Ethical Review Committee for Research in Architecture

The purpose of an ethical review committee is to ensure that the research studies being undertaken in the organization protects the integrity of the participants and are inclined towards the progress of society. It intends to ensure good methodical, logical, systematic practice, like originality of research ideas, methodologically sound research designs, good scientific reporting practices, and anti-plagiarism practices.

In 2018 the UGC-CARE was established to promote and benchmark research integrity and publication ethics among the Indian academia (Patwardhan, et al., 2018 and Patwardhan, 2019). Prime objective of the UGC-CARE is to promote quality research, academic integrity and publication ethics in Indian universities. Its structure for the assessment of journals is available as a well-planned, informative, functional, responsive, and graded structure (UGC-CARE. http://ugccare.unipune.ac.in).

Recognizing the need for a body that educates students and teachers about good research practices and also one that monitors research projects undertaken at educational institutions, the UGC has recommended that each institution has its own committee of Research Integrity.

Research Ethics Committee (REC)

PhD Research Center at Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture under Savitribai Phule Pune University has introduced a comprehensive ethical scrutiny process to address relevant ethical considerations and is subject to appropriate ethical review. Ethical Committee approval is required to safeguard researchers conducting the study and also protects the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of research participants. Obtaining ethical approval also facilitates and promotes ethical research that is of potential benefit to participants and society. The ethical approval from an impartial committee helps the center to ensure that the research conducted is of high ethical standard, sound integrity and in accordance with good research governance and legal requirements.

Composition of REC: The research ethics committee (REC) is constituted with individuals having backgrounds relevant to the areas of research the committee is most likely to review. Committee ensures that multiple perspectives are brought into the discussion. There is at least one lay member and one non-affiliated member, present to make decisions about the proposed research.

- **Chairperson**
- **Internal Member/Supervisor**
- **External Member.**
- **Head, Research Centre**

The members are supposed to attend meetings arranged at the center for reviewing their research proposals in light of ethical concerns by invitation against receipt of an application from the candidate

for approval. It is the responsibility of the candidate as well as supervisor/s to make sure that such ethical approval has been obtained prior to any data collection/analysis taking place. Applications for ethical approval should be submitted to the center with necessary documents. Approval from REC is required for the following cases:

Sources of Data

All research that involves collecting new data from human participants and/or using pre-existing personal data. It covers all forms of collection process, e.g. experimental procedures/retreatment/intervention, focus group, telephone/internet survey, observation, personal interviews, or self-administered questionnaire, etc. It also includes physical settings, particularly in architectural research, whose anonymity needs to be safeguarded.

Usage of pre-existing data refers to retrieving readily available personal data from existing documents/records for secondary analysis, irrespective of whether or not the data are publicly available, whether or not the data originally collected are intentionally for research purpose, and whether the personal data from existing documents/records will be extracted for secondary analysis.

Risk

To ensure that participants' interests and rights are protected candidates should consider carefully if the research study will involve any possible risks which could induce greater than minimal physical and/or psychological stress/pain/discomfort to participants. In case that there are risks, the participants should be informed clearly about the type and what degree of the risk they may be undertaking, and what measures will be taken to minimize the risk, and what remedial support will be given to participants at risk.

Candidate should safeguard participants' privacy and confidentiality. Candidate should inform participants how their provided data will be deployed in the research, and how and how long the data will be safely kept.

Informed Consent

Researchers must accordingly obtain appropriate informed consent assure the voluntary capacity of the participant by providing sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate, and minimizing the possibility of coercion, undue influence, or harassment

Parental Consent

The candidate should be to seek written consent from parents and to obtain assent from students themselves for research involving children under 18, even in cases where children were able to decline participation.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Data

Researchers must maintain the confidentiality of data related to individual research participants. Except by public observation, researchers should clearly indicate the purpose of the collection of data and the method to ensure the confidentiality of collected data. Researchers must also avoid use of any personal identifiers such as individual names and addresses in their research reports which could lead to the human participants being identified.

Benefits

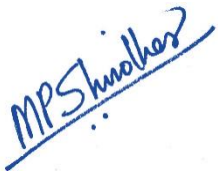
Prospective participants should not be adversely induced by financial reward or be pressured to participate in research. All reimbursement of expenses, such as traveling expenses, should be commensurate with standard practice and be reasonable.

Studies Involving External Parties

If an external party is involved in co-organizing the research project (e.g. in recruitment or data collection), a formal contract/letter of agreement or consent form should be signed before commencement of the project, and such document should be submitted together with the ethical application.

Approval Process:

- **Approved:** A letter of approval will be issued to the PI with indication of the ethics approval period granted.
- **Conditionally Approved**: The approval letter will be issued with comments/concerns need to be satisfactorily addressed.
- **If Approval is Not Given:** The Committee will specify its comments/recommendations on the notification to the PIs of protocols which are not approved.
- **Reconsideration of Decision:** The Committee will further consider the resubmitted proposals according to the Committee's recommendations.



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