

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Research Ethics Guidelines

The humanities, the social sciences and natural sciences have developed hand in hand with progress towards a more advanced, sophisticated and diverse society. The continued pursuit of truth in traditional academic disciplines is accompanied by relentless processes of integration between different disciplines and generation of new fields of academic endeavor. Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) is aware of the turbulent environment surrounding scientific inquiry today and the need to go beyond strict adherence to existing conventions and structures of academic research at universities. With this awareness, APU declares its commitment to the ideals intrinsic to academic research: pursuit of truth, conception and transmission of cultural traditions, and contribution to the welfare of humanity and advancement of human society. APU will promote research, following the spirit of the “Ritsumeikan Charter,” the ideals and mission of which are shared by the Ritsumeikan Trust personnel and which is widely conveyed to society.

At universities, research should be conducted freely on the basis of academic conscience. In order to guarantee this freedom and enable APU and its researchers to fulfill their responsibilities to society in conditions of autonomy, it is critically important to develop a shared ethical paradigm. This must encompass protection of research subjects, both individuals and organizations, and researchers themselves, from any acts of infringement in the research process, as well as providing a concrete framework for application.

APU has established these Research Ethics Guidelines with the aims of facilitating the proper and smooth performance of academic research and maintaining community confidence in this research. The Guidelines prescribe standards which must be routinely observed and complied with by all those involved in research activity at APU.

1. Academic research at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU)

- (1) Holding ‘Freedom, Peace and Humanism’, ‘International Mutual Understanding’ and ‘Creation of the Future of the Asia Pacific’ as its basic ideals and aiming to achieve a better future for humankind, APU will strive to identify fundamental truths and seek solutions to problems facing humanity through activity founded on the freedom of academic inquiry. APU will use these efforts to contribute to peaceful, democratic and sustainable development throughout the world and in Japan.
- (2) APU will endeavor to cultivate a hub for distinctive and world-standard research, giving emphasis to both basic research activity founded on the free and original intellectual interests of each individual researcher, and focused research in areas of strategic significance for the university.
- (3) APU will promote the internationalization of research activity and the dissemination of research findings both within Japan and overseas. It will also work to develop linkages with overseas research institutes and other organizations, and aim to become an international center of academic research.
- (4) Through research activity, APU will work to contribute to the welfare of humankind, the advancement of society, the achievement of world peace, and the interests of local communities.
- (5) APU will enhance functions for integration of research and pedagogy, and endeavor to nurture individuals to assume active roles as just and ethical citizens of the global community.
- (6) APU will actively promote research and educational exchange, working to develop linkages with individuals and organizations overseas, public bodies at national and regional level, private enterprise, civil society organizations and other bodies.

2. Obligations and behavioral standards for researchers and staff engaged in administration of research activities

The term ‘researcher’ is a generic description which refers not only to APU faculty members but also to graduate students, undergraduate students, visiting research fellows and others engaged in research activity at APU.

(1) Basic provisions

- (i) The researcher shall behave with integrity and in accordance with good conscience and conviction, aware of the fact that academic research is supported by the trust and mandate of wider society.
 - (ii) In the course of research, the researcher shall respect human dignity and fundamental human rights and endeavor to gain the understanding of society.
 - (iii) The researcher shall comply with internationally-recognized standards, agreements, treaties and other conventions, domestic laws, regulations and guidelines, and all regulations prescribed by APU.
 - (iv) The researcher shall endeavor to maintain and expand his/her own specialist knowledge and skills, always aiming to achieve higher standards through profound academic inquiry.
 - (v) The researcher shall respect expert research in other fields and endeavor to comprehend the cultures, customs and values entailed in research activity conducted in other countries and regions. The researcher shall also recognize that fellow participants in joint research activity are mutually independent researchers of equal status, and exercise respect for their academic standpoints.
 - (vi) In cases where undergraduate and/or graduate students participate in research activity, the researcher shall take care to ensure that the students do not suffer any disadvantage.
 - (vii) The researcher shall take responsible steps in regards to safety and environmental considerations for individuals engaged in the research as collaborators. The researcher shall endeavor to build positive human relationships with these individuals, devoid of any harassment or discrimination based on factors such as disability, gender or nationality. Issues relating to harassment shall be dealt with in accordance with guidelines established separately from these provisions.
 - (viii) Research-related exchange and interaction with bodies outside the university shall be based on the four principles of autonomy, democracy, disclosure and harmony.
 - (ix) When engaging in research and activities involving examination, evaluation or exercises of judgment, the researcher shall pay sufficient attention to avoiding conflicts of interest and shall handle these activities appropriately and in consideration of their public character.
 - (x) In the process of engaging in research activity, the researcher shall behave with integrity and in accordance with the spirit of these guidelines.
- (2) Formulating research questions and proposals
 - (i) The researcher shall formulate research questions and proposals in a manner which enables presentation in as clear a form as possible.
 - (ii) When formulating research questions and proposals, the researcher shall obtain a full grasp of results of related research carried out previously, and take sincere steps to confirm the originality and novelty of his/her proposed research.
 - (iii) In the course of performing his/her research, the researcher shall undertake self-assessment of research progress, and endeavor to produce reports on progress as appropriate.
 - (iv) If at any stage, including during actual execution of research tasks, the possibility arises that the research may exert an undesirable influence on any human, society or environment, the researcher shall give careful consideration to whether or not to continue the research.
 - (3) Informed consent
 - (i) The researcher shall observe and safeguard all laws, regulations, guidelines and other rules in engaging with research subjects and collaborators.
 - (ii) If the researcher engages in research involving the receipt of information or data regarding personal matters such as individual conduct, thoughts or beliefs, property or assets, environment, and physical or mental condition, the researcher shall provide the individual(s) supplying that information or data with a thorough explanation of

the aims, significance, data collection methods and other aspects of the research, and obtain the consent of the individual(s) to participate in the research.

- (iii) The researcher shall endeavor as far as possible to eliminate all foreseeable risks to the individual(s) supplying the information or data.
- (iv) The above provisions also apply in cases where information or data is supplied by an organization, group or other collective body.
- (4) Obtaining and managing materials, data etc.
 - (i) When obtaining materials, data etc. for the purposes of his/her research, the researcher shall employ methods which are both scientific and generally considered suitable.
 - (ii) The researcher shall employ appropriate methods to store all records related to materials, data etc. obtained for the purposes of his/ her research, and shall preserve these records for a period sufficient to allow retrospective verification.
- (5) Protection of personal information
 - (i) The importance of personal information shall be recognized and measures shall be instituted to ensure appropriate management of this information, in light of the need to handle it carefully and in keeping with the principle of respect for individual personality.
 - (ii) The researcher and clerical staff responsible for administration of the research shall ensure that all materials, data etc. obtained in relation to the research are managed diligently. They shall not release any personal information obtained in the course of the research to any third party without the permission of the person to whom the information relates.
 - (iii) The researcher and clerical staff responsible for administration of the research shall respond with integrity to complaints or other inquiries regarding the handling of personal information.
- (6) Managing the safety of research equipment, chemicals etc.
 - (i) If the researcher uses research devices, machinery, chemicals or other materials to conduct research experiments, the researcher shall observe all relevant laws, regulations, internal APU rules and other stipulations and endeavor to ensure the safety of these uses.
 - (ii) The researcher shall take responsibility for the final disposal of all residues, waste matter, spent chemicals and other materials generated in the course of experiments related to his/her research.
- (7) Proper administration of research funds
 - (i) The researcher and clerical staff responsible for the research shall endeavor to administer all research funds in a proper manner, in constant awareness of the fact that these funds derive from sources including student fees, subsidies from national and regional public entities, grants from foundations and other providers and contributions from private enterprise.
 - (ii) The researcher shall use research funds only for the purposes of the research for which they were granted.
 - (iii) When administering research funds, the researcher and clerical staff responsible for the research shall comply with all related laws and regulations, APU accounting regulations and other standards regarding the use of the funds in question.
- (8) Disseminating research findings
 - (i) The researcher has the right and obligation to accurately report and return to society the findings of his/her research in their entirety, except in cases where public release is restricted on rational grounds such as the protection of rights of related parties and the acquisition of industrial property rights.
 - (ii) In presentation of research findings, the researcher shall survey earlier research carefully and avoid infringing on the intellectual property of others.

- (iii) Performance of the research and presentation of its findings shall not involve any improper conduct such as fabrication (creating data that does not exist in fact), falsification (altering data or manufacturing false data) or plagiarism (use of others' ideas, data, research findings etc. without appropriate citation).
 - (iv) In presentation of research findings, the person(s) materially involved in the research and holding responsibility for its content and findings shall be deemed the author(s) of the presentation.
- (9) Engaging in performance evaluation of third parties
- (i) If by virtue of appointment to a screening committee or other arrangement the researcher is involved in evaluating the performance of another party, the researcher shall conduct evaluation appropriately in accordance with relevant standards such as evaluation criteria and screening guidelines, and shall not allow the evaluation to be informed by any arbitrary perspectives.
 - (ii) Any information which the researcher obtains in the course of evaluating the performance of other parties shall not be disclosed to any third party or used in any improper manner.

3. Obligations of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU)

- (1) Maintaining the research environment and implementing ethics education
- (i) APU shall maintain a research environment that enables all researchers to exercise their abilities to the full, and shall give attention to researchers' individual development and building capabilities in accordance with aptitude.
 - (ii) APU shall implement awareness programs and ethics education in order to enhance recognition of ethical issues among researchers.
 - (iii) APU shall inform all researchers of the need to comply with the research ethics guidelines and to act with integrity.
 - (iv) APU shall make known to all parties the need to observe related laws and regulations, internal rules and other stipulations regarding the implementation of research projects and the management of research funds. APU shall also institute measures necessary to ensure that improper conduct does not occur.
 - (v) In the emergence of a matter of dispute such as a researcher conflict of interest or supposed improper intrusion on the research activity, APU shall institute measures necessary for the resolution of this matter.
 - (vi) APU shall establish Investigative Committee regarding research ethics.
- (2) Establishing an Investigative Committee

Investigative Committee Meetings shall be held to promote the proper application of these Guidelines and to address matters including conduct by researchers in violation of research ethics, submissions from parties subjected to improper or unjust treatment, and disruptive conduct encountered by researchers themselves.