



Versatile Consultants

Research Ethics/Code of Conduct Policies

Versatile Consultants Research Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy

1. Introduction

Versatile Consultants, a firm registered in Pakistan under the Companies Act of 2017, specializes in Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring & Evaluation services. This Research Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy establishes the ethical standards and professional behavior expected from all employees, consultants, and stakeholders involved in our research activities.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all research conducted by Versatile Consultants adheres to the highest ethical standards and respects the rights and dignity of all participants and stakeholders.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all research activities conducted by or on behalf of Versatile Consultants, including but not limited to data collection, analysis, reporting, and dissemination.

4. Core Principles

4.1 Integrity All research activities must be conducted with honesty, transparency, and accountability. Researchers must ensure the accuracy of data, report findings truthfully, and acknowledge any limitations or potential biases.

4.2 Respect for Persons Researchers must respect the autonomy, privacy, and dignity of all research participants. Informed consent must be obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality must be protected.

4.3 Beneficence and Non-maleficence Researchers must strive to maximize benefits and minimize harm to participants and communities involved in the research. Any potential risks must be clearly communicated, and appropriate measures must be taken to mitigate them.

4.4 Justice Researchers must ensure that the benefits and burdens of research are distributed fairly. Special care must be taken to avoid exploiting vulnerable populations and to ensure equitable access to the benefits of research.

5. Ethical Research Conduct

5.1 Informed Consent

- Obtain voluntary, informed consent from all research participants.

- Provide participants with clear and comprehensive information about the research purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits.
- Ensure that participants understand their right to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

5.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

- Protect the confidentiality of all research data and the privacy of participants.
- Implement secure data storage and handling practices to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Anonymize data where possible to protect participants' identities.

5.3 Data Integrity

- Ensure the accuracy and reliability of all data collected.
- Avoid fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data.
- Maintain detailed and accurate records of research procedures and findings.

5.4 Conflict of Interest

- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest that may affect the research process or outcomes.
- Implement measures to manage and mitigate conflicts of interest.

5.5 Responsible Publication

- Publish and disseminate research findings responsibly and transparently.
- Acknowledge all contributors and sources of funding.
- Avoid duplicate publication and ensure that all research outputs are original.

5.6 Collaborative Research

- Foster a culture of collaboration and mutual respect among research partners and stakeholders.
- Ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and agreed upon.
- Respect the intellectual property rights of all collaborators.

6. Ethical Review and Oversight

6.1 Ethical Review Board

- Establish an Ethical Review Board (ERB) to review and approve all research proposals involving human participants.

- The ERB will ensure that research proposals comply with ethical standards and protect the rights and welfare of participants.

6.2 Monitoring and Compliance

- Conduct regular audits and monitoring of research activities to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Address any ethical concerns or violations promptly and appropriately.

7. Training and Awareness

- Provide regular training on research ethics and this code of conduct to all employees, consultants, and stakeholders.
- Ensure that all researchers are aware of their ethical responsibilities and have access to resources for ethical decision-making.

8. Reporting and Accountability

8.1 Reporting Misconduct

- Encourage the reporting of any suspected ethical violations or misconduct.
- Provide mechanisms for confidential and anonymous reporting.

8.2 Accountability

- Hold all researchers accountable for adhering to this policy.
- Implement disciplinary actions for violations of this policy, up to and including termination of employment or contracts.

9. Review and Updates

This Research Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Approval

This Research Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Versatile Consultants and is effective as of January 31, 2024.

Signatures

Muhammad Zubair Rafique
Chief Executive Officer/Director
Versatile Consultants (Private) Limited



Haider Ali
Board Chair
Versatile Consultants (Private) Limited

