RESEARCH ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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Applicable to	:	All internal staff (teaching and non-teaching) of AMGOI
Prepared By	:	Dean, R&D
Reviewed By	:	Dean, R&D
Approved By	:	Director & Campus Director, AMGOI

1. Purpose

Ashokrao Mane Group of Institutions (AMGOI) is committed to promoting a responsible, transparent and ethical research culture. This policy establishes the principles and expected conduct for planning, conducting, supervising, reporting and publishing research undertaken by faculty members, students, research scholars and collaborators associated with AMGOI.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

1. Promote honesty, integrity, accountability and responsible conduct in all research activities.
2. Prevent plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, misrepresentation and other forms of research misconduct.
3. Ensure proper authorship, acknowledgement, citation, data management and protection of intellectual property.
4. Protect the rights, dignity, privacy, safety and well-being of research participants and collaborators.
5. Promote responsible use of institutional facilities, research funds, equipment and third-party resources.
6. Establish a fair process for reporting, examining and addressing suspected research misconduct.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all AMGOI faculty members, students, research scholars, project staff, technical and administrative personnel, visiting researchers and external collaborators involved in research, consultancy, innovation, publication or other scholarly activities under the name or responsibility of AMGOI, whether funded or unfunded and whether conducted on or off campus.

4. Policy Guidelines

4.1 Fundamental Principles of Research Ethics

- Research shall be conducted with honesty, objectivity, reliability, fairness, transparency and accountability.
- Researchers shall report methods, observations, results and limitations accurately and shall not suppress findings merely because they do not support the expected outcome.
- Researchers shall respect human dignity, individual rights, privacy, cultural values, the environment and the rights of other researchers.

- Research freedom shall be exercised responsibly and in accordance with applicable laws, institutional policies, approved protocols and funding conditions.

4.2 Plagiarism and Research Misconduct

- Plagiarism, including copying or presenting another person's words, ideas, data, figures, designs or work without appropriate acknowledgement, is prohibited.
- Fabrication, falsification, manipulation or selective omission of data, results, credentials, citations or research records is prohibited.
- Misappropriation of ideas, piracy, sabotage, impersonation, ghost writing, gift authorship, duplicate publication and deceptive reporting are unacceptable research practices.
- All theses, dissertations, reports and manuscripts shall undergo plagiarism checking wherever required, in accordance with applicable UGC regulations and AMGOI procedures.
- Similarity reports shall be interpreted after excluding legitimate references, quotations and other permitted material, as prescribed by applicable regulations; no single similarity percentage shall override the applicable rules.
- Honest errors or differences of academic opinion shall not, by themselves, be treated as research misconduct.

4.3 Data Collection, Management and Retention

- Research data shall be collected, recorded, analysed, stored and reported accurately and securely.
- Researchers shall maintain complete and verifiable records, including research protocols, raw data, analysis files, approvals and relevant correspondence.
- Data shall not be altered, deleted, concealed or selectively excluded to misrepresent research outcomes; reasons for legitimate exclusions shall be documented.
- Access to research data shall be controlled and provided to authorised project members in accordance with institutional, contractual and legal requirements.
- Ownership, access, retention, sharing and transfer of data shall be governed by AMGOI policies, project agreements, sponsor conditions and applicable law.
- Confidential, personal or commercially sensitive data shall not be disclosed or used beyond the approved purpose without appropriate authorisation.

4.4 Authorship, Publication and Acknowledgement

- Authorship shall be based on substantial intellectual or scholarly contribution to the conception, design, execution, analysis or interpretation of the research and approval of the final work.
- All authors shall agree to the author order, approve the final manuscript and accept responsibility for their respective contributions.
- Gift, guest, honorary, ghost or purchased authorship is prohibited. Individuals who provide limited assistance shall be acknowledged appropriately with their permission.
- The corresponding author shall ensure that all co-authors are informed about submission, revision, acceptance and publication status.
- Duplicate or simultaneous submission of the same manuscript to multiple journals or conferences is not permitted unless expressly allowed by the concerned publishers.
- Salami publication, misleading self-citation, fabricated references and misrepresentation of acceptance or publication status are prohibited.
- AMGOI affiliation, funding support and collaborator contributions shall be acknowledged accurately, wherever applicable.
- Errors discovered after publication shall be reported promptly to the publisher or concerned authority, and corrections or retractions shall be pursued where necessary.

4.5 Research Involving Human Participants, Animals and the Environment

- Research involving human participants, personal data, biological samples or vulnerable groups shall be undertaken only after obtaining approvals required from the competent ethics committee or statutory authority.
- Participants shall be informed about the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of research, and informed consent shall be obtained before participation, wherever required.
- Participation shall be voluntary; privacy, confidentiality, dignity and the right to withdraw shall be respected in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Research involving animals shall be undertaken only where legally permitted, with prior approval from the competent authority and safeguards for animal welfare.
- Research activities shall comply with applicable environmental, biosafety, laboratory safety, waste-management and other statutory requirements.
- No research shall commence until all mandatory ethical, safety and statutory approvals have been obtained.

4.6 Intellectual Property, Confidentiality and Third-Party Rights

- Researchers shall respect copyright, patents, designs, software licences, confidential information and all other third-party rights.
- Potentially patentable or commercially sensitive findings shall be disclosed to the R&D Cell before public disclosure or publication, in accordance with the AMGOI IPR Policy.
- Confidential information received from industry, sponsors, collaborators or research participants shall be protected and shall not be disclosed without proper authorisation.
- Ownership, inventorship, authorship, licensing and benefit-sharing shall be determined under applicable law, written agreements and AMGOI policies.
- Use of licensed software, databases, instruments and other research resources shall comply with applicable licence and usage conditions.

4.7 Conflict of Interest and Research Funding

- Researchers shall disclose actual, potential or perceived financial, professional or personal conflicts of interest that may affect research design, conduct, evaluation or reporting.
- Sources of funding, sponsorship, in-kind support and relevant affiliations shall be disclosed in proposals, reports and publications as required.
- Research proposals, budgets, expenditure statements and progress reports submitted to funding agencies shall be accurate and complete.
- Research funds shall be used only for approved purposes and supported by proper records and bills in accordance with institutional and sponsor requirements.
- External consultancy, sponsored research and use of AMGOI name, logo, facilities or resources shall follow relevant institutional policies and approval procedures.

4.8 Responsibilities of Supervisors and Research Team Members

- Principal Investigators and project leaders shall ensure that research is properly planned, supervised, documented and conducted in accordance with approved protocols.
- Faculty supervisors shall guide students in research methodology, citation, publication ethics, data management, safety and responsible research practices.
- Each research team member shall perform assigned duties honestly, maintain records and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- Supervisors shall ensure fair recognition of student and junior researcher contributions and shall not appropriate their work or findings.

- Any change to an approved research protocol shall be documented and submitted for approval wherever required.

4.9 Reporting and Handling of Research Misconduct

- Any person with a reasonable concern about research misconduct may submit a written complaint with relevant details or evidence to the Dean, R&D or designated institutional authority.
- Complaints shall be handled confidentially, impartially and without retaliation against persons who report concerns in good faith.
- The concerned authority may conduct a preliminary assessment and refer the matter to an appropriate committee for examination.
- The person against whom an allegation is made shall be given a fair opportunity to respond, and the matter shall be examined on the basis of records and evidence.
- Where required, the Institute may recommend correction, withdrawal or retraction of research outputs and may initiate action under applicable institutional rules.
- False, malicious or knowingly fabricated complaints may also be dealt with under applicable institutional rules.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Students / Research Scholars: Follow research ethics, cite sources, maintain authentic records, obtain required permissions and acknowledge contributions.

Research Team / Collaborators: Comply with agreed protocols, confidentiality, authorship, data-sharing and funding obligations

Faculty Supervisor/ Researchers: Conduct and report research honestly, disclose conflicts, protect data and intellectual property, and comply with approvals and safety requirements., Ensure ethical project design, appropriate supervision, accurate records, fair authorship and team compliance.

Concerned HOD: Promote compliance within the department, verify required declarations and approvals, and forward concerns to the Dean, R&D

Research Ethics Committee: Review research ethics matters referred to it, examine allegations impartially, seek records or clarification and submit reasoned recommendations.

Dean, R&D / : Coordinate implementation, create awareness, receive or route complaints, monitor compliance and place matters before the appropriate committee

Director& Campus Director : Approve the policy, constitute or nominate the appropriate committee, and take decisions on recommendations in accordance with institutional rules.

Finance: Support approved research activities, maintain relevant records and follow institutional procedures for facilities, safety and expenditure.

Management: Approve, reject or seek clarification on claims; decision is final under institutional norms.

6. Review and Revision of Policy

The Dean, R&D shall periodically review this policy in consultation with the R&D Committee and other competent authorities. Revisions may be proposed in response to changes in applicable laws, UGC or other regulatory requirements, research practices or institutional needs. All amendments shall be submitted to the Director / Competent Authority for approval and communicated to the AMGOI research community.

7. Annexures/Supporting Documents

1. **Annexure A:** Research Ethics Undertaking / Declaration by Faculty Members, Students and Research Scholars.
2. **Annexure B:** Research Proposal Ethics Self-Assessment and Approval Checklist.
3. **Annexure C:** Informed Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet, wherever applicable.
4. **Annexure D**: Plagiarism / Similarity Check Report, wherever required.
5. **Annexure E**: Conflict of Interest and Funding Disclosure Form.
6. **Annexure F:** Research Data Management and Confidentiality Undertaking, wherever applicable.
7. **Annexure G:** IPR / Invention Disclosure Form, wherever applicable.
8. **Annexure H:** Research Misconduct Complaint Form and supporting evidence, wherever applicable.
9. **Annexure I**: Ethics committee, statutory, safety or other approval documents relevant to the research activity.

8. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

1. Before commencing research, the researcher shall review this policy and identify the ethical, legal, safety, data protection and intellectual property requirements relevant to the proposed work.
2. The researcher shall prepare the proposal, obtain approval of the Faculty Supervisor / Principal Investigator and HOD, and submit it to the R&D Cell where institutional review or further approval is required.
3. For research involving human participants, animals, personal or sensitive data, biological materials or environmental impact, the researcher shall obtain prior approval from the competent ethics committee or statutory authority before starting the activity.
4. The Principal Investigator / Faculty Supervisor shall ensure that all team members understand their responsibilities, approved protocol, data-management requirements and safety precautions.
5. During research, the team shall maintain authentic records, protect confidential information, disclose conflicts of interest and document approved changes to the protocol.
6. Before submission or publication, authors shall verify originality, citations, authorship order, acknowledgements, affiliation, funding disclosures and compliance with publisher requirements.
7. Any suspected research misconduct or breach of this policy shall be reported to the Dean, R&D or designated authority for appropriate examination and action.
8. The Dean, R&D shall maintain relevant declarations, approvals, training records and recommendations, and place matters requiring institutional decision before the competent authority.
9. The competent authority shall communicate the decision and ensure corrective or disciplinary action, where warranted, under applicable institutional rules.

Dr. Mrs. V. K. Thombare
Dean, R&D

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