



health

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mpumalanga Department of Health Research and Ethics Committee (MPHREC) is committed to a policy of fair dealing and integrity in conducting its research activities. It is imperative that there should be a code of conduct that guides members serving in the research and ethics committee on how they should present themselves. The code of conduct for responsible research should provide standards of good practice to guide individuals working in all research associated with health related research issues including non-clinical research in line with the principles of honesty, integrity, good stewardship, accountability, professional courtesy and fairness. Each member has to have, observe and adhere to the provisions of the Code of Conduct as contemplated herein under.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Code of Conduct: A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organisation.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Integrity and Honesty

- 3.1.1** Members of the MPHREC must act in good faith and in the best interest of the research participants.
- 3.1.2** Members of the MPHREC should avoid conflicts of interest and bias. In cases where a conflict cannot be avoided, it should be disclosed to the committee in full at the earliest opportunity, and then proactively managed.
- 3.1.3** Members of the MPHREC should act ethically.

3.2 Good Stewardship and Accountability

- 3.2.1** Members of the MPHREC should take responsibility for one's actions, admit mistakes, and learn from them.
- 3.2.2** Protect the confidentiality and privacy of sensitive information entrusted by others.

3.3 Professional courtesy and fairness

- 3.3.1 Treat all individuals with respect, dignity, and fairness, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or any other characteristic.
- 3.3.2 Foster an inclusive environment that welcomes diverse perspectives and promotes equal opportunities for everyone.
- 3.3.3 To review independently, impartially and objectively whether the proposed design and conduct of research is likely to protect participants' safety, rights and welfare.

4. GENERAL CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

The members of the MPHREC must;

- 4.1 At all times act in the best interest of the health establishment and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the health establishment is maintained;
- 4.2 Maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to MPHREC ethics guidelines, regarding research proposal or protocol information, reviews and decisions and all matters discussed at committee meetings;
- 4.3 Disclose conflicting interests including any personal involvement or participation in the research or in competing research. In the event of such a conflict with respect to a proposal, not to review the proposal and to reclude him/herself during the discussion and decision making process;
- 4.4 To attend meetings on a regular bases and far as possible to remain until the meeting is adjourned;
- 4.5 Perform the functions of office in good faith, honestly and in a transparent manner;
- 4.6 Review independently impartially and objectively whether the proposed design and conduct of research is likely to protect participants' safety, rights and welfare;
- 4.7 To keep up to date with research ethics and regulatory guidelines;
- 4.8 To contribute to ethics related continuing education.

5. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

5.1 A member of MPHREC must attend each meeting of the committee according to the prescripts, except when:

- 5.1.1 Leave of absence is granted in terms of an applicable law or as determined by the procedural rules of the governance structure; and/or
- 5.1.2 The member is required in terms of this Code to reclude from the meeting.

5.2 The MPHREC shall sit at least once per quarter to review and approve research studies;

5.3 Furthermore, the MPHREC will sit on an ad hoc basis as mandated by the need to develop/review urgent studies.

6. SANCTIONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE OF MEETINGS

6.1 A member who absents himself/herself for two (2) consecutive ordinary meetings of the committee without leave or an apology will be deemed to have resigned and his/her position will be declared vacant by the chairperson of the MPHREC at a full committee meeting.

7. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

7.1 MPHREC members shall sign confidentiality forms on the first meeting of their term in office and will sign declaration forms each time the committee sits;

7.2 Should there be any conflicted member in any research application, the member shall recuse him/herself from a meeting, until decisions are made on that particular research application;

7.3 These disclosures must cover the full range of potential interests:

7.3.1 -such as direct benefits like the provision of materials or facilities, and

7.3.2 -financial or in-kind support; for example, payment of travel, accommodation expenses to attend conferences.

7.4 Such disclosure should cover any situation in which the conflict of interest may, or may be perceived to, affect decisions regarding other people;

7.5 Researchers / supervisors have an obligation, at the time of reporting, proposing research, or seeking approval from MPHREC or other regulatory authorities to declare any conflict of interest which has a potential to influence the project and its conduct;

7.6 Members of MPHREC must withdraw from the committee when discussion of projects in which they are personally involved takes place, and must not use their membership to gain a favourable advantage.

14. BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The MPHREC Chairperson in consultation with the committee may:

14.3.1 Recommend to the MEC that the MPHREC member be removed or recalled based on failure to adhere to the code of conduct.

16. CODE OF CONDUCT APPROVAL

APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED



DR LK NDHLOVU

HEAD: HEALTH

6/7/2023

DATE

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