence after BUV, or in the work of BUV.

## 2. Scope


This policy relates to engagement of human subjects, and use of sensitive information in teaching and learning, and research and innovation at BUV, or in the work of BUV. BUV has a separate policy on engagement of animals in teaching and research activities, entitled as 'Animal Ethics in Teaching and Research Policy'.

This policy applies to academic activities of teaching and learning, and research and innovation at BUV, or in the work of BUV, carried out by either BUV staffs or undergraduate and postgraduate students supervised by BUV staffs or visiting staff from other institutions undertaking or supervising research at BUV, or for BUV, or in the work of BUV. It applies equally to any other teaching and learning activity accredited by BUV, and any other research works that might not involve human subjects but still raises ethical issues or concerns.

This policy does not apply to the ethical issues relating to the strategic interests of BUV including business partnerships and matters of procurement or investment.

## 3. Definitions

- A. 'Policy' refers to Human Ethics Policy.
- B. 'Researcher' refers to, but is not limited to, the following individuals involved in research activities: (i) BUV staffs including Honorary staffs, or (ii) undergraduate and postgraduate students supervised by BUV staffs, or (iii) visiting staffs from partner institutions undertaking or supervising research at or for BUV or in the work of BUV.
- C. 'Academic staff' refers to an individual who is employed by BUV and is assigned to undertake teaching and learning activity at BUV, or for BUV, or in the work of BUV.
- D. 'Human subjects' refers to any human participant, informant, or any person or group of persons subjected to experimental procedures or observation or questioning or otherwise used as a source of information or data.
- E. 'HEC approval' refers to approval granted by the Human Ethics Committee to proceed the teaching and learning, and research and innovation activities that may involve human subjects.
- F. 'Teaching and learning activity' refers to an academic activity undertaken by BUV academic staffs while in the course of employment with BUV, which requires participation of human subjects in teaching exercises, laboratory exercises, training sessions or project works.
- G. 'Sensitive information' refers to any private information relating human subjects, that is,

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currently not available in public domain such as, but is not limited to, personal income, sexuality, substance abuse, commercial information supplied in confidence, etc.

H. In the case of obscurity, it should be referred to Human Ethics Committee.

#### **4. Principles underpinning the Ethical practices**


BUV is committed to protecting the rights, welfare, and dignity of all those who involve in teaching and learning, and research and innovation activities, and to promoting high ethical practices at BUV, or in the work of BUV. The BUV academic staffs or researcher(s) must take account of the following principles while planning their projects or activities and developing related proposals.

##### **4.1 Teaching and learning**

- A. Academic staffs shall take full account of the diversity of students in terms of, but is not limited to the origin, sex, culture, physical disability, etc., and shall adapt inclusive pedagogies and strategies related to teaching, learning, and assessment.
- B. Academic staffs shall inform in advance and shall give the opportunity to opt out if teaching and learning involves the use of material that might be reasonably expected to cause offence or distress.
- C. Every student would have opportunities to reflect and debate on relevant ethical issues.

##### **4.2 Research and innovation**

- A. Researcher(s) should design and undertake research activities in a way that ensures integrity, and transparency, and provides benefits that outweigh potential risk or harm.
- B. Researcher(s) must inform participants appropriately about the purpose, methods, and intended possible uses of the findings, what their participation in the research entails, and what risks, if any, are involved.
- C. Researcher(s) must obtain informed consent from participants without force or coercion to enable participants to take part voluntarily. In the case of a minor, the researcher(s) must obtain such consent from a person with parental responsibility.
- D. Participants would have right to withdraw their participation any time or at any stage of the research.
- E. The anonymity of respondents, and confidentiality of information supplied by participants must be respected in all stages of the research work, and be dealt with in such a manner as not to compromise the personal dignity of the participants or to infringe upon their right to privacy.
- F. Researcher(s) would have an obligation to protect participants wherever possible from significant harm consequent upon the research.
- G. Researcher(s) must maintain independence of research and innovation, and where any conflicts of interest or partiality arise, must declare in writing prior to obtaining HEC

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approval.

## 5. HEC approval requirements

The BUV academic staffs and (or) researcher(s) who intend to undertake an activity that qualifies for one, or all of the following circumstances must get an HEC approval from Human Ethics Committee prior to undertaking such activity.

- A. All research and (or) teaching activities that will involve human subjects as defined in clause 3(B).
- B. All research and (or) teaching activities that will use sensitive information as defined in clause 3(E).
- C. All research activities concerning human health-related behaviour in a variety of circumstances and environments.

Nonetheless, in the following circumstances, HEC approval is not required:

- Research and teaching activities that will involve publicly available documents or information.
- Research being conducted for the purpose of evaluating academic and educational practices at BUV, or in the work of BUV with no collection of identifiable private information.
- Preliminary interaction or discussion for a proposed research, yet the researcher(s) should disclose the purpose for doing so to participants.
- Interviews that will seek non-sensitive factual information, and interviews with public figures or professionals in the areas of their duties or competence.
- Case studies of business organisations and institutions unless the project involves gathering personal information of a sensitive nature about or from individuals.


## 6. HEC approval process

The lead (academic staff or researcher) of the project or activity that requires HEC approval from Human Ethics Committee shall contact BUV Compliance Office to initiate the HEC approval process. The lead will require to fill in a standard request form provided by the Compliance Office and shall grant at least 10 (ten) working days for an outcome.

The Compliance Office will forward the request form to the Chair of the Human Ethics Committee for necessary action. The Chair will call for a meeting to take a decision over the request. After the decision on the request, the Chair will write a formal letter to the applicant informing about the decision of the Human Ethics Committee, which will be dispatched by the Compliance Office.

## 7. Human Ethics Committee: terms of reference

### 7.1 Responsibilities

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The Human Ethics Committee is a sub-committee of the Ethics Committee. It shall advise on ethical issues with regards to the use of human subjects in teaching and learning, and research and innovation at BUV, or in the work of BUV. The members will have an ethical, and social responsibility to conduct their responsibilities in a fair and equitable manner.

The Human Ethics Committee will have the following responsibilities:

- i. To ensure that Human Ethics Policy is in place.
- ii. To ensure that no teaching and learning, and research and innovation activity that involves human subjects commences without prior HEC approval.
- iii. To review HEC approval request and approve; to require modification, or to withhold approval of requested activities.
- iv. To keep abreast of new externally-driven developments, policies and regulations concerning human ethics in teaching and learning, and research and innovation to ensure that BUV meets all necessary requirements.
- v. To maintain an updated record of all the research and (or) teaching learning related projects that are approved by the Human Ethics Committee.
- vi. To document all HEC meetings and decisions made.
- vii. To report to the Senate on activities of the committee and human ethics issues.

## **7.2 Membership**

The membership for meetings of the Committee shall comprise:

Appointed members:


- Chair (The Chair of the Research Committee will act as Chair of the Human Ethics Sub-Committee).
- Up to FIVE members from the Research Committee, nominated by the Chair of the Research Committee. Members nominated should represent input from all Schools.
- Secretary of Senate and Committees:

Committee members are required to declare to the Chair any real, or potential conflict of interest. If the Chair or Committee deems the member to have a conflict of interest in a matter before the Committee, the member will be excused from committee discussions and deliberations on that matter. The Chair may nominate a representative to attend in his/her place.

## **7.3 Quorum**

Meetings shall be quorate when at least one half of the total voting membership is present, including the Chair. Where a loss of quorum is identified, meetings may be adjourned until a time determined by the Chair.

## **7.4 Evaluation and Review**

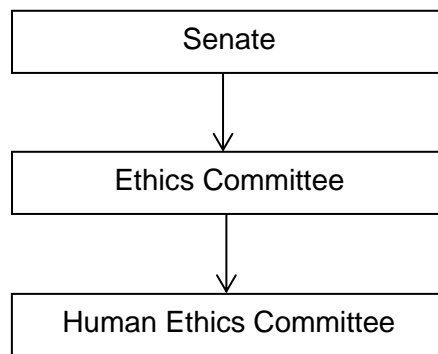
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To ensure the Committee is fulfilling its duties, it will undertake an annual self-assessment of its performance against aforementioned terms of reference and provide that information to the Senate, along with any information that the Senate requests to facilitate its review of the Committee's performance and its membership.

## 8. Communication

The Ethics Committee will ensure that BUV academic staffs and researchers are provided with adequate and regular training in Human Ethics Policy. The policy related information would be provided via print copies or an electronic copy of it available on the BUV's website.

## 9. Governance Structure



## 10. References

- University of Southampton (2012). *Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Studies Involving Human Participants*. [Online], available at: [https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~assets/doc/ethics\\_policy\\_human\\_participants.pdf](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~assets/doc/ethics_policy_human_participants.pdf), accessed on 28.06.2020.
- University of Leicester (2019). *Research Ethics Policy*. [Online], available at: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/ethics/policy/cop-researchethics.pdf>, accessed on 28.06.2020.
- University of Portsmouth (2017). *Ethics Policy*. [Online], available at: [http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-028.pdf?\\_ga=2.268127053.234986917.1593232857-719186202.1593232856](http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-028.pdf?_ga=2.268127053.234986917.1593232857-719186202.1593232856), accessed on 28.06.2020.