RESEARCH POLICY AND PROCEDURE

2018
Royal Education Council

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Annexure

Vision, Mission, and Mandate of REC

Vision

A leading centre for education innovation and transformation.

Mission

Provide leadership in Research, Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development in improving the mainstream education system, supported by enabling institutional culture and competent professionals.

Mandates

REC as the national epicentre for education innovation and transformation shall determine the national school curricula and teacher professional development programmes, and strive to improve the overall mainstream education system. Therefore, the specific mandates of the REC are as follows:

1. Review, innovate, and develop relevant curriculum and teaching learning materials for school education.

2. Develop and provide teacher professional development programmes for efficient implementation of school curriculum.

3. Conduct research in curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, teacher education and educational policies.

4. Innovate and strengthen educational technology to support design and delivery of curriculum, professional development and educational research.

5. Provide forum to facilitate academic and professional discourses at national and international levels.

6. Provide technical expertise and work in collaboration with relevant national and international stakeholders.

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Rationale

Research is key to development of quality curriculum, effective professional development programmes, and curricular policies. Therefore, REC needs to have a policy that promotes and supports research and scholarly culture.

This document sets out expectations, standards, and procedures for the conduct of research by professionals associated with the organization.

Policy Statements

1. REC encourages a culture of enquiry and innovation among the professionals.

2. REC uses research to inform curriculum development, implementation practices, and professional development programmes.

3. REC prioritises research activities based on the mandates, education goals and national priorities.

4. REC secures annual budget for planned research undertaking.

5. REC seeks and mobilizes funds for research in addition to budget provided by the Royal Government.

6. Research Division spearheads research and provides platforms for publications.

7. REC has a Research and Ethics Committee comprising experienced researchers from REC and other relevant agencies.

8. All research proposals need clearance from the Research and Ethics Committee.

9. REC engages in joint research endeavours with national and international institutions to build technical capacities through exchange of ideas and expertise.

10. REC takes up research assignments commissioned by external agencies.

11. All professionals of REC to comply with the research code of conduct.

12. REC ensures availability of adequate electronic and print resources to conduct research.

13. REC ensures secure storage of all primary data and research tools for a minimum period of five years.

14. REC maintains repository of research publications and make it available in the public domain.

15. REC ensures quality publications by instituting a professional body of editors.

16. REC subscribes to relevant aspects of "The Copyright Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2001" for authorship and copy rights.

17. The REC research policy and procedure govern all research undertakings by REC.

Procedures

1. **REC encourages a culture of enquiry and innovation among the professionals.**

   REC encourages a culture of enquiry and innovation among the professionals by creating enabling conditions and through on-going professional development support in research. Enabling conditions for policy implementation include the following, but are not limited to these:

   1.1 Adequate budget, human resource, and facilities to be ensured by the Management.

   1.2 In order to enable professionals to undertake research, motivation and commitment is important, therefore, relevant and continuous professional development programmes to be explored and organised by the Research Division and the Human Resource Section.

   1.3 Culture of enquiry to be an integral part of all the activities of the organisation. Scholarly seminar/symposiums/conference to be held annually. Similarly, research based journal to be instituted.

2. **REC uses research to inform curriculum development, implementation practices, and professional development programmes.**

   2.1 Review, plan, develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum and professional development programs through research. (For detailed procedures, refer the

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Curriculum Development Cycle and the Professional Development Cycle in the REC Operational Framework 2017)

2.2 For the purpose of research, review shall consist of major improvement on content based on empirical evidence and not minor improvement like proof reading, editorial, change in design, illustration and layout, made to the existing curriculum.

3. REC prioritises research activities based on the mandates, education goals and national priorities.

3.1 Professionals is/are required to consider the REC mandates, education goals and national priorities while formulating research proposals.

3.2 Research and Ethics Committee to address this policy while assessing the research proposals.

4. REC secures annual budget for planned research undertaking.

4.1 All research related undertakings/proposals to be submitted to the Research Division for consolidation.

4.2 The Research Division to submit the research proposals to the Research and Ethics Committee for clearance.

4.3 The Research Division upon obtaining clearance from the Research and Ethics Committee, to propose for budget allocation.

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5. REC seeks and mobilizes funds for research in addition to budget provided by the Royal Government.

5.1 Research Division to develop a strategy for fundraising including grant applications. (Annexure H)

5.2 Research Division to liaise with Finance Section to create a separate account for funds raised and to process the release of fund.

5.3 Research Division to develop guidelines for the utilization of fundraised. (Annexure I.1 - to be developed and endorsed)

6. Research Division spearheads research and provides platforms (educational journals, seminars, conferences etc.) for publications.

6.1 Research Division to explore and provide trainings on research and publication to enhance the professional competencies of professionals at REC.

6.2 Research Division to design and launch a national education journal in collaboration with Instructional and Media Division and publish it annually.

6.3 Research Division to organize and seek participation in national and international seminars, conferences, symposiums, etc.

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7. REC has a Research and Ethics Committee comprising experienced researchers from REC and other relevant agencies.

7.1   The Research and Ethics Committee to be instituted with the following composition:

- four experienced researchers from REC,
- one from Ministry of Education,
- one from Royal University of Bhutan,
- one from National Statistics Bureau, and
- one from an established independent research firm.

7.2   The members are to function in accordance to the Terms of Reference. (Annexure A)

8. All research proposals need approval and clearance from the Research and Ethics Committee.

8.1   All research proposals along with the Ethics Clearance Application form to be submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee in the Research Proposal Format (Annexure B) and Ethics Clearance Application Form (Annexure D) within the date determined by the management committee. When identifying the submission date, due consideration to the fiscal opening and closing to be made. While also taking care of the provision for reworking on the research proposal submitted, if determined required by the Committee.

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8.2   Research and Ethics Committee to assess the research proposal based on the Research Proposal Evaluation Form. (Annexure C)

8.3   For the ethics clearance, the Research and Ethics Committee to review and approve on a case to case basis.

9.   **REC engages in joint research endeavours with national and international institutions to build technical capacities through exchange of ideas and expertise.**

9.1 Protocol for linkages and collaboration within the country are as follows:

- Consultation to identify areas of mutual interests, and

- Finalise the working modalities and sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) where required.

9.2 Protocol for linkages and collaboration with institutions outside the country are as follows:

- Identify institutions with similar goals,

- Seek legal advice from the office of the Attorney General.

- Obtain clearance from Gross National Happiness Commission,

- Obtain clearance from Ministry of Foreign Affairs for signing of MoU,

- Prepare proposal,

- Finalise proposal with the identified institute, and

- Sign MoU.

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10. REC takes up research assignment commissioned by external agencies.

10.1 Research Division to study the nature of work and identify relevant individual/team to carry out commissioned assignments.

10.2 The appointed individual/team to prepare a detailed research work plan and present it to the Research and Ethics Committee for endorsement. (Annexure B & D)

10.3 The appointed individual/team to conduct and complete the assignment as per the ToR of the commissioned agency.

11. All professionals of REC to comply with the research code of conduct.

11.1 All professionals of REC to abide by the research code of conduct. (Annexure F)

11.2 Allegations of misconduct/breeches to be submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee using the approved format. (Annexure G)

11.3 Research and Ethics Committee to initiate an investigation as per the Terms of Reference.

11.4 Any party dissatisfied with the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee has the right to appeal in writing to the Director, REC.

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12. REC ensures availability of adequate electronic and print resources to conduct research.

12.1 Instructional and Media Division to develop guidelines for the procurement and use of the electronic and print resources to conduct research. (Annexure I.2 to be developed and endorsed)

12.2 All professionals to abide by the guideline and its formalities for availing resources.

13. REC ensures secure storage of all primary data and research tools for a minimum period of five years.

13.1 Research Division liaises with Instructional and Media Division to create a safe and reliable data storage.

13.2 All professionals to submit all primary data to the Research Division upon signing an agreed upon consent form for safe keeping and storage. (Annexure J)

13.3 Research Division to facilitate data access upon instruction from the Director provided the concerned professional/s gives consent and is /are protected.

13.4 Research Division in collaboration with Instructional and Media Division to explore and provide regular data safety management trainings.

14. REC maintains a repository of research publications and make it available in the public domain.

14.1 Research Division liaises with Instructional and Media

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Division to create a safe and reliable repository.

14.2 The final research publication to be submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee for endorsement.

14.3 Research Division to facilitate documentation and dissemination of the research study.

14.4 Research Division in collaboration with Instructional and Media Division to facilitate access to publication.

15. REC ensures quality publications by instituting a professional body of editors.

15.1 Research Division initiates the formation of the Editorial Committee as and when required.

15.2 Research Division in collaboration with Curriculum Development Centre, Professional Development Centre, Instructional and Media Division will recommend the Editorial Committee member composition based on relevant subject expertise, research and publication experience.

15.3 The editors to function in accordance to the ToR for editors. The ToR to be finalised by the management in collaboration with Instructional Media Division. (Annexure E)

15.4 Upon approval from the Editorial Committee, Instructional and Media Division to assist and facilitate printing of research publications.

16. **REC subscribes to relevant aspects of "The Copyright Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2001" for authorship and copy rights.**

   16.1 All copyright shall remain with the creator unless: the work is a work for hire (and copyright vests in the organization under copyright law), is supported by a direct allocation of funds through the organization for the pursuit of a specific project, is commissioned by the organization, makes significant use of organization resources or personnel, or is otherwise subject to contractual obligations (Clause 13.2.5.1 of ZHIB'TSHOL, RUB).

   16.2 The authorship shall remain with the creator/s (Copyright Act, 2001).

   16.3 All copyright issues to be addressed in alignment with the Copyright Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2001.

17. **The REC research policy and procedures governs all research undertakings of REC.**

   17.1 All researchers must abide by the REC Research Policy and Procedures while undertaking research.

   17.2 Research and Ethics Committee regulates the implementation of this policy.

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ANNEXURE A: ToR of the Research Ethics Committee[1]

The Research and Ethics Committee is the highest professional body within REC that oversees all aspects of research which include but is not limited to reviewing the research proposals and ethics application forms submitted by REC professionals.

1. Membership of the Committee

Membership shall be as follows:

- Four experienced researchers from REC,
- One from Ministry of Education,
- One from Royal University of Bhutan,
- One from National Statistics Bureau, and
- One from an established independent research firm.

Selection of the members will be based on their knowledge, qualities and experience and not as representatives of any organisation, group or opinion. All appointment are for three years and may be renewable.

Members are not offered remuneration, however, members will be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in attending Research and Ethics Committee meetings or in otherwise carrying out the business of the Research and Ethics Committee.

Membership will lapse if a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings or send comment without apology or reasonable excuse. Membership will also lapse if members fail to attend all the required meetings in a calendar year.

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1. Adapted from University of Western Sydney's ToR for Human and Research Committee

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Members shall receive a formal notice of appointment and a guarantee that the institution accepts legal responsibility for decisions and advice from the Panel and indemnifies its members accordingly. Members are bound by the RGoB Conflict of Interest Policy. Members of the Research and Ethics Committee shall maintain the confidence of applicants and their proposals, ensuring that they do not discuss or disclose details of submissions outside the meeting forum, apart from discussion undertaken with another member of the Committee. If the committee seeks advice from experts in considering a proposal, these experts are bound by the same confidentiality requirements. All general discussions within the forum of the meetings must remain in confidence.

2. Main Functions

1. Review research proposals to be undertaken by professionals of REC or on the premises of the Council, to determine whether they are ethically acceptable and in accordance with relevant standards and guidelines.

2. Grant approval for research proposals, including amendments to proposals, where review has determined that they are ethically acceptable and in accordance with relevant standards and guidelines.

3. Withhold ethical approval for research proposals where review has determined that they are not ethically acceptable and/or are not in accordance with relevant standards and guidelines.

4. Withdraw/Revoke ethical approval for research proposals where review has determined that they are not ethically acceptable and/or are not in accordance with relevant standards and guidelines

5. Monitor the conduct of approved research through the receipt of annual and completion reports.

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3. Meetings and Quorum

1. The Research and Ethics Committee will meet face to face twice a year (February and August) for planned research undertaking, or as and when required for adhoc research studies.

2. The quorum for meetings shall be 50% of the membership plus one.

3. The chair of the meetings shall provide all members opportunity to express relevant views on matters on the agenda.

4. The Research and Ethics Committee shall endeavour to reach its decisions by general agreement based on review of the documents provided by researchers.

5. Where a unanimous decision is not reached, the Chair shall facilitate the expression of opinion from all members, identify points of agreement and disagreement and accordingly make decision.

6. Any significant minority view (i.e. 2 or more members) shall be noted in the minutes.

7. Discussions of significant issues and decisions shall be recorded in the minutes.

8. Where members wish, a record of their formal dissent from the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee shall be recorded in the minutes.

9. Where further information is sought from applicants, the Chair shall determine whether or not further committee review is required.

10. To encourage free and open discussion and to emphasise the collegiate character of the Research and Ethics Committee, particular views shall not be attributed to particular individuals in the minutes, except in

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circumstances where a member seeks to have their opinions or objections recorded.

11.   The committee may invite any relevant official to the meeting to assist the committee in the attainment of its objectives.

12.   The final minutes shall be circulated to the REC Director within two weeks of the meeting.

4. Authority

The Committee has jurisdiction over the research of all REC professionals and all visiting staffs, including those using REC facilities.

5. Performance Evaluation

The Research and Ethics Committee shall, at least once a year, review its own performance and its Terms of Reference and shall report its conclusions and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Director of REC.

ANNEXURE B: Research Proposal Format

1. Research Proposal Format (2000 words)

Research Title Provide a short descriptive title of the study in less than 20 words	Researcher(s) Name Name list of researcher(s)
Introduction (600 words) Introduction includes but are not limited to the following, aims and objectives, research questions, significance of the study, expected outcomes and limitation of the study	
Literature Review (700 words) The quality and nature of discussions indicated should illustrate the researcher's thorough understanding of what is known in the field through relevant and pertinent discussions linked to the study; critical and analytical presentation of ideas that are logical and convincing, use of facts and evidences from the existing literature to support arguments; synthesize of ideas from different sources into one coherent argument; and identification of gaps, controversies, and contradictions in the existing literature.	
Methodology (600 words) Methodology includes but are not limited to the following; appropriate choice of research method and design; clearly stated data collection procedures with a timeline that is realistic and achievable; clear explanation of the sampling procedures and the appropriate nature and size of the sampling population; the researcher shows evidence of understanding the procedures of analyzing the data; validity and reliability issues are addressed appropriately; clear description of addressing ethical issues with appropriate measures to deal with risk and safety issues; limitation(s), assumption(s), and potential threat(s) of the study are clearly stated; and procedures of disseminating the research findings are also stated.	
Budget (100 words) Proposed budget estimation is justified; budget preparation is done in line with the existing financial rules and regulation of the RGoB and source of funding is reliable.	
References APA referencing of materials	

ANNEXURE C: Research Proposal Evaluation Form[2]

Section A: Introduction

1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Weak; 3= Good; 4 = Excellent

	Introduction of the proposal	Ratings			
		1	2	3	4
1	The introduction provides a clear outline of the overall study.				
2	Research Problem is stated clearly, concisely, and objectively.				
3	Research issue(s) or problem(s) identified are topical and relates to the problems at the local/national level.				
4	Strong, valid, and convincing justifications that builds a good basis for the study.				
5	Research objectives are clear				
6	Research aims and objectives are aligned to the priorities and mandates of the organization.				
7	Research question(s) are clear (SMART)				
8	Potential for policy formulation to improve educational system and/or current practices.				

Section B: Literature Review

1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Weak; 3= Good; 4 = Excellent

	Literature Review	Ratings			
		1	2	3	4
1	Relevant and pertinent discussions linked to the study.				

2. Adapted from Paro College of Education evaluation form

2	Critical and analytical presentation of ideas that are logical and convincing.				
3	Uses facts and evidences from the existing literature and personal opinions to support arguments.				
4	Synthesizes ideas from different sources into one coherent argument.				
5	Identifies gaps, controversies, and contradictions in the existing literature and provides a personal opinion in relation to the study.				
6	Projects the researcher's personal voice and perspective strongly in the discussion.				
7	The quality and nature of discussions indicate the researcher's thorough understanding of what is known in the field.				

Section C: Methodology

1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Weak; 3= Good; 4 = Excellent

	Methodology	Ratings			
		1	2	3	4
1	Appropriate choice of research method and design.				
2	Justifies the choice of research approach through a comparative analysis of the different research approaches and designs.				
3	Demonstrates high degree of understanding and knowledge of research methodology.				
4	Research tools or instruments are relevant and clearly described.				

5	Clearly justifies the choice of research tools and instruments in comparison to other research tools.				
6	Research tools/instruments are prepared meticulously and attached as appendix for reference.				
7	Data collection procedures are stated clearly in logical sequence and structure.				
8	Clear description of the data collection procedures with a timeline that is realistic and achievable.				
9	Clear explanation of the sampling procedures and the appropriate nature and size of the sampling population.				
10	Procedures for analyzing the data are explained clearly step-by-step.				
11	The researcher shows evidence of understanding the procedures of analyzing the data.				
12	Validity and reliability issues are addressed appropriately.				
13	Clear description of addressing ethical issues with appropriate measures to deal with risk and safety issues.				
14	Limitation(s), assumption(s), and potential threat(s) of the study are clearly stated.				
15	Procedures of disseminating the research findings are stated.				
16	Provides a research timeline that is realistic and achievable (e.g., researcher has worked out a daily or weekly time commitment schedule for the research proposed).				

Section D: General Impression

1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Weak; 3= Good; 4 = Excellent

	General Impression	Ratings			
		1	2	3	4
1	The overall presentation of the proposal is well organized and well-structured with proper title page, table of contents, section headings, etc.				
2	Exhibition of good writing skills in terms of the flow of ideas, sentences, paragraphs, grammar, spelling, syntax, punctuation, choice of words, smooth transition from one section to another, etc.				
3	Page layout in terms of margin, font size, line spacing, page number, etc.				
4	Good evidence of the use of relevant literature resources that are current and have a strong bearing on the research in hand.				
5	All in-text citations and end referencing are used correctly according to the APA style.				
6	The research proposal on the whole presents a "professional" appearance.				

Section E: Budgeting

1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Weak; 3= Good; 4 = Excellent

	Budgeting	Ratings			
		1	2	3	4
1	Proposed budget estimation is justified.				
2	Budget preparation is done in line with the existing financial rules and regulation of the RGoB.				
3	Source of funding is reliable.				

Section F: Overall recommendation

Based on the above rating (Section A to E), this proposal should be: (tick the recommendation)

1. Accepted as is, since all ratings are good or excellent

2. Accepted based on the strengthening of the identified limitations (need to list the limitations with suggestions)

3. Resubmit with substantial revision (need to list the limitations with suggestions)

4. Reject

Comments for the researcher/author: (listing limitations, observations and suggestions)

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ANNEXURE D: Ethics Clearance Form[3]

This application form covers research dealing with non-invasive procedures such as interviews, focus groups and those questionnaires that contain sensitive information.

1. Title of Project: _____

2. Aims of Project: (Describe briefly)

_____
_____
_____

3. Person responsible:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Contact number: _____

4.   Associate 1: _____
     Associate 2:   _____
     Associate 3:   _____
5.   Funding: Is this application subject to grant proposal? Specify.

_____
_____
_____

6.   Proposed date of commencement

_____

_____

3. Adapted from University of New England ethics form

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7. Duration and completion date

    _____
    _____

8. Intended number of participants

    _____

9. Source of participants

    _____

10. Briefly describe the research methods to be used (eg. Interview, focus group, survey etc.)

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

11. Describe any risks or serious burdens which this research might pose for your participants and how this will be rectified. (eg. Intrusion upon privacy, embarrassment, emotional upset etc.)

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    _____

12. Does this research involve subject matter of particularly sensitive nature? (eg. Participants knowledge of, or participation in, illegal issues/ issues deemed sensitive by the community etc.)

    _____
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    _____
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13. If the research involves interviews with participants, briefly explain what mechanisms (if any) will be put in place to respond to foreseeable eventualities such as: a revelation of illegal activity by or involving the participant; disclosure of the institutional mismanagement; a participant becoming distraught because of the subject matter of the interview, etc (e.g. Are interviewers trained for this project? Will interviewers have names and contact numbers of appropriate referral services? Is it appropriate for some arrangements to be made to respond to disclosure of harm or illegal activity involving participants?)

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14. Will your participants receive any financial reward or other compensation for their time and inconvenience? If yes, give details.

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15. What steps will you take to obtain the agreement of your participants to take part in the research? Please attach a copy of the Plain Language Statement/Consent Form.

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    _____

16. Does this research involve any impediments to obtaining the full understanding, free agreement of participants to take part in the project? (eg. will some or all participants be people of limited competence to consent or young children? If so, give details of how you will negotiate an agreement for the participation of these persons through a family member, career, legal guardian or other person.)

_____
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17. Are potential participants in this research independent of relationship, which may limit their belief that they are free to refuse participation? If so, give details of the steps you will take to preserve their right to refuse participation.

_____
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18. Does the project require the withholding of relevant information about the aims and conduct of the research? If yes, explain why?

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19. Does this research require participants be deceived about a relevant aspect of the aims or nature of the research of
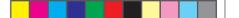
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their participation? If so, explain why deception is required and how the interests of the participants will be protected, including what they will be told about the research and their participation.

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20. Will participants be informed that they are free at any time to discontinue participation? If yes, give details. If no, explain why.

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21. Confidentiality of records
(a) How will confidentiality of records be maintained during the study?

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(b) Are the records to be preserved after the study is completed?

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(c) If YES, how will the confidentiality of the records be protected during the period of their preservation?

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22. **Ethical Issues**

    Please indicate which, if any, of the following ethical issues are involved in this research.

    (a) Will participants be photographed by camera or video?
    _____

    (b) Will participants be tape-recorded? _____

    (c) Does the research involve any stimuli, tasks, investigations or procedures, which may be experienced by the subjects as stressful, noxious, aversive or unpleasant?

    _____
    _____

    (d) In this study are there any procedures known (or thought) to be beneficial or harmful to one group of participants (EXPERIMENTAL) being withheld from another group of participants (CONTROL)?

    _____
    _____
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    _____

23. Is there any other ethical issues raised by this research? If so, what steps will you take in response to them?

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24. Is anything in the conduct of the research project likely to be subject to legal constraint? If so, what steps will you take in response?

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25. How will the results of your research be presented?

_____
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26. Signatures of responsible investigator and associates:

Researcher:

Date:

Co-Researcher (If any): (Signature with dates)

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27. Comments if any from the Head of Unit/Centre:

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For Research and Ethic Committee use only

Decision with justification (whether clearance is granted or not)

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ANNEXURE E: ToR for Editors

Pointers for the Development of ToR

Roles and Responsibilities

Primary responsibilities of the editors include reviewing article submissions and preparing them for publication. Specifically this entails the following:

1. Perform initial review of submitted manuscript to determine if publishable and if suitable for scope of journal;

2. Select and assign expert peer reviewers to the manuscript if necessary;

3. Monitor review process - keep things going;

4. Sort through feedback to steer authors, especially regarding:

    • differences of opinion and perspectives among reviewers;

    • sometimes reviewers provide contradictory suggestions;

    • sometimes reviewers are wrong.

5. Make a final publication decision based on feedback from reviewers;

6. Manage revision process (if applicable);

7. Schedule accepted manuscripts for publication;

8. Manage the flow, edit, and publish selected manuscripts;

9. Correspond with authors submitting manuscripts and with any other reviewers involved;

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10. Work with guest editors (if any), editorial assistants, and/or clerical/secretarial staff;

11. Work with the Editorial Committee to produce a high quality Journal based on the needs of the readership;

12. Responsibility for Quality of Content - The Co-Editors are responsible for ensuring that the content of the Journal is of a high quality in terms of accuracy, validity, reliability, credibility, authority, readability, and relevance to the Journal's scope and mission; and

13. The Co-Editors have editorial content responsibility for the publication. The Co-Editors and the Editorial Committee reserve the right to accept or reject any material submitted for publication, as well as to edit any materials submitted for publication.

ANNEXURE F: Research Code of Conduct

The purpose of research is creation and dissemination of new knowledge and emphasises the importance of transparency and due process to all claims and findings to be tested by others. REC researchers and associates are expected to be committed to the highest standards of professional conduct in accord with the accepted practice of their discipline, codes of relevant external funding bodies and legislative requirement. This code sets out the general principles for the conduct of research and should be read in conjunction with RUB Zhib'tshol, pages 27 to 76, which details the foundational principles; protection of research subjects; conflict of interest; handling data and materials; leadership and professional research duties.

I. Foundational Principles

1. The following values underlie this code: honesty, accuracy, morality and ethics, scholarship and professionalism, inclusiveness, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, efficiency and objectivity.

2. Researchers shall keep themselves informed in order to maintain their competence, strive to advance the body of knowledge within which they practice and provide opportunities for the professional development of themselves, their subordinates and fellow practitioners.

3. Researchers shall strive to acquire knowledge and skills through appropriate research endeavours aimed at advancing the body of knowledge for the sake of people and their environment.

4. Researchers shall be aware of the global research trends and developments, but adapt, synthesize and implement to cater to the local and national interests.

5.   Researcher shall conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner while representing the Organization and the Nation in any national and international forum.

6.   Researchers shall observe the standards of practice and conduct set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, academic and scientific societies and also other relevant professional bodies.

7.   Researchers shall be aware of the legal requirements, which regulate their work noting particularly health and safety legislation and data protection.

8.   Researchers shall obtain methodological and ethical approval for all research works.

II. Protection of Research Subjects

1.   RGoB regulations – researchers are subject to all the laws, policies, and regulations of the country. The primary responsibility for ensuring compliance lies with them, but some of governing policies related to human subjects research are summarized here, by focal agency.

2.   Research Ethics Board of Health – REBH was formed in the Ministry of Health, RGoB, to protect human participants in any research or studies. All those conducting any health related research /study in Bhutan involving human participants must obtain prior Ethical Approval from REBH before conducting the research/ study. Such clearance should be provided to a College Research Committee along with the research proposal for approval. Ref: www.health.gov.bt/rebh.php

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3. National Statistical Bureau – By executive order of Prime Minister Sangay Ngedup (May 26, 2006), as per the decision of the 300th Coordination Committee Meeting of the Council of Ministers (April 11, 2006), the NSB is "designated as the central authority for collection and release of any official data, and their custodian. As such, all ministries, departments, and agencies are directed to acquire prior approval from the NSB on all statistical matters." The University, though it exerts its independence as an autonomous institute, recommends that researchers dealing with human statistical information (such as would be collected through survey sampling from the national population) as a matter of professional practice, inform the NSB of any nation-wide sampling studies being conducted. CRCs are expected to monitor this level of compliance with the executive order.

4. National Biodiversity Centre – The Biodiversity Act of Bhutan (2003) provides for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources through the regulation of access and equitable sharing of benefits as well as the documentation and protection of traditional knowledge associated with biological resources. As per the Access and Benefit Sharing Policy (still in a draft stage), the NBC is the central authority on matters involving traditional knowledge (TK), and as such must be consulted prior to human contacts made with the intention of documenting TK. CRCs are expected to monitor compliance with this.

5. Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs – Researchers interested in studying Bhutanese cultural properties or cultural heritage sites should seek approval from this Department.

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6. Royal Education Council- All research proposal must get approval from the Research and Ethics Committee prior to its conduct.

III. Conflicts of Interest

1. The Royal Education Council is an institution of public trust. Therefore, the professionals must respect that status and carry out their intellectual activities in ways that will not compromise the integrity of the Council or that trust. A conflict of interest occurs when there is a divergence between an individual's private interests and his or her professional obligations to the organization such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the individual's professional actions or decisions are determined by considerations of personal financial gain, or other personal interference. A conflict of interest depends on the situation, and not on the character or actions of the individual.

2. Personal interests and the prospect of financial gain should not improperly influence a researcher's fundamental obligation to truth and honesty. Financial conflicts of interest are situations that create perceived or actual tensions between personal financial gain and adherence to the fundamental values of honesty, accuracy, efficiency, and objectivity.

3. Conflicts of commitment arise from situations that place competing demands on researchers' time and loyalties. At any time, a researcher might be: working on one or more funded projects; preparing to submit a proposal for a new project; attending workshops, trainings, professional meetings, or giving guest lectures; serving

as a peer reviewer; sitting on advisory boards; working as a paid consultant. Each of these situations requires time and makes demands on a researcher's commitments. Care needs to be taken to assure that these commitments do not inappropriately interfere with one another or violate the HR or Financial policies.

4. Researchers are expected to avoid bias in proposing, conducting, reporting, and reviewing research. They therefore should be careful to avoid making judgments or presenting conclusions based solely on personal opinion or affiliations rather than on evidence.

5. Intellectual conflicts may arise when a researcher holds strong personal views on the importance of a particular area of research or set of research findings. Those views should be disclosed so that others can take them into consideration when judging the researcher's statements (sometimes such opposite or dissenting views could be highly valued). The same is true of strong moral, cultural, or religious convictions that could influence a researcher's scientific opinions. This is particularly true when researchers serve as expert, witnesses or advisors.

6. Researchers must foster an atmosphere of academic freedom by promoting the open and timely exchange of results of scholarly activities. This means responding to all reasonable requests for data, protocols, etc.

7. All researcher have an obligation to avoid actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest. Disclosure of conflicts of interest must be made at the time of reporting or proposing research.

IV.   Handling data and materials

1.   Data and materials often take the bulk of researchers' attention, being their most important tools for testing hypothesis, generating results, and arriving at conclusions. Proper data management practices are vital to responsible research. Researchers should take into consideration four important issues before any data are collected: ownership, collection, storage, and sharing. The integrity of data and, by implication, the usefulness of the research it supports, depends on careful attention to detail, from initial planning through final publication.

2.   The organization – Support for research is typically awarded to the organization, not to individual researchers. Even in situations where researchers win individual research funds, the funds are typically tied to that individual's affiliation with the organization. The organization therefore has ultimate responsibility for budgets, regulatory compliance, contractual obligations, and data management. To assure that the organization is able to meet these responsibilities, it claims ownership rights over data collected with funds given to it. At the organization, even research projects not funded by specific grants are implicitly supported by the organization infrastructure. This means that researchers cannot automatically assume that they can take their data with them if they move out of the institution. The organization maintains rights and obligations to retain control over the data – this is the default situation, and other scenarios would have to be cleared by written agreement with management/research and ethics committee.

3. External Funders – Non-organization funders may stake claims to data collected during the course of research funded by them. Funders provide support for research for different reasons. These different interests translate into different ownership claims. Since the claims of funders can and do vary considerably, researchers must be aware of their obligations to them before they begin collecting data. Written agreements on file with the management would have to detail the data ownership terms of external funders. If the funder requests ownership of data, this would have to be approved by management/ research and ethics committee.

4. Before any data are collected, ownership issues and the responsibilities that come with them need to be carefully worked out. It is also important to note that in most cases ownership provisions must be approved by the organization as the recipient and responsible entity for the administration of research funds. Researchers therefore should not enter into agreements that affect the control and use of data without getting institutional approval. Before undertaking any work, researchers should make sure they can answer the following questions:

   a. Who owns the data being collected?

   b. What rights does the researcher have to publish the data?

   c. Does collecting these data impose any obligations on the researcher or the organization?

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5. Throughout their work, researchers shall keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and the approval granted during the research process, including records of interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes.

6. To have and hold their value, research data must be properly recorded. In recording data, two simple rules should be kept in mind to avoid problems later, should someone ask about or question the work:

   a. Hard-copy evidence should be entered into a numbered, bound notebook so that there is no question later about the date the experiment was run, the order in which the data were collected, or the results achieved. It is not recommended to use loose-leaf notebooks or simply collect pages of evidence in a file. Records in a bound notebook should not be changed without noting the date and reasons for the change.

   b. Electronic evidence should be validated in some way to assure that it was actually recorded on a particular date and not changed at some later date (the date stamp on electronic files can be changed and is an unreliable indicator). If data are collected electronically, researchers must be able to demonstrate that they are valid and have not been changed.

7. Once collected, data must be properly protected. They may be needed later to confirm research findings, to establish priority, or to be re-analyzed by other researchers. Over time, data, as the currency of research, become an investment in research. If the data are not

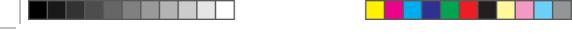properly protected, the investment, whether public or private, could become worthless.

8. Data storage – The responsible handling of data begins with proper storage and protection from accidental damage, loss, or theft:

    a. Lab notebooks should be stored in a safe place.

    b. Computer files should be backed up and the backup data saved in a secure place that is physically removed from the original data.

    c. Samples should be appropriately saved so that they will not degrade over time. For samples that are naturally degradable, efforts should be taken to record, document, and protect data extracted from them prior to their degradation.

    d. Care should be taken to reduce the risk of fire, flood, and other catastrophic events.

    e. Confidentiality – Some data are collected with the understanding that only authorized individuals will use them for specific purposes. In such cases, care needs to be taken to assure that privacy agreements are honoured. This is particularly true of data that contain personal information that can be linked to specific individuals. It is also true of confidential information about protected processes and materials. If a company shares confidential data about a process with a researcher prior to seeking a patent on that process, the researcher must take care to make sure the data are kept confidential.

f.   Period of retention – Data should be retained for a reasonable period of time to allow other researchers to check results or to use the data for other purposes. The Organization's minimum retention period is 5 years following the submission of a report on the research. Researchers shall securely store all primary data as the basis for publications for at least 5 years unless otherwise required by contractual terms or the guidance of relevant professional bodies in a paper and/ or electronic form, as appropriate, after completion of a research project.

g.   Researchers discontinuing their relationship with the Organization within the data retention minimum timeframe must deposit their data with other Organization associates.

V. Leadership

1.   Research group leaders shall ensure that good research practices including documentation of results, peer review of research, regular discussion and seminars, are encouraged and shall ensure that adequate supervision exists at all relevant levels.

2.   Research group leaders and senior researchers shall groom and develop the research leadership skills of their immediate subordinates by involving them appropriately.

3.   Research leaders shall treat their team members with respect for their professionalism and concern for their well-being, and provide them with a safe, congenial working environment, fair compensation and proper acknowledgment of their scientific contributions.

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VI. Professional Research Duties

1. In the course of professional researchers' research work, they will come across additional responsibilities that are common in the career of every research professional. These include collaborating with partners, publishing and disseminating their findings, and serving as peer reviewers. When encountering these situations, Royal Education Council requires its researchers to adhere to the guidelines given in RUB's Zhib'Tshol given its comprehensiveness.

ANNEXURE G: Allegation of Research Misconduct Form

If you have a concern or allegation concerning the conduct of research at this institution that you feel meets the definition of research misconduct, please complete this form.

Describe the nature and specifics of the complaint. Include all relevant dates, locations and other applicable information.

_____

_____

List the applicable laws, policies, rules and/or regulations that have been violated.

_____

_____

If applicable, provide the names and contact information of additional witnesses.

_____

_____

Any other information.

_____

_____

Certification

I certify that the information contained in this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Name: _____

Signature with date: _____

Address, Phone number, Email address: _____

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ANNEXURE H: Strategy for Fundraising

There is a need to develop a contextualised fundraising strategy for REC. As an example, we could follow the following steps shown below (which is adapted from the materials stated in *https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/help/fundraising-strategy*)

Step 1: Designate a fundraising coordinator

As a first step, it is important for an organisation to assign the overall responsibility for fundraising activities to one person. Even if you have a fundraising committee or outside consultants, one person in your organisation still needs to be in ultimate control of your fundraising strategy.

Step 2: Set your parameters

Schedule some time for senior staff/volunteers and your board/committee and others interested in fundraising to get together and thrash around some ideas and establish some goals.

• Outline your goals. What do you hope to achieve?

• Research past fundraising activities – what has worked? And just as importantly, what has not worked?

• Work out who your friends and potential friends are, and who is willing to support your organisation – businesses, government departments, individuals, families, philanthropic trusts and foundations.

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Step 3: Identify your fundraising methods

Identify which of the six pillars of fundraising your organisation will try to draw funds from in the upcoming year, and how. If possible, you should aim to draw from all six:

• Grants

• Donations

• Membership/Alumni

• Events

• Sales/Earned Income

• Community-Business Partnerships (Sponsorships)

Conduct market research with members, friends, etc., collecting their good ideas and examples of what has worked to raise money.

Detail a case to support each prospective fundraising activity, and set an estimated target for each.

Remember that the imperatives for each method of fundraising are different:

• Grant-makers will each have a specific goal that they want to achieve through their grants and will want you to demonstrate how you can help them achieve those goals.

• Donors generally want to contribute to specific projects or activities, rather than the organisation as a whole.

• Members want something in return for their fees – information, special access, etc.

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- People attending a special event do not always have charitable motives – if they are paying for entertainment and they expect to be entertained.

- Businesses generally enter partnerships with not-for-profits to do the right thing, but they also may want to be seen to be doing the right thing. There may be other drivers (e.g. access to markets) at play as well.

Each of the six pillars of fundraising are explored in more detail here.

Set a timeline and a year planner, noting good times (and bad times) for the organisation to raise funds.

Step 4: Get your systems in order

Before you can accept any payments, you need to make sure you have the right administrative systems in place. You will need to be able to record and receipt all of your income, and ensure you can keep track of how, when and by whom it is being spent. In most cases, you are going to have to report on that later.

When making an appeal for public funds there are certain laws you must abide by. There are different rules for each state and territory applying to different methods of fundraising and different types and sizes of organisations. These rules are separate from the tax and incorporation laws that you are also obliged to observe.

Step 5: Get under way

Do not spend too long planning and pondering – get stuck in.

If you are a first-time fundraiser, start small with something that would not take much effort and would not throw your budget into deficit.

Creating quick wins is a great way to get the team enthused and chanting "What is next?"

Step 6: Monitor

The development of a fundraising strategy needs to be an annual exercise and should be evaluated and tweaked throughout the year as well.

You need the flexibility to react to new opportunities or to curtail activities that are either not practical or not profitable.

After every fundraising activity, and at least once a quarter, step back and check how you are going.

If you are not hitting your targets, what could you do to put the situation to rights?

Do not forget to monitor your volunteer workforce as well – if they are already burnt out only a few months into the year you're in trouble.

Step 7: Say thanks

One of the main lessons of fundraising is to ensure that you appropriately acknowledge those that have assisted you, either as volunteers, donors or sponsors.

Acknowledgement can be expressed during an event, in your newsletters, on your tickets, in advertising, or in a personal letter from the CEO or Chair.

If the donation/sponsorship/voluntary contribution is significant, consider providing a plaque, framed certificate or some form of permanent acknowledgement (signage, dedication).

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Step 8: Review

At the end of each year, have a look at what you said you would do and then compare it to what you have actually done.

Hold an evaluation session to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to the discussions around what worked and what did not.

Then have a break. And a party. Celebrate what is been achieved and all those who have allowed you to achieve it.
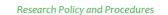
Then it is time to start again.

ANNEXURE I.1: Guidelines for Utilization of Fund-raised

To be developed after finalization of the fundraising strategy document.

ANNEXURE I.2: Guidelines for the procurement and use of electronic and print resources

To be developed by Instructional and Media Division to streamline and optimize the procurement and use of electronic and print resources

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ANNEXURE J: Consent form for primary data safe keeping

This is to certify that I, _____, am submitting all primary data associated with _____ _____ study to the Research Division for proper storage and protection from accidental damage, loss or theft, and natural calamities.

The Research Division may facilitate data access upon instruction from the Director (head of organisation) provided my respondents and I are protected from unnecessary harm.

The primary data submitted contains: (please be specific)

1.   _____
2.   _____
3.   _____

Signature of researcher/author: _____

Name of researcher/author: _____

Signature of research division representative: _____

Name of research division representative:_____

Signature of IMD representative: _____

Name of IMD representative:_____

Signature of Witness: _____

Name of Witness: _____

ANNEXURE K: Consent form for data collection

The consent forms needs to be adapted and made suitable to one's research.

K.1 Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Date………………

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

My name is _____ and I am currently working at Royal Education Council. This year, I am in the process of working on a research study. The topic of my research is _____. Over a period of _____, I will observe the class to collect data and I assure no harm in any form will be done to your child. Any information that can be identified with your child will remain confidential.

In order to successfully conduct my research, I am requesting your permission to use your child's data for my research. If you agree to let your child participate in my research, I would like you to kindly fill up the form given below with your signature.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email at _____ or call me at _____.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

_____

_____

Tick the relevant box:

☐ I have read the consent form. I give my child_____

(child's name) permisson to take part in the research study.

☐ I have read the consent form. I do not give my child _____

(child's name) permisson to take part in the research study.

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K.2 Principal Consent Form

Date……………….

Dear Principal,

This year, I am in the process of working on a research study. The topic of my research is _____. Over a period of _____, I will observe the class to collect data and I assure no harm in any form will be done to your child. Any information that can be identified with your child will remain confidential.

In order to successfully conduct my research, I am requesting your permission to use your students' data for my research. If you agree to let your students participate in my research, I would like you to kindly fill up the form given below with your signature.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email at _____ or call me at _____.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

_____

_____
_____

Tick the relevant box:

☐   I have read the consent form. I give my consent for class_____students (mention the class) to take part in the research study.

☐   I have read the consent form. I do not give my consent for class _____ students (mention the class) to take part in the research study.

Principal's Signature :
Date:____/____/_____

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K.3 Individual Student Consent Form

Date..................

Dear Student,

I am in the process of working on a research study. The topic of my research is _____. Over a period of _____, I will observe your class to collect data and I assure no harm in any form will be done to you. Any information that can be identified with you will remain confidential.

In order to successfully conduct my research, I am requesting your permission to collect data for my research. If you agree to participate in my research, I would like you to kindly fill up the form given below with your signature.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to me.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

_____

_____

_____

I _____of class_____in _____school, have read the consent form and agree to participate voluntarily in the above mentioned Action Research.

Signature: _____   Date: ___/___/_____

_____

_____

4. Adapted from https://earlyactionresearch.wikispaces.com/file/view/Consent+forms.docx

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