CODE OF ETHICS FOR RESEARCH

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PREAMBLE

ATLAS SkillTech University remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles outlined in this code and actively promotes and backs all its faculty, staff, and students in adhering to the prescribed research standards.

As ATLAS SkillTech University expands its reach and gains national and international acclaim, there is a realization of the necessity to update and reinforce its Institutional Code of Research Integrity and Publication Ethics. It aims to align with global norms while also incorporating the essence of local cultural values into the tapestry of professional behaviour.

SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This code is applicable to various stakeholders and activities within ATLAS SkillTech University, including:

Research

Any systematic scientific activity aimed at addressing specific research inquiries, conducted within established regulations, involving human participants and data. The objective is to generate new knowledge, contribute to existing knowledge, or disseminate acquired information from the research process.

Researcher

a. Any qualified, trained, and experienced individual conducting research involving human participants and data within ATLAS SkillTech University, its constituent schools, centres, and the surrounding community.

b. Teacher: Any ATLAS SkillTech University employee engaged in research, encompassing all types of educators, such as full-time, part-time, adjunct, additional, temporary, permanent, contractual, and honorary/emeritus staff.

c. Student: Any learner with legitimate credentials enrolled in courses approved by the Academic Council and offered by ATLAS SkillTech University's schools/centres. This includes learners up to the point of receiving their degree/diploma during convocation.

d. Research Scholar/Assistant/Fellow: Any individual appointed by ATLAS SkillTech University or its schools for the purpose of conducting research.

Purpose

Research and development represent a structured endeavour aimed at enriching and expanding humanity's, culture's, and society's pool of knowledge. This knowledge treasure is then harnessed to create fresh, sustainable solutions for the betterment of well-being. Research and development encompass a wide spectrum of activities, both original and innovative, spanning academic, professional, and technological domains. Engaging in research necessitates the freedom to choose directions while remaining mindful of their consequences, and it demands unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards and integrity. Ethical, legal, and professional boundaries must guide the course of research.

The standing of a university is intricately linked to the principles and ethical standards it upholds in the pursuit of research, particularly the work conducted by its scholars. The objective of this code is to delineate the conduct expected of research scholars enrolled in doctoral programs as they interact with the academic community, peers, and the broader public. This code emphasizes the importance of maintaining discipline and ethical behaviour while remaining dedicated to the university's mission, thereby fostering trust among all stakeholders.

ATLAS SkillTech University mandates that research supervisors and scholars adhere rigorously to principles of academic integrity and originality. The institution places paramount importance on encouraging its faculty and research scholars to abide by ethical guidelines established by both the University and the UGC during the course of their research activities. The university shall establish an Institutional Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with the code of conduct.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The University is dedicated to ensuring that all aspects of its operations, particularly those involving research, adhere to the highest standards while also upholding legal, ethical, and safety regulations. The responsibility of the institution inherently extends to individuals as they fulfill their professional duties on behalf of ATLAS SkillTech University.

Therefore, the responsibility include :

1. To develop a framework for research governance through the establishment of policies and procedures.

2. To create awareness about code of ethics adopted by the University.

3. To establish robust management systems to ensure compliance with established standards and mechanisms for resolving disputes, preventing misconduct, and facilitating informed decision-making and grievance resolution.

4. To provides the necessary infrastructure, resources, support, and services to facilitate research.

Leadership and Supervision

Leadership within the context of this code refers to the ability to inspire and motivate actions that benefit the University. Leaders, in this case, the research supervisors, are anticipated to create an environment conducive to achieving commendable research outcomes for the University. They should facilitate research endeavours while firmly upholding principles of integrity, good governance, and ethical conduct. Additionally, leaders are responsible for cultivating a culture characterized by honesty, cooperation, and professionalism.

In their role as supervisors, leaders are expected to demonstrate competence in providing the necessary training to enhance research outcomes and gain recognition from stakeholders. The research supervisor should maintain a professional relationship with their supervisees and allocate credit appropriately.

Training and Mentorship

It is the university's responsibility to establish policies ensuring that all researchers have access to training opportunities, supervision, and necessary assistance to conduct research of the highest quality.

Academic Freedom, Integrity, And Responsibility

The university grants academic freedom to all researchers, allowing them to pursue knowledge and engage in advanced research without unjust interference or constraints from any source, including norms, laws, institutional rules, or public influence. Within the confines of the University, researchers are afforded the necessary freedom to investigate their chosen subjects of study, present their research findings, and publish data and conclusions without any form of control or censorship, following established professional practices. Researchers are expected to exercise this freedom responsibly, ensuring strict adherence to widely recognized academic research standards. Violations of such standards are considered significant transgressions within the academic community and are detrimental to the university's reputation, which is dedicated to promoting excellence in academic research.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The University strongly encourages all researchers to give earnest consideration to ethics and moral philosophy, particularly those principles related to morality. These principles serve as a guide for researchers in terms of their ethical conduct. Ethics encompass all aspects of individual and organizational conduct and are thus applicable to various professions, including researchers at the University.

When interacting with research participants and fellow researchers, research scholars bear a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the physical, social, and psychological well-being of their research subjects from being adversely affected by the research. Research scholars must refrain from engaging in actions that could potentially lead to harmful consequences for stakeholders or tarnish the reputation of the discipline.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The University recognizes the importance of promoting and facilitating the effective utilization of intellectual property rights (IPR). Intellectual Property represents the result of innovative, diligent, creative, and intellectual endeavours. To this end, ATLAS SkillTech University has established an Intellectual Property Cell (IP Cell) with a focus on encouraging and facilitating the submission and processing of Patents, Copyrights, and Design Applications publications. The IP Cell, under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor, is responsible for supporting faculty members in the submission and processing of patent applications.

Intellectual Property encompasses various types, including:

A) COPYRIGHT

Copyright is a legal concept that grants creators rights over their literary and artistic works. This protection applies to a wide range of creative works, such as books, music, paintings, sculptures, films, computer programs, databases, advertisements, maps, and technical drawings. It's important to note that copyright does not safeguard ideas; rather, it protects tangible forms of original work, like art, music, architectural designs, and software code. Copyright owners have exclusive rights to sell, publish, and reproduce their works.

B) PATENTS

A patent provides an exclusive right to an invention, allowing the patent owner to determine its usage by others. In exchange, the patent owner must disclose technical details of the invention through a published patent document. Patents are essential for preventing the unauthorized creation, sale, or use of an invention by third parties. Patent owners have the freedom to commercialize their patents, including selling them or licensing the invention to third parties under mutually agreed terms. To publish a patent, faculty members can seek assistance from the IP Cell.

C) TRADEMARKS

Trademarks serve as protection for signs that distinguish the goods or services of one enterprise from those of others. These signs can take various forms, including text, phrases, symbols, sounds, smells, or colour schemes. Trademarks are used to safeguard a class of products or services rather than a single item or process

D) TRADE SECRETS

Trade secrets encompass confidential information that can be sold or licensed. Unauthorized acquisition, use, or disclosure of such confidential information, contrary to fair commercial practices, is considered an unfair practice and a violation of trade secret protection.

The University places significant emphasis on adhering to ethical guidelines and legal regulations related to intellectual property rights, fostering a culture of innovation and respect for intellectual property.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Researchers might be entrusted with confidential information from fellow researchers, partners, or sponsors. It's crucial for researchers to exercise caution in their treatment of such confidential or restricted information. They must refrain from using or revealing this information to third parties unless they have obtained explicit consent from the rightful owner of the confidential information. Researchers should also stay informed about any confidentiality requirements related to particular projects that involve commercially sensitive data or intellectual property, and they must be mindful of their responsibilities regarding these provisions.

Publication and Authorship

Every researcher is anticipated to openly, truthfully, transparently, and precisely publish and circulate their research findings through suitable means like journal articles, books, critiques, software, data repositories, or conference materials. This should be done while adhering to both intellectual property rights regulations and the stipulations outlined in research agreements.

Norms of Publications

The University anticipates that all publications adhere to discipline-specific professional standards and exemplify the following good practices:

I. Authors must be able to clearly identify their contributions to any publication, fully comprehend its content, and accept personal responsibility for it.

ii. Proper acknowledgment should be given to formal collaborators, as well as individuals who have directly or indirectly supported the research, including research students, research staff, and professional services staff, with their consent.

iii. Funding agencies that have supported the research should be duly acknowledged.

iv. The order in which authors are listed should be agreed upon by all authors.

v. Deliberate failure to acknowledge the contributions of others is considered unprofessional behaviour, and significant omissions will be regarded as research misconduct.

vi. Individuals who have not made a substantive intellectual, scholarly, or practical contribution, and who have not been substantially involved in conceiving, executing, or interpreting relevant research, should not be included as authors. "Honorary authorship" is discouraged.

vii. Research scholars must appropriately acknowledge and attribute all sources used in accordance with the citation and referencing conventions specific to their discipline.

viii. If a researcher submits work that is substantially similar to multiple publishers, they should disclose this fact to the publishers at the time of submission.

ix. Researchers are responsible for promptly rectifying any inconsistencies or errors in their published material.

x. Stipendiary research scholars should comply with any conditions imposed by funding or other organizations regarding the publication of their research.

Research Misconduct

Misconduct in academic research encompasses a range of actions, including but not limited to fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or deceit when proposing, conducting, or reporting research findings. It also involves intentionally deviating from established research practices in a reckless or negligent manner. This deviation includes instances where agreed-upon research protocols are not followed, leading to an unreasonable risk or harm to individuals or the environment. Additionally, it encompasses situations where a researcher colludes with or conceals the misconduct of others. The University emphasizes that research misconduct should be strongly condemned by researchers. It's important to note that "research misconduct does not encompass honest mistakes or differences of opinion."

Misconduct encompasses various actions, including but not limited to the following:

a. Plagiarism: Intentionally copying ideas, text, data, or other work, whether in whole or part, without proper permission or acknowledgment. Plagiarism involves appropriating someone else's ideas, processes, results, or words without providing appropriate credit. Presenting another person's work as one's own constitutes plagiarism and may breach ethical principles.

b. Piracy: Deliberately using ideas from others without giving them due credit.

c. Abuse of Intellectual Property Rights: Failing to adhere to legal standards related to copyright and the moral rights of authors.

d. Abuse of Research Resources: Neglecting the terms and conditions associated with institutionally licensed research resources.

e. Defamation: Disregarding applicable legal norms concerning libel and slander.

f. Misinterpretation: Knowingly misrepresenting or distorting the ideas or work of others, either for personal gain or to unfairly discredit them.

Institutional Ethics Committee

To ensure compliance with code of conduct, the institution shall establish the Insitutional ethics committee. Its primary purpose is to engage in discussions and considerations related to the ethical aspects arising from research protocols. It is responsible for granting ethical approval for these protocols and ensuring the well-being and safety of research participants throughout the duration of the research study.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE:

a. The Institutional Ethics Committee is responsible for evaluating and granting approval for research protocols while prioritizing the protection of participants.

b. The Institutional Ethics Committee is obligated to maintain the highest standards in its review process and post-approval activities.

c. The Institutional Ethics Committee is tasked with overseeing the study from its initiation until its conclusion.

d. The Institutional Ethics Committee must adhere to the relevant guidelines and regulations that are in force at any given time.

e. The Institutional Ethics Committee must independently review and approve protocols, following established Standard Operating Procedures.

f. The Chairman and Members of the Institutional Ethics Committee are bound by the ethical requirement of disclosing any potential 'conflict of interest,' if such conflicts exist, regarding matters under their consideration.

g. The Institutional Ethics committee will serve as a consultative body for addressing disputes related to research ethics and conduct, making recommendations to the University regarding actions to be taken in cases of identified misconduct following inquiries and thorough investigations. The Committee will generate a report detailing the procedures employed during the formal investigation, the sources of information obtained as relevant, the committee's findings and their basis, a summary of the respondent's perspectives, and a description of any recommendations put forth by the committee. The Same report will be forwarded to the University Research Committee for further necessary action if any.

Constitution of Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) – ATLAS SKILLTECH UNIVERSITY

- Constitution of Institutional Ethics Committees
    - Chairperson - External Expert, as per the requirement
    - Members - Convener – Director of the Centre for Research as Member Secretary
    - One member representing Research in Management (Internal)
    - One member representing Research in Design (Internal)
    - One member representing Research in Technology (Internal)
    - One member representing Research in Entrepreneurship (Internal)
    - Sr. Faculty from the University (Internal)
    - One member who is a Legal Person (External)
    - One member as a Community Representative (External)
    - One member as a Counsellor (External)