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Research and Ethics Policy and Procedure

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Instructions for Document Users

All Idea Leadership Management Institute (ILMI) students, lecturers and other internal staff can access revised and approved documents related to the ILMI Policies and Procedures from Canvas LMS link: https://ideaed.instructure.com/courses/55

Continuous Improvement

Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be applied, executed and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated. Please contact us on: +356 2145 6310

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1.0 Introduction

Research is one of IDEA Leadership and Management's (ILMI) core values, a strong fundamental principle reflecting its ethos of academic excellence and student centredness. ILMI views research as a significant component in its vision and mission, designing its curriculum in a way which promotes research through research-based assessment and dissertations. ILMI drives towards high quality research, producing findings and knowledge as contributory elements towards the holistic development of the student and the wider community of society as a whole.

Refer to The Ethos of IDEA Management and Leadership Institute Document_013.

2.0 ILMI Research Ethics Board (IREB)

Refer to ILMI Boards Document _038.

2.1. IREB Structure

2.1.1 IREB is appointed by the Director of Studies and is made up of the Chair and 1-3 board members.
2.1.2 IREB is a fully autonomous board. All decisions made by IREB are final.
2.1.3 IREB consists of 1-3 members which are selected on a case by case basis considering particular expertise needed relevant to the Study Programme.
2.1.4 The first member acts as the chairperson of the Board, the second person acts as the secretary to the Board, and the third member is nominated depending on the area of expertise relevant to the Study Programme. Other members may be invited to join IREB depending on the need.
2.1.5 All Board members should be at least in possession of an MQF Level 7 qualification and have adequate experience in applying research methods and carrying research work.
2.1.6 The Board secretary is mainly responsible for organising and the setting up of meetings, preparation of the agenda, the collection of all the documents required for meetings, keeping the minutes of meetings and keeping records of all documentation.

2.2. Terms of Reference for the IREB

2.2.1 The main objective of IREB is to maintain high ethical standards in the conduct of research at ILMI, promoting and maintaining excellence in the disciplinary field of academic research.
2.2.2 The Director of Studies appoints IREB members for a period of one year. The Director of Studies may terminate an appointment and replace members in cases of inappropriate management.
2.2.3 IREB may request to the Director of Studies to invite persons who have expertise in specific disciplinary fields to participate and advise the board during the meetings.
2.2.4 IREB is responsible for:

a. Carrying out the ethical review of all research proposals and to give non/approval to the students. In the case of non-approvals IREB will make recommendations for the necessary changes;

b. To review regularly this policy and procedure (at least every two years);

c. To carry out the final review of all proposals which entail ethical issues.

2.2.5. In carrying out its duties, IREB will ensure that the principles of its policy and procedures as defined by this document are observed.

3.0 Criteria for Ethical Review by IREB

IREB needs to review any of the following:

1. Research studies that may jeopardise the health or well-being of the participants be it physiological or psychological.

2. Research studies that involve surveys or questionnaires or any other form of research which participants may interpret as highly personal or offensive (referred to as sensitive data). Sensitive data includes but is not limited to, questions regarding ethnicity and race, political views, religious beliefs, physical/mental health, sexual orientation and experiences, criminal acts/records/affiliations.

3. Research studies which include vulnerable groups, which refers to any individual or group of individuals considered particularly susceptible to coercion or undue influence in a research setting. A vulnerable group includes persons who may be incapable of understanding what it means to participate in research and/or who may not understand what constitutes informed consent. Individuals considered vulnerable may, for various reasons, have a diminished capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and/or recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. Vulnerable groups may also consist of individuals who are unable to care for themselves and/or may have an increased chance of suicide, self-harm, or the likelihood of harming others.

4. Research studies involving prisoners or young offenders.

5. Research studies where personal confidential data, can lead to the identification of individuals as per GDPR.

6. Research studies where there is a risk of breaching confidentiality.

7. Research studies which intend to use sources that may lead to a participant's identity being revealed such as video/audio recordings, photographs, and quotations, if the data will be available beyond the research team.

8. Research studies which involve any form of deception.

9. Research studies where the researcher's safety may be at risk.

10. Research studies that may be detrimental to the natural or built environment.

11. Research studies that may be detrimental to the financial well-being of an individual or organisation.

12. Research studies that may be detrimental to the well-being of animals.

13. Research studies where the researcher may have any ethical concerns.

All dissertation proposals are to go through IREB. If the proposal does not include any of the aforementioned points, IREB will simply keep a record of the proposal and give their approval.

4.0 Research Review Procedure

At the end of the Research Methods Module, students are to fill in the Research Proposal and Ethical Considerations Form (RPECF) Document_063, which includes:

- Their dissertation proposal;
- Ethical considerations;
- Consent forms for individuals and groups (for future use); and
- Information letter template for research participants, to be filled in accordingly (for future use).

The RPECF is sent to the lecturer who provides feedback and suggests any amendments and finally issues a grade. ILMI's Assessment Policy Document_011 will be followed as normal.

Once this process has been completed the student will forward the final RPECF to the IREB secretary. The IREB secretary is then to convene IREB to review all proposals.

IREB will review all RPECFs and issue approval/non-approval accordingly, in writing by filling in the relevant section on the RPECF. If approved, the researcher can start carrying out their research study while if the proposal is not approved for ethical purposes, IREB will make recommendations to the student and ask for amendments. In such cases, students are expected to make such amendments to their dissertation RPECF and re-submit to IREB (and lecturer if necessary).

Any RPECF that propose a study where research will involve any healthcare patients or their relatives, or clinical trials, will be sent to the Health Ethics Committee, under the Ministry of Health, for official approval.

5.0 Researcher's Responsibilities

The following clauses describe the responsibilities of the student researcher:

5.1. General

5.1.1 5.1.1 The student researcher is responsible to ensure that all research carried out at ILMI is conducted ethically and responsibly towards human subjects, animals and environmental protection.

5.1.2 5.1.2 The research student shall forward his/her proposal on ILMI's Research Proposal and Ethical Considerations Form, Document_063 to the IREB, providing an explanation of how the ethical considerations are being provided for.

5.1.3 5.1.3 The collection of data and involvement of human subjects in research can only start to be carried out upon approval of IREB and the collection of the informed consent as stipulated by these guidelines.

5.2. Consent

5.2.1 All participants in the research must choose to do so out of their own free will.

5.2.2 Written consent must be given by signing a detailed consent form that clearly covers what their participation entails, including any benefits and risks, and how the data collected will be used and discarded once used.

5.2.3 These consent forms will be provided by ILMI as an appendix in the Research Proposal and Ethical Considerations Form Document_063, to ensure that all considerations are included. The consent forms can be amended in special circumstances to adapt to the needs of the researcher, with the prior permission of IREB.

5.2.4 Consent forms need to be signed by both the researcher and the participant and a copy needs to be given to each participant.

5.2.5 Consent forms need to be provided in English.

5.2.6 In some cases, institutional approval for access to participants will also be required. ILMI and IREB will guide students accordingly.

5.3. Deceptive Research

If a student chooses to conduct any form of covert or deceptive research, a detailed justification must be given to IREB to why this is necessary for the study. IREB will approve such studies only when no other reasonable alternative is possible.

5.4. Confidentiality

5.4.1 All Gathering of Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) must be adhered to.

5.4.2 A sample information letter will also be available to all ILMI students in the RPECF. This letter will include the aim and purpose of the study being conducted, the details of the researcher, the use of personal information provided, accessibility to data by other stakeholders and length of time that data will be kept and what will happen to data collected once the study has been completed.

5.4.3 All data collected including personal details and consent forms need to be stored safely and securely.

5.5. Withdrawal from Research Study

5.5.1 It must be made clear to all research participants that they can withdraw from the study at any point without suffering any negative consequences. The process of how they can withdraw needs to be explained before giving consent.

5.5.2 Participants also have the right to withdraw their data after it has been collected. The procedure of how this can be done must be explained clearly prior to consent being given. Participants must also be informed that their data will be destroyed immediately upon their withdrawal from the research study.

5.6. Disclosure

If unethical behaviour or practices are uncovered or observed during the research study which may lead to any form of harm to the participant or others, participants must be aware that confidentiality may have to be broken as relevant authorities will be informed.

5.7. Animal Rights and Environmental Protection

The suffering of any animal must be avoided, as must any negative impact on the natural or built environment. All legislations related to animal welfare and environmental protection must be adhered to at all times.

5.8. Dissemination

ILMI may choose to share any research study with the general public for the benefit of fellow professionals, policy makers and general public knowledge. This must be done following all ethical guidelines aforementioned.

IDEA Group was founded in 2005 as IDEA Management Consulting Services offering advisory services in the field of business development, change management and human resources as well as corporate training.

Today, Idea Group offers a wide range of management, research, training and education services. The Group's centric idea remains keeping clients at the centre of our service.

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