

Global College Malta

Doctoral Research Ethics Policy

Ethics Policy Statement

Global College Malta (the College) is committed to carrying out its research and best practice work, teaching, learning and other activities within a comprehensive ethical framework.

The underpinning principle for any ethical review should be to ensure that in undertaking any research, consultancy, enterprise activity or project the College strives to do positive good and avoids causing harm.

Activities involving research or studies on human participants will always require formal ethical consideration. However, the College believes ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and that review might also be needed for research and consultancy where other factors could be present including:

- dealing with personal, confidential or sensitive data on individuals;
- a risk of damage to the environment;
- political or social sensitivity; and,
- impact on culture and cultural heritage.

It is the College's expectation that staff, students and any visitors should be aware of ethical considerations, ensure that they act in an ethical manner when engaged on College business and conduct their projects and studies to the highest ethical standards.

Overarching Ethics Policy Purpose

The purpose of the College's Ethics Policy is to:

- i. Set out the principles applicable to all research, teaching, learning and other studies conducted at, by or in the name of Global College Malta;
- ii. Provide members of the College with a clear understanding of the ethical review process operated by Global College Malta; and
- iii. Support a culture of academic freedom and excellence by providing a framework for review which subjects research proposals and other studies to a level of scrutiny that is in proportion to the risk of harm or adverse effect to participants, researchers, the College and to society as a whole.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff and students of the College engaged in studies or research as well as to visitors, individuals, collaborators, or agents conducting research or other studies in the name of or at Global College Malta and/or engaged to conduct research by the College. It extends to cover consultancy activities, but is not intended to apply to operational decisions or actions taken by the College (for example, but not exclusive to, financial, estates and facilities, procurement or human resource matters as these are subject to different review procedures).

Principles of Ethical Research

- i. Studies and research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency;
- ii. Participants must be fully informed about the research or studies they are invited to participate in and their consent to take part must be made voluntarily, freely and without any coercion. Consents should be recorded, ideally in writing;
- iii. Risks should be managed so that harm and/or damage arising from the research is avoided or minimised wherever possible and measures should be taken to ensure that the benefits of research/study should outweigh any potential harm or damage caused;
- iv. The independence of the research/study must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit;
- v. The same high ethical standards shall apply wherever the study/research is undertaken; and,
- vi. The College meets these principles by communicating its standards and policies to staff through education and training, publication of this and related policies, and through this Ethics Policy and the process for the ethical review of research and studies.

The College's Research Group may decide to develop additional guidance or policies from time to time which it will make available.

Ethical Review Process

The College is committed to providing a competent, rigorous and independent process of ethical review for the research and studies undertaken proportionate to the risk involved.

The College's Doctoral Research Ethics Group has overall responsibility for the doctoral ethical review process at the College.

- ** All students and researchers that are undergoing any such studies are obliged to fill in the Ethics Application form and submit it to the College Data Protection Officer and once this is approved or changes requested, this should be sent to their supervisor for approval by the College Ethics Committee. The College Ethics Committee may either approve and thus the

student or researcher can commence their primary data collection, or request changes, in which case these need to be done, and re-submitted for approval.

College Doctoral Research Ethics Group

The College's Doctoral Research Ethics Group, chaired by the College Academic Dean, is responsible for research ethics. This includes developing, keeping under review and monitoring the implementation of the College's Ethics Policy, and for sustaining a College-wide awareness of research governance, ethical and related issues. The Doctoral Research Ethics Group is also responsible for developing guidance in these areas and for ensuring that individuals involved with ethical considerations receive appropriate training in ethical issues.

Researchers

The College expects all researchers (whether staff, visitors or students) to take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this Ethics Policy, any specific policies and guidance that may be issued from time to time and with the procedures they need to follow for the research or studies they undertake.

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator and/or internal research lead for any research/study to ensure that all their colleagues involved in that research/study are aware of and comply with the policies of the College and with the contents of the approved ethics application for the research/study.

Notwithstanding any ethical approval that may be obtained, researchers are still required to ensure that their research or other studies are conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements of their funding body and/or any professional bodies or associations relevant to their discipline as well as comply with health and safety requirements.

Appeals

Where a researcher has a concern about the decision of the College Doctoral Research Ethics Group to withhold, suspend or withdraw ethical approval of research/study they should attempt to resolve the matter with the Group. In the first instance they should contact the Chair who may decide to convene a panel to review the application, invite the researcher to resubmit his/her application or confirm the original decision.

Appeals will only be permitted on one of two grounds:

- i. That the researcher possesses new evidence that was not available at the time the College Doctoral Research Ethics Group made its decision and it has subsequently refused to consider such evidence; or
- ii. That there had been a significant failure in the application of procedures which had affected the decision of the College Doctoral Research Ethics Group.

Researchers may not question the judgement of the College Doctoral Research Ethics Group since this is an academic judgement.

Sanctions

Any breach of this Ethics Policy will be taken extremely seriously, and may result in disciplinary action including proceedings for gross misconduct where the breach is committed by a member of staff, or formal disciplinary proceedings under the relevant College procedures where it is committed by a student. Visitors breaching this policy may have their visitor status reviewed or withdrawn

GDPR

The following statement must be added to all information sheets circulated to research participants, except where a collaborating organisation specifies a different form of words:

Your data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (EU Regulation 2016/679 'GDPR') as enacted in the Malta Data Protection Act 2018.

The data controller for this project will be Global College Malta. The College will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. The legal basis for processing your personal data for research purposes under the GDPR is a 'task in the public interest'. You can provide your consent for the use of your personal data in this study by completing the consent form that has been provided to you.

You have the right to access information held about you. Your right of access can be exercised in accordance with the GDPR. You also have other rights including rights of correction, erasure, objection, and data portability. Questions, comments and requests about your personal data can also be sent to the Chief executive officer at Global College Malta. If you wish to lodge a complaint with the Information and Data Commissioner's Office, please visit idpc.info@gov.mt.

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