

POLICY DOCUMENT: **ETHICS COMMITTEE**

dated 01-10-2021.

Preamble:

To use technology for the benefit of society while upholding the highest ethical standards, Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation is in front to train technical professionals of the highest caliber. These professionals must possess solid knowledge of fundamental engineering principles, technical skills, innovative research capabilities, and exemplary professional conduct. The University has committed to fostering higher values such as accountability, honesty and respect for others' property and people's rights.

Objectives:

KLEF Deemed to be University is committed to conducting research, including research activities within teaching (e. g. Dissertation projects, etc.), to the highest ethical standards. This policy provides the principles and procedures that underpin the promotion and maintenance of an ethical culture throughout the University. The policy emphasizes the values of respect, integrity, and the promotion of an ethical culture for research driven by passion, collaboration, openness, and curiosity. It also integrates the core elements of the concordat to support research integrity, honesty, rigor, transparency and open communication, care and respect.

Scope

The policy relates to all University Faculty, Staff, Students, and collaborators and extends to teaching, research and enterprise activity undertaken both within the KLEF campus and outside.

Definitions:

"Ethics" – The analysis and application of ethical concepts (i. e. what is valued in society in terms of behavior and conduct) that describe and prescribe 'right' conduct and 'good' character of individuals within specific contexts. It also encompasses the ethical culture of organizations and consideration of the factors that enable or diminish human, animal, and environmental flourishing.

"Research integrity" – This specifies the range of values and practices that contribute to the conduct of ethical research practice from the design to dissemination of research. The values as specified in the concordat to support research integrity include honesty (emphasizing truthfulness in data collection and reporting of results); rigor (requiring

appropriate and competent research methods in keeping with disciplinary norms and standards}; transparency and open communication (regarding conflicts of interest and the trustworthiness of data reporting); and care and respect (relating to research participants and subjects).

"Academic integrity" – This relates to ethical practice in all areas of academic research activity and professional conduct, including the design, execution, analysis, and publication/dissemination of research. Such conduct is guided by adherence to agreed codes of practice and procedures that ensure fairness and create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE (UEC)

The University has established relevant norms that are binding on all the students and staff to enforce professional ethics in personal conduct. To create the KLEF's ethics policy, a university ethics committee (UEC) was established. The University Ethics Committee shall be comprised of senior faculty members from each School/Department, Deans with Vice-Chancellor as the Chairman of the committee.

Composition:

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|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Chairman | - | Vice – Chancellor |
| 2. Member Secretary | - | Dean (Research & Development) |
| 3. Member | - | Dean (F&SA) |
| 4. Member | - | Dean (SA) |
| 5. Member | - | Dean (MHS) |
| 6. Member | - | Principal – CoE |
| 7. Member | - | Principal – College of Architecture |
| 8. Member | - | Principal – College of Pharmacy |
| 9. Member | - | Principal – College of Agriculture |
| 10. Member | - | Principal – College of Sciences |

Policy:

Principles:

1. Respect for people

All members of the University community must demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the rights, interests and well-being of students, colleagues, and research participants both within and outside the University. This involves upholding the principles, processes and behaviors and may also involve raising.

and escalating concerns about unethical practices, research misconduct or academic misconduct in accord with university procedures.

2. Promotion and maintenance of the ethical culture of the University

All members of the University community have an obligation to adopt an ethical approach when undertaking research and teaching-related research. This involves acting, always, in a manner that demonstrates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, social justice and respectfulness for individuals.

3. Ethical engagement with external organizations and the international community. All members of the University community have an obligation to reflect on and enact ethical practice in their engagement and collaboration with external organizations, national and international, where issues may arise.

Members of the University community embarking on research, and/ or educational/ teaching-related research activities within the University, or with external organizations and the international community must ensure that wherever possible, they act in accord with the University Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy is in accord with the Equality Bill 2021 and covers the following protected characteristics: race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage, and civil partnership; and pregnancy and maternity. Where University activities are conducted in other jurisdictions, there needs to be adherence to the local policies and laws that apply.

Responsibilities of UEC:

1. Formulate Ethics Policy for KLEF
2. Report breaches of Ethics Policy or non-compliance of ethical practices among students, faculty, and staff to the Chairman for taking necessary actions.
3. Recommend actions on non-compliance of ethical practices among students, faculty and staff.
4. Propose corrective actions on report of non-adherence to the Policy.
5. Make amendments and clarity to the Policy as and when required.

Responsibilities of the Students/Scholars:

It shall be the responsibility of the students and scholars to:

1. Read, understand and be aware of the Ethics Policy and subsequent amendments brought to this Ethics Policy.
2. Maintain the dignity of the classroom/laboratory during teaching.

3. Refrain from cheating in tests/exams and any kind of malpractice and misconduct causing disturbance to other candidates and invigilators.
4. Respect the laws of the country, rights of individuals and to always conduct in a responsible and dignified manner. One must show due respect to people while interacting for academic purposes by way of data collection, and surveys for student projects.
5. Obtain written consent from human subjects/participants and prior approval of Ethics Committee in projects involving any kind of direct measurement of human physiological parameters such as ECG/EMG etc.
6. Ensure that the rights of an individual will be respected, and their property and life will not be put under threat at any circumstances. Academic work must not pose a risk or danger to people or the environment. Necessary clearances and permits/licenses must be obtained while handling, storing, and disposing of radioactive, toxic, or harmful materials.
7. Behave and conduct themselves in the College Campus, hostels and premises in a dignified and courteous manner and show due respect to the authorities, employees, elders, and fellow beings.
8. Follow ethical practices in publications/thesis/project reports etc. by checking plagiarism and by avoiding self-plagiarism. Be cautious to avoid so-called "predatory journals" which publish papers with minimal or no review. It is unethical to publish in such journals of this nature.
9. Carefully avoid data fraud and all unacceptable forms of data manipulation, such as or subtracting data points at will, editing images to produce a false result, creating images artificially and presenting them as data or using the same figure or table to describe different experiments. The conclusions claimed in a research paper must be genuine.
10. Honestly claim authorship of documents. The list of authors in research papers, reviews, books, monographs, or policy documents should not be manipulated to give undue credit to those who have not contributed ("honorary authorship") or deny credit to those who have contributed sufficiently.
11. Improve the balance of under-represented sections and provide a supportive environment by avoiding bias, favoritism, and discrimination of any kind. Academic communities are enriched by the presence of people of different ethnicities, genders, religions, castes, tribes, socio-economic strata, affiliations, backgrounds, and sexual orientations. There must not be direct or indirect bias or discrimination against any individual based on the above categories.



12. Respect fellow beings in every endeavor. Bullying in the workplace is a form of harassment that usually targets the most vulnerable members. This can include abusive language, frequent use of insults, threats, sabotage of others' work etc. Such actions are highly unethical and are not acceptable.
13. Refrain from any sexual misconduct and/or gender-based harassment or discrimination. It is everyone's responsibility to support a gender neutral and supportive environment to ensure equal participation of women in all academic activities.

Responsibilities of Faculty/Staff:

It shall be the responsibility of the members of staff to:

1. Read, understand and be aware of this Ethics Policy and subsequent amendments brought to this Ethics Policy.
2. Maintain the dignity of the classroom/laboratory during teaching. Adherence to a code of conduct and general discipline is essential. Students must be able to see role models and examples to follow from their teachers. An unbiased approach without discrimination of any kind to all students is essential in all academic activities which shall be inspiring and motivating any student to attain academic excellence and defined outcomes.
3. Respect the rights of individuals and conduct in a responsible, unbiased, and dignified manner always. One must show due respect to people while interacting for academic purposes by way of data collection, and surveys for student projects.
4. Obtain written consent from human subjects/research participants and prior approval of Ethics Committee in projects involving direct measurement of human physiological parameters such as ECG/EMG etc.
5. Ensure that the rights of an individual will be respected, and their property and life will not be put under threat under any circumstances. Academic work must not pose a risk or danger to people or the environment. Necessary clearances and permits/licenses must be obtained while handling, storing, and disposing of radioactive, toxic or harmful materials.
6. Behave and conduct themselves in the College Campus, hostels, and premises in a manner.
7. Follow ethical practices in publications/thesis/project reports etc. by checking plagiarism and by avoiding self-plagiarism. Be cautious to avoid so-called "predatory journals" which publish papers with minimal or no review. It is unethical to publish in such journals.

8. Avoid data fraud and all unacceptable forms of data manipulation, such as adding or subtracting data points at will, editing images to produce a false result, creating images artificially and presenting them as data or using the same figure or table to describe different experiments. The conclusions claimed in a research paper must be genuine.
9. Honestly claim authorship of documents. The list of authors in research papers, reviews, books, monographs, or policy documents should not be manipulated to give undue credit to those who have not contributed ("honorary authorship") or deny credit to those who have contributed sufficiently.
10. Improve the balance of under-represented sections and provide a supportive environment by avoiding bias, favoritism, and discrimination of any kind. Academic communities are enriched by the presence of people of different ethnicities, genders, religions, castes, tribes, socio-economic strata, affiliations, backgrounds, and sexual orientations. There must not be direct or indirect bias or discrimination against any individual based on the above categories.
11. Respect fellow beings in every endeavor. Bullying in the workplace is a form of harassment that usually targets the most vulnerable members. This can include abusive language, frequent use of insults, threatening letters, sabotage of others' work, exploiting juniors for carrying out personal errands etc. Such actions are highly unethical and are not acceptable.
12. Refrain from any sexual misconduct and/or gender-based harassment or discrimination. It is everyone's responsibility to support a gender neutral and supportive environment to ensure equal participation of women in all academic and administrative activities.
13. Discharge all entrusted duties with utmost sincerity, dedication, and ethical principles in executing responsibilities such as exam invigilation, timely completion of paper valuations, extra-curricular activities, charity works, consultancy projects, matters of public accountability etc. to name a few. It is extremely important to ensure participation of all members of staff in exam-related duties with utmost vigilance and an unbiased approach to prevent any malpractices during exams.



Procedures for Corrective Action

This Policy is envisaged to employ procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, as well as any other kind of misconduct as described in this document, against its staff and students.

(i) Corrective action:

If a publication or report/thesis is found to contain plagiarism or manipulated data, the concerned department must ensure that a correction or retraction is published in the same place as the original paper.

On the other side, if a decision is found to have been made based on a bias or conflict of interest, then it should be overturned and the process must be repeated from the first step, if necessary.

In general, every effort must be made to ensure that an unethical action fails in propagating false knowledge or incorrect decisions.

(ii) Punitive action

This Policy covers not just misconduct involving data and publication, but also harassment, discrimination and other issues covered in this document. Such cases shall be dealt with in the Students' Grievance Redressal Cell whereas if staff alone is involved, it shall be dealt with by the Ethics Committee. Punitive action communicates not just to the violator, but also to society at large, that unethical behavior is unacceptable. The degree of punishment should be carefully calibrated in proportion to the offence. First-time offenders, particularly, if the offence is minor or unintentional and the offender is inexperienced, may be let off with a warning. Serious, multiple, or repeated offences must be treated with utmost seriousness. Large-scale ethical violations should be met with severe disciplinary action and, if appropriate, the chairman can take or recommend disciplinary action.

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