



## **Research and Ethics Policy**

### **Policy Brief and Purpose**

The founding principal to research is to investigate systematically to discover facts. The Global Give Back Circle mission is to uphold the ideals of discovery, to encourage and support research into new ways of acquiring, investigating, and developing knowledge for the good of society, and to ensure that all research is conducted in accordance with ethical principles. The paramount principle governing all Global Give Back Circle research involving human participants and personal data is respect for the participants' dignity, rights, safety, and well-being.

### **Participants' Rights**

Participants have a right, as a principle of research ethics, to:

- Be fully informed about how and why their data will be collected and used as part of a research project, and by whom.
- Consent to participate, withdraw from, or refuse to take part in research projects.
- Confidentiality, meaning that personal information, or identifiable data should not be disclosed without participants' consent.
- Security of their data, meaning that data and samples collected should be kept secure and anonymized where appropriate.
- Safety, meaning that participants should not be exposed to unnecessary or disproportionate levels of risk, and request erasure of their data if and when it is no longer required for research purposes.

### **Researchers' Obligations**

Researchers have an obligation to ensure that their research is conducted with:

- Honesty and Transparency
- Integrity
- Mitigate risk to participants and to themselves.
- Respect for other persons, their values, and their cultures.

### **Policy Elements**

Guidance on the interpretation and application of these principles is detailed in this Policy document. The principles and requirements outlined in this Policy reflect the principles of research ethics but do not displace a researcher's obligation to comply with any relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Finally, if research ethics are to be more than merely formulaic and procedural, they must be meaningful and relevant to - and accepted by - researchers. To this end, this Policy specifies an ethics review procedure that depends on researchers to be ethically aware, self-reflective researchers taking responsibility for operationalizing the principles and requirements embodied in the Policy.



### Introducing Research Ethics

The Global Give Back Circle definition of research is taken from the Research Excellence Framework 2014: **'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'**. This applies to all research undertaken by, or on behalf of, the organization. This definition includes:

- a) work of educational value designed to improve understanding of the research process,
- b) work of relevance to commerce and industry,
- c) work of relevance to the public and voluntary sectors,
- d) scholarship supporting the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues, and contributions to research databases),
- e) the invention, design, and generation of ideas, images, and data, where these lead to new or substantially improved understanding, and
- f) the experimental use of existing knowledge to develop, design and construct new or substantially improved methodologies and processes.

### Research Ethics at Global Give Back Circle

The Global Give Back Circle Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data recognizes that the responsibility for maintaining ethical conduct lies, in the first instance, with researchers themselves. If researchers do not take responsibility for the ethical conduct of their own research, defensible research ethics will be an unrealizable goal. To this end, responsibility for operating the Global Give Back Circle Ethics Review Procedure, informed by the Policy, is conducted by trained and vetted facilitators(researchers).

Within this devolved framework, the Global Give Back Circle recognizes that diversity enriches and strengthens its research culture and performance. Diversity means that research activities involving human participants and personal data may differ widely from project to project. Thus, the ethical issues relating to human participation in research may also differ considerably from one project to another.

This means that the formal ethical review of research proposals involving human participants and personal data is best carried out within the broad parameters provided by this Policy and the Research Ethics Approval Procedure.

The key principle underlying the Research Ethics Approval Procedure is that researchers should reflect on the ethical issues that are raised by their research and be able to justify, in ethical terms, the practices and procedures that they intend to adopt during their research. Matters of research ethics are often not 'black and white', and there is no 'one size fits all approach'. This Policy, therefore, aims to set a clear framework and guiding principles to assist researchers in addressing the ethical issues that may arise during their research.

### Research Governance and Responsibilities

Heads of programs are responsible for the conduct of the research that is undertaken in their assigned programs. They are, therefore, responsible for ensuring that program researchers have access to appropriate ethics review procedures for research activities that involve human participants and personal data in line with the Global Give Back Circle Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data. They are also responsible for ensuring that all research-active staff, contractors, and volunteers are familiar with the content of the Policy and that appropriate training and guidance is made available. They are responsible



to make sure that all participants are also familiar with their rights under this policy and are agreeable to participate on their own accord. As in all other matters, individual researchers are expected to follow the leadership of their Head of Department, under the direction of the policy manager.

In everyday research practice, however, the first responsibility for considering, respecting, and safeguarding the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of human participants involved in research lies with the lead researcher. However, this practical principle does not absolve more junior, or more senior, staff, from personal responsibility in this respect, or from their responsibility to disclose any failure to meet the principles of conduct required by the Policy. All researchers at the Global Give Back Circle, whether staff members, consultants, or volunteers, are responsible to a range of stakeholders for their conduct during, and delivery of, their research activities involving human participants. These are:

- a) the human participants involved.
- b) society in general.
- c) Global Give Back Circle.
- d) fellow researchers, whether colleagues or volunteers.
- e) colleagues who undertake research support activities.
- f) the research funder (Grant Maker)

The Global Give Back Circle Policy Manager will be responsible for:

- a) reviewing the Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data every 5 years and reporting its findings to the Board of Directors.
- b) offering guidance to staff, consultants, and volunteers on the interpretation of the Policy.
- c) seeking outside counsel to resolve disputed or uncertain ethics approval decisions in the event of concerns arising about whether a research proposal or ongoing research activity complies with the Policy, suspending the approval process, or the research activity in question, pending further investigation.
- d) actively promoting awareness and knowledge of the Policy, and research ethics more generally, within the organization.
- e) keeping abreast of externally driven developments, policies and regulations concerning research ethics, and ensuring that the organization meets all necessary requirements.
- f) providing advice on any ethical matters relating to research that are referred to it from within the organization.

### **Scope**

The Global Give Back Circle Ethics Policy governing research involving human participants and personal data applies to all staff, consultants and volunteers who conduct, or contribute to, research activities involving human participants and/or personal data. Research funding bodies may have their own research ethics policies and/or requirements, which must be met as a condition for receiving research funding. However, this does not preclude the need for observance of the Global Give Back Circle Policy and its associated procedures. In such cases, the external policies and requirements are an extra layer of research ethics governance, not an alternative to the Global Give Back Circle Policy.



### **Policy Elements**

The Policy is intended to:

- a) protect the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of human participants,
- b) codify Global Give Back Circle's position on research ethics for research involving human participants and personal data.
- c) demonstrate a commitment to high quality, transparent and accountable research ethics throughout the Global Give Back Circle organization, from senior management policymaking to the practicalities of individual staff and individual research projects,
- d) warrant and inform the operation of the Global Give Back Circle Ethics Review Procedure within department or program,
- e) provide guidance on research ethics involving human participants and personal data for all staff, consultants, and volunteers.
- f) encourage an organizational research culture based upon defensible standards of research practice,
- g) reduce risks to Global Give Back Circle, and individual researchers.
- h) strengthen the eligibility and quality of Global Give Back Circle research funding applications; and, not least,
- i) enhance the Global Give Back Circle reputation with the general public and wider society, within the non-profit sector, and with grant writers and external auditors.

### **Good Research Practice**

Observing recognized research ethics principles is basic to good research practice in general. The Global Give Back Circle Ethics Policy Governing Research involving human participants and personal data upholds ethical standards in the conduct of research by accepting and respecting principles of integrity, honesty, and openness and conducting research with integrity, embracing intellectual honesty, and accepting personal responsibility for one's own actions. Prior to, during, and following the completion of research activities, researchers are expected to consider the ethical implications of their research and, depending on its nature, the cultural, economic, psychological, physiological, political, religious, spiritual, and social consequences of it for the human participants involved. Researchers should always consider their research from the perspective(s) of the participants and any other people who may possibly be affected by it.



### **Safety and Well Being**

Finally, issues of safety and well-being are at the heart of research ethics. Researchers have a responsibility to protect all participants, as well as they can, from avoidable harm arising from their research. Researchers also have a responsibility to consider their own safety and that of any co-researchers or collaborators. Generally, people participating in research should not be exposed to risks that are greater than, or additional to, those they encounter in their normal lifestyles. If it is expected that harm, unusual discomfort, or other negative consequences might occur in prospective participants' future lives because of participation in a research project, the researcher should highlight this during the ethics approval process and discuss the matter fully with participants during negotiations about informed consent. However, it should also be noted that it may not be possible for researchers to identify every eventuality that may arise during a research project, and that this Policy is not designed to cover all possible situations.

Unexpected incidents affecting the safety or well-being of those involved, and/or presenting a potential reputational risk to the Global Give Back Circle, may arise even in a project that has been well-considered and thoroughly ethically reviewed. Should such an incident arise, the researcher should take appropriate steps to manage the immediate situation in an ethical and appropriate way. At the earliest opportunity they should make management aware of the situation.