



<b>Procedure Number</b>	<b>PDIIIE007</b>	
<b>Procedure Name</b>	<b>IIE Research Ethics Code of Conduct</b>	
<b>Version</b>		
<b>Policy Approval</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>Date of Implementation</b>
<b>Dates Amended</b>		
<b>Date For Next Review</b>		
<b>Related Policies</b>		

This Policy enjoys copyright under the Copyright Act, 1978 (Act No. 98 of 1978). No part of this Policy may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any other information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the Proprietor.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Preamble</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Scope and Application</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Fiduciary Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Core Ethical Principles</b> .....	<b>5</b>
4.1	Respect for Persons and Human Dignity.....	5
4.2	Beneficence and Non-maleficence.....	5
4.3	Justice and Distributive Justice.....	5
4.4	Singapore Statement Principles.....	6
<b>5</b>	<b>Responsibilities of Researchers</b> .....	<b>6</b>
5.1	Research Integrity and Scientific Merit.....	6
5.2	Ethical Review and Compliance.....	7
5.3	Level-Appropriate Research Conduct.....	7
5.4	Participant Protection and Informed Consent.....	8
5.5	Data Management and Protection.....	8
5.6	Research Publication and Dissemination.....	9
5.7	Accountability and Transparency.....	9
<b>6</b>	<b>Responsibilities of Student Researchers</b> .....	<b>9</b>
6.1	Planning and Time Management.....	10
6.2	Supervisor Engagement.....	10
6.3	Academic Requirements.....	10
6.4	Progress Reporting.....	11
<b>7</b>	<b>Responsibilities of Supervisors</b> .....	<b>11</b>
7.1	Qualification and Experience Requirements.....	11
7.2	Supervisory Duties.....	11
7.3	Supervision Load and Capacity.....	12
7.4	Ethical Responsibilities.....	12
7.5	Professional Development.....	12
7.6	Co-Supervisor Responsibilities.....	12
<b>8</b>	<b>Responsibilities of REC Members</b> .....	<b>12</b>
8.1	Attendance and Participation.....	12
8.2	Diligent Performance of Responsibilities.....	13
8.3	Maintenance of Confidentiality.....	13
8.4	Management of Conflicts of Interest.....	13
8.5	Competence and Professional Development.....	14
8.6	Respect and Fairness.....	14
8.7	Special Provisions for Consultants, Observers, and Guests.....	14
<b>9</b>	<b>Prohibited Conduct</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Reporting Violations</b> .....	<b>15</b>
10.1	Duty to Report.....	15
10.2	Protection of Whistleblowers.....	15
10.3	Investigation Process.....	15

<b>11</b>	<b>Consequences of Violations.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Dispute Resolution.....</b>	<b>16</b>
12.1	Student-Supervisor Disputes .....	16
12.2	REC Decision Appeals .....	17
<b>13</b>	<b>Training and Education.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Support and Resources .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Review and Amendment .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Acknowledgement and Commitment.....</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>SIGNATURE PAGE.....</b>	<b>19</b>

## CODE OF CONDUCT

---

### For Researchers and Members of the Research Ethics Committee

## 1 PREAMBLE

- (1) This Code of Conduct establishes the ethical standards and professional expectations for all researchers conducting studies under the auspices of The Independent Institute of Education (IIE) and for members serving on the Research Ethics Committee (REC). It provides guidance on maintaining integrity, protecting research participants, and upholding the reputation of the institution.
- (2) This Code is grounded in and must be read in conjunction with:
  - a) The National Department of Health Guidelines for Health Research Ethics in South Africa (NDoH 2024, 3rd Edition)
  - b) The IIE Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE007)
  - c) The IIE Research and Postgraduate Studies Criteria and Minimum Standards (PDIIIE007)
  - d) The IIE Intellectual Integrity Policy (IIE023)
  - e) The IIE Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (IIE015).
- (3) The IIE affirms that research should reflect the attributes of the philosophy of *ubuntu*, including respect for human dignity, compassion, and harmony. These attributes are pursued together with the research integrity core values of scientific merit, openness, distributive and social justice, care, beneficence, and non-maleficence.

## 2 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- (1) This Code applies to:
  - a) All researchers, including faculty, academic staff, students (undergraduate and postgraduate), visiting scholars, and collaborators engaged in research activities associated with The IIE.
  - b) All members of The IIE Research Ethics Committee, including chairpersons, voting members, alternate members, advisory members, consultants, ad hoc reviewers, and Non-Assessing Chairs (NACs).
  - c) All members of Campus Research Ethics Committees and the Higher Degrees Committee.
  - d) All supervisors and co-supervisors of research projects, mini-dissertations, dissertations, and theses.
  - e) Observers and guests attending REC meetings.
  - f) All research conducted under IIE auspices, regardless of funding source, location, or NQF level (8-10).

### **3 FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (1) All researchers and REC members have a fiduciary responsibility to serve the interests of the institution and of the public. All decisions must be made solely based on a desire to promote the best interests of the institution and the public. In the case of research ethics matters, the interests of research participants and researchers must be protected. The REC's primary responsibility is to protect research participants whilst safeguarding the integrity of the institution.

### **4 CORE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

- (1) All research conducted in the name of The IIE must align with the principles of ethical research as stated in the Belmont Report and Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, as stipulated in IIE007 Section 4.1.

#### **4.1 Respect for Persons and Human Dignity**

- (1) Treat all research participants as autonomous agents capable of deliberation and decision-making.
- (2) Provide additional protection for those with diminished autonomy, including vulnerable populations such as children, persons with cognitive impairments, prisoners, and economically disadvantaged groups.
- (3) Obtain fully informed consent before participation, ensuring participants understand the nature, risks, and benefits of the research.
- (4) Demonstrate respect for human dignity, compassion, and harmony consistent with the ubuntu philosophy.

#### **4.2 Beneficence and Non-maleficence**

- (1) Maximise potential benefits and minimise possible harm to participants, animals, and society.
- (2) Conduct thorough risk assessments using The IIE's risk assessment framework (minimal, medium, or high-risk research as per PDIIIE007).
- (3) Ensure that risks to participants are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits.

#### **4.3 Justice and Distributive Justice**

- (1) Distribute the benefits and burdens of research equitably across all segments of society.
- (2) Avoid exploitation of vulnerable populations.
- (3) Ensure fair selection of research participants based on scientific objectives, not convenience or vulnerability.

- (4) Ensure that those who bear research burdens are positioned to benefit from the research outcomes.

#### **4.4 Singapore Statement Principles**

- (1) In accordance with the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, researchers must demonstrate:
  - a) Honesty in all aspects of research.
  - b) Accountability in the conduct of research.
  - c) Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others.
  - d) Good stewardship of research on behalf of others.

### **5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS**

#### **5.1 Research Integrity and Scientific Merit**

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Conduct research with honesty, accuracy, efficiency, objectivity, and scientific merit.
  - b) Report findings truthfully, without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data.
  - c) Take responsibility for the trustworthiness of the research and maintain adherence to regulations and policies.
  - d) Employ appropriate research methods, base conclusions on critical analysis of evidence, and report findings and interpretations fully and objectively.
  - e) Keep clear and accurate research records that allow verification and replication while protecting privacy.
  - f) Acknowledge all sources appropriately in compliance with The IIE Intellectual Integrity Policy (IIE023) and avoid plagiarism in all forms.
  - g) Maintain accurate and complete records of research data, methodologies, and analyses for the period specified by institutional policy (minimum five years).
  - h) Demonstrate openness in research conduct and reporting.
  - i) Exercise discretion, sound judgement, and flexibility when ethical issues arise during research.
  - j) Declare all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that may compromise research objectivity.
  - k) Collaborate responsibly, ensuring equitable contribution and appropriate authorship recognition.
  - l) Acknowledge all contributors fairly and only list those who made genuine contributions as authors.

## 5.2 Ethical Review and Compliance

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Submit all research proposals involving human participants or the environment to the REC for review before commencing any data collection.
  - b) Obtain ethical clearance or consent from The IIE Research Ethics Committee (research by academics), Campus Research Ethics Committee (NQF level 8 or UG research), or Higher Degrees Committee (NQF level 9 & 10) as appropriate to the research level and type.
  - c) Commence research and data collection only after receiving formal written ethical clearance.
  - d) Obtain REC approval before implementing any amendments or changes to approved protocols that substantially change methodology or data collection methods.
  - e) Report any major incidents, protocol deviations, or adverse events to the REC promptly.
  - f) Comply with all conditions specified in the ethical clearance letter.
  - g) Submit bi-annual progress reports for ongoing research (Master's by Dissertation and Doctoral studies) and final reports upon completion.
  - h) Consult the REC when doubt arises regarding ethical matters.
  - i) Understand that desktop studies (secondary studies, theoretical research, conceptual analysis, and literature reviews) require a waiver from ethical clearance. Researchers must complete the institution's official waiver form for all desktop studies.
  - j) Adhere to relevant South African legislation (including the National Health Act, POPIA, and Children's Act), regulations, and professional codes governing research conduct.

## 5.3 Level-Appropriate Research Conduct

- (1) Researchers must conduct research appropriate to their level of training and competence.

### 5.3.1 NQF Level 8 Research Projects

- (1) Avoid topics that constitute any form of risk for subjects until required research methodology skills and research competence are demonstrated and have been properly mastered.
- (2) Refrain from research on sensitive topics involving vulnerable groups such as children.
- (3) Limit participation of humans to low-impact, low-stress methods, such as surveys, only after ethical clearance.
- (4) Research involving human subjects requires explicit acknowledgement from the supervisor and Campus Ethics Committee that both topic and methodology pose no risks.
- (5) Maintain absolute transparency on the research purpose alongside informed consent processes.

### 5.3.2 NQF Level 9 and 10 Research

- (1) Demonstrate advanced research methodology capacity and independent intellectual work.
- (2) May undertake research with appropriate consent and ethics clearance that may include more risk, provided proper safeguards are in place.
- (3) Ensure research contributes to the body of knowledge (Master's) or makes an original contribution (Doctoral level).

## 5.4 Participant Protection and Informed Consent

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Obtain voluntary informed consent from participants or their legally authorised representatives.
  - b) Provide participants with comprehensive information about the research in an accessible language.
  - c) Explain the implications of anonymisation and data sharing to participants.
  - d) Respect participants' right to withdraw from research at any time without penalty.
  - e) Protect participant privacy and maintain confidentiality of personal information in compliance with POPIA.
  - f) Implement appropriate data security measures, including secure storage and controlled access.
  - g) Provide support and appropriate referrals, such as campus counselling, when participants experience distress related to research participation.
  - h) Ensure cultural sensitivity and respect for diverse beliefs, practices, values, and languages.
  - i) Adhere to national, sectoral, and institutional labour and working conditions as well as safety and health provisions.
  - j) Ensure that participants are reimbursed for reasonable and direct expenses, such as travel, accommodation, and loss of income. The reimbursement must be fair, reasonable, and not coercive to ensure that participation is voluntary.

## 5.5 Data Management and Protection

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Store research data securely with restricted access limited to authorised personnel (e.g., password-protected drives, restricted access folders, etc.).
  - b) Retain primary data securely for five years with due attention to privacy requirements so that challenges to findings can be explored or tested.
  - c) Hand data over to the institution for safekeeping if unable to provide retention capacity.
  - d) Anonymise or de-identify data when appropriate to protect participant privacy.
  - e) Share data responsibly when requested, subject to ethical considerations, participant consent, and formal data sharing agreements.

- f) Provide data security that ensures data is not falsified, misinterpreted, fabricated, misrepresented, or changed.
- g) Be able to account for analysis and conclusions by providing access to original data and analysis methods as required.
- h) Comply with POPIA requirements for obtaining and processing personal information.
- i) Destroy data securely at the appropriate time, ensuring complete deletion of sensitive information.

## 5.6 Research Publication and Dissemination

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Report and disseminate research to relevant stakeholders where possible.
  - b) Disclose and resolve any contractual arrangements requiring embargo periods on publication prior to research commencement, as far as possible.
  - c) Ensure no publication exposes participants to ridicule or risk, preserving confidentiality and anonymity.
  - d) Adhere to publication conventions, including submitting work to only one journal at a time and citing previous publications.
  - e) Avoid publication in predatory journals and seek guidance when unsure.
  - f) Include students as primary authors when publishing work done by students.
  - g) Acknowledge The IIE institutional affiliation in all research outputs.
  - h) Protect the reputation of the institution through appropriate selection of publication platforms.
  - i) Capture research outputs on the Research Activity Tracker for record purposes.
  - j) For Master's by Dissertation and Doctoral candidates, submit a research publication for graduation purposes as required.

## 5.7 Accountability and Transparency

- (1) Researchers must:
  - a) Accept accountability toward science and society for research conduct.
  - b) Conduct and communicate scientific work with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency.
  - c) Consider the consequences of new knowledge and its application.
  - d) Exercise academic freedom and freedom of scientific enquiry responsibly and professionally.
  - e) Fulfil ethical obligations to weigh societal benefits against risks inherent in the work.
  - f) Provide fair, prompt, rigorous peer review evaluations and respect confidentiality when reviewing others' work.

# 6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT RESEARCHERS

- (1) In addition to the general researcher responsibilities above, students conducting research as part of their qualification requirements must ensure the following.

## **6.1 Planning and Time Management**

- (1) Plan, compile, document, and implement a research plan in consultation with the supervisor that enables completion within prescribed time frames.
- (2) Take responsibility for managing their study journey and completion timeline.
- (3) Engage with the supervisor on amended plans if unable to keep to the original plan.
- (4) Understand that a change in research topic or direction will not constitute grounds for extension of study.

## **6.2 Supervisor Engagement**

- (1) Ensure a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed with the supervisor outlining expectations.
- (2) Make and keep regular appointments with the supervisor to discuss progress.
- (3) Address amendments or revisions as required by the supervisor.
- (4) Inform the supervisor of any administrative or academic difficulties that may impede completion.
- (5) Hold supervisors accountable for providing relevant support and guidance throughout the research journey.

## **6.3 Academic Requirements**

- (1) Complete appropriate research methodology modules or Proposal Development Programmes as required.
- (2) Present research at academic seminars as required (Master's by Coursework: once; Master's by Dissertation: twice; Doctoral: three times).
- (3) Write and proofread research work prior to submission to ensure quality of language and presentation.
- (4) Obtain professional language editing assistance prior to examination, where required.
- (5) Submit institutional Similarity Detection Tool reports with research outputs.
- (6) Confirm that proposed research titles are new and are not duplicates of an existing study.
- (7) Attend additional research-related workshops and capacity development sessions.

## 6.4 Progress Reporting

- (1) Submit bi-annual progress reports in conjunction with the supervisor (Master's by Dissertation and Doctoral students).
- (2) Provide evidence of progress and motivational letters when requesting extensions.
- (3) Meet all deadlines and escalate supervisor conduct issues that may undermine timely completion.

## 7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS

- (1) Supervisors play a critical role in guiding students toward research mastery and successful completion. Supervisors must meet minimum qualification requirements as specified in IIE007 Section 4.3 and PDIIIE007.

### 7.1 Qualification and Experience Requirements

- (1) NQF Level 8: Hold a minimum NQF Level 9 qualification in a cognate field.
- (2) Master's Level: Hold a minimum NQF Level 10 qualification in a cognate field (50% may hold Level 9).
- (3) Doctoral Level: Hold an NQF Level 10 qualification in a cognate field with relevant supervision experience.
- (4) Demonstrate research output and, where relevant, industry and professional experience.
- (5) Maintain professional registration in relevant professions if required.

### 7.2 Supervisory Duties

- (1) Complete and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with students outlining expectations.
- (2) Provide guidance toward mastery of the research process, discipline, and field of specialisation.
- (3) Assist students in selecting appropriate topics that align with level requirements and scope.
- (4) Support students in developing workable research problems during the Proposal Development Programme (where applicable).
- (5) Ensure students are aware of and can access all relevant institutional resources and templates.
- (6) Provide constructive feedback aligned with assessment rubrics.
- (7) Meet agreed turnaround times for feedback as specified in the MoU.
- (8) Submit bi-annual progress reports with students (Master's by Dissertation and Doctoral level).
- (9) Escalate concerns that may impact student completion to programme coordinators and managers.
- (10) Not sign off on proposals that do not meet the level requirements or ethical standards.

### **7.3 Supervision Load and Capacity**

- (1) NQF Level 8: Supervise 2-10 students at a time (experienced supervisors may supervise more based on capacity).
- (2) Master's by Coursework: Normally not more than four students.
- (3) Master's by Dissertation: Normally not more than three students.
- (4) Doctoral: Normally, not more than three students.

### **7.4 Ethical Responsibilities**

- (1) Consult with postgraduate coordinators and the Dean RPGS on topics or methodologies of uncertain sensitivity or risk.
- (2) Ensure students do not conduct research on sensitive topics or with vulnerable populations without appropriate clearance.
- (3) Confirm that research involving human subjects at NQF Level 8 poses no risks.
- (4) Ensure students maintain ethical standards throughout the research process.

### **7.5 Professional Development**

- (1) Attend annual supervisor onboarding and capacity development sessions.
- (2) Participate in institutional research workshops and capacity development sessions.
- (3) Engage in mentoring of novice supervisors when serving as a lead supervisor.
- (4) Keep current with research ethics and regulatory guidance.

### **7.6 Co-Supervisor Responsibilities**

- (1) Co-supervisors are appointed for specialist expertise or supervisor capacity development and must meet the same minimum requirements as supervisors. Co-supervisors enable continuation of research if the lead supervisor needs replacement.

## **8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF REC MEMBERS**

- (1) Upon appointment to the Research Ethics Committee (REC or Campus Research Ethics Committees, and Higher Degrees Committee), all members have specific responsibilities as outlined below.

### **8.1 Attendance and Participation**

- (1) NQF REC members must:
  - a) Attend meetings on a regular and punctual basis.
  - b) Remain present until the meeting is adjourned to maintain quorum and enable valid decision-making throughout the meeting.

- c) Participate actively in deliberations and contribute meaningfully to committee discussions.

## 8.2 Diligent Performance of Responsibilities

- (1) REC members must:
  - a) Review research protocols independently, impartially, and objectively.
  - b) Assess whether the proposed research design and conduct will protect participants' safety, rights, and welfare.
  - c) Apply The IIE's risk assessment framework (minimal, medium, or high-risk) consistently.
  - d) Serve as a main reviewer in their area of expertise when assigned.
  - e) Serve as a general reviewer of all research discussed at committee meetings.
  - f) Review submissions thoroughly and provide constructive, timely, and specific feedback to researchers.
  - g) Base decisions solely on ethical principles, scientific merit, and regulatory requirements.
  - h) Respond to inquiries promptly and professionally.

## 8.3 Maintenance of Confidentiality

- (1) REC members must:
  - a) Maintain strict confidentiality regarding research protocols, protocol information, reviews, decisions, and all matters discussed at committee meetings.
  - b) Confirm at each meeting that they will maintain confidentiality of applications and proceedings (confirmations to be minuted).
  - c) Protect intellectual property and proprietary information contained in research proposals.
  - d) Refrain from unauthorised disclosure of committee deliberations, decisions, or rationales.
  - e) Store committee documents securely and return or destroy them as required.

## 8.4 Management of Conflicts of Interest

- (1) REC members must:
  - a) Disclose all conflicting interests at each meeting, including any personal involvement or participation in the research under review or in competing research.
  - b) Complete conflict of interest declarations at each meeting as part of the register of attendance.
  - c) Recuse themselves from reviewing protocols where conflicts of interest exist.
  - d) Absent themselves from the decision-making process when conflicts are present.
  - e) Resist external pressures that may compromise the integrity of the review process.

## 8.5 Competence and Professional Development

- (1) REC members must:
- a) Possess appropriate expertise, training, and experience to evaluate research proposals.
  - b) Keep up to date with research ethics, regulatory guidance, and IIE policies.
  - c) Engage in ongoing professional development and continuing education activities related to research ethics.
  - d) Contribute to ethics-related continuing education initiatives.
  - e) Seek expert consultation when proposals fall outside their area of expertise.

## 8.6 Respect and Fairness

- (1) REC members must:
- a) Treat researchers with courtesy, dignity, and respect throughout the review process.
  - b) Apply ethical standards consistently and equitably to all proposals.
  - c) Provide clear, specific, and constructive feedback to facilitate improvement of research protocols.
  - d) Foster a collaborative relationship that supports ethical research practice.

## 8.7 Special Provisions for Consultants, Observers, and Guests

- (1) Consultants, ad hoc reviewers, observers, and guests attending REC meetings must maintain confidentiality regarding the business of the committee and confirm this obligation at each meeting (confirmations to be minuted). Only REC members may vote on decisions. Non-members who disagree with resolutions or outcomes should address concerns with the REC Chair, who may call a special meeting if warranted.

## 9 PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- (1) The following behaviours constitute violations of this Code and are strictly prohibited. These align with research misconduct as defined in PDIIIE007:
- a) Research misconduct including fabrication of data (making up data or results), falsification of data (deliberately manipulating research materials, equipment, processes, or changing results), and plagiarism (using another person's ideas or findings without due acknowledgement).
  - b) Conducting research without appropriate ethical clearance or before receiving a formal written clearance letter.
  - c) Implementing protocol amendments without REC approval.
  - d) Coercion or undue influence in recruiting research participants.
  - e) Breaches of confidentiality or unauthorised disclosure of sensitive information.
  - f) Failure to report major incidents, adverse events, or protocol deviations.

- g) Failure to disclose or properly manage conflicts of interest.
- h) Discrimination or harassment based on race, gender, age, religion, disability, or other protected characteristics.
- i) Exploitation of research participants, students, or junior colleagues.
- j) Misrepresentation of qualifications, credentials, or research findings.
- k) Financial misconduct, including misappropriation of research funds.
- l) Violations of POPIA or other applicable legislation.
- m) Failure to acknowledge contributors or inappropriate authorship practices.
- n) Publication in predatory journals.
- o) Failure to acknowledge IIE institutional affiliation in research outputs.
- p) Retaliation against individuals who report ethical concerns or violations.

## **10 REPORTING VIOLATIONS**

### **10.1 Duty to Report**

- (1) All individuals covered by this Code have a responsibility to report suspected violations promptly and with substantiative evidence. Reports may be made to:
  - a) The IIE Ethics Hotline (ethicshotline@iie.ac.za).
  - b) The REC Chair or Campus Research Ethics Committee Chair.
  - c) The Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies.
  - d) Other designated institutional reporting mechanisms.

### **10.2 Protection of Whistleblowers**

- (1) The IIE is committed to protecting individuals who report violations in good faith from retaliation, discrimination, or harassment. Anonymous reporting options are available where appropriate.

### **10.3 Investigation Process**

- (1) All reports of violations will be investigated fairly, thoroughly, and confidentially at both the campus level and centrally by The IIE Research Ethics Committee, as appropriate. Investigations will be conducted by qualified individuals who are free from conflicts of interest. Both the complainant and the respondent will be afforded due process throughout the investigation. Serious violations may be referred to the NHREC or relevant health professions councils as appropriate.

## 11 CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS

- (1) All cases of research misconduct and Code violations will be managed in alignment with The IIE Intellectual Integrity Policy (IIE023) and Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (IIE015). Disciplinary decisions by the Research Ethics Committee will align with relevant IIE policies.
- (1) Violations of this Code may result in one or more of the following actions, depending on the nature and severity of the violation:
  - a) Requirement for additional ethics training or education.
  - b) Increased monitoring or supervision of research activities.
  - c) Suspension or termination of research approval.
  - d) Removal from the Research Ethics Committee or supervisory roles.
  - e) Prohibition from conducting research or serving on the REC for a specified period.
  - f) Formal warnings, reprimands, or notation in personnel files.
  - g) Referral for disciplinary action under institutional policies (IIE015, IIE023).
  - h) Deregistration from postgraduate programmes.
  - i) Notification to relevant regulatory bodies, funding agencies, or the NHREC.
  - j) Referral to relevant health professions councils for violations of ethical or professional rules.
  - k) Legal action where violations constitute criminal conduct.

## 12 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- (1) Disputes between students and supervisors, or between researchers and REC members, are serious in nature and must be addressed appropriately.

### 12.1 Student-Supervisor Disputes

- (1) Both parties are encouraged to resolve disagreements amicably without third-party intervention.
- (2) Either party may request intervention from the Postgraduate Programme Coordinator, Campus Higher Degrees Programme Coordinator, or National Postgraduate Programme Coordinator.
- (3) Alternatively, use the dispute resolution mechanisms outlined in the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (IIE015).

## 12.2 REC Decision Appeals

- (1) Appeals will be reviewed on the same ethics principles, but by a different grouping of the Research Ethics Committee.
- (2) Applicants must provide written reasons supported with evidence for disagreement with outcomes.
- (3) Researchers must not collect data until the ethics consent or clearance letter has been released.
- (4) Where applications are declined twice, resubmission requires major changes as communicated in both outcome letters. In postgraduate research, researchers will be guided by their supervisor through the necessary revisions.

## 13 TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- (1) All researchers, students, supervisors, and REC members must:
  - a) Complete mandatory ethics training before commencing research, supervision, or joining the REC, as applicable.
  - b) Participate in ongoing professional development activities related to research ethics.
  - c) Attend annual supervisor onboarding and capacity development sessions (supervisors).
  - d) Attend academic seminars, research methodology workshops, and discipline-specific capacity development sessions, as applicable.
  - e) Stay informed about updates to ethical guidelines (including NDoH guidelines), IIE policies (IIE007, PDIIIE007, IIE023, IIE015), regulations, and institutional practices.
  - f) Attend periodic refresher courses as required by the institution.
  - g) Familiarise themselves with relevant legislation, regulations, and binding instruments.

## 14 SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

- (1) The IIE provides comprehensive support and resources to assist researchers and REC members in meeting their ethical obligations:
  - a) Ethics consultation services through The IIE Research Ethics Committee.
  - b) Guidance documents, templates, and policy documents (IIE007, PDIIIE007, and all annexures).
  - c) Training materials and capacity development workshops.
  - d) Expert advisors and Standard Operating Procedures.
  - e) Information centre support for research methodology, referencing, and academic writing.
  - f) Access to institutional resources, including databases, Similarity Detection Tools, and Research Activity Tracker.
  - g) Academic seminars and peer support networks.
- (2) Individuals are encouraged to seek guidance proactively when facing ethical dilemmas or uncertainties.

## 15 REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

- (1) This Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically, at least every five years in alignment with the review cycle of IIE007, or more frequently as necessitated by changes in research ethics guidance or regulations. Interim updates will be made as necessary to reflect evolving ethical standards, regulatory requirements, and institutional practices. All stakeholders will be notified of significant amendments through appropriate institutional channels.

## 16 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

- (1) By conducting research at The IIE or serving on the Research Ethics Committee, individuals acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. Each individual commits to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct in all research-related activities and contributing to a culture of integrity, respect, and excellence.
- (2) *The induction process for new REC members requires that they sign this Code of Conduct to indicate they know and understand the expectations. Supervisors and students should also confirm their understanding and commitment to this Code through appropriate institutional processes.*

Chairperson, Research Ethics Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Research and  
Postgraduate Studies Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Registrar: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SIGNATURE PAGE

*I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct for Researchers and REC Members at the Independent Institute of Education.*

*I understand that this Code must be read in conjunction with IIE007, PDIIIE007, IIE023, IIE015, and other relevant IIE policies.*

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g., Researcher, Student, Supervisor, REC Member, etc.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Witnessed by:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_