INSTITUTION GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

INTRODUCTION

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences, Hyderabad, is dedicated to fostering a robust research environment characterized by integrity, academic excellence, accountability, inclusiveness, and professionalism. These principles are upheld within the ethical and legal frameworks that guide our institution's operations.

The credibility and public perception of scientific research are deeply influenced by the adherence to the highest ethical standards. Ethical conduct not only reflects a commitment to a scientific moral code but also contributes to the quality of scientific outcomes. Collaborations across disciplines and with external partners necessitate strict adherence to ethical research practices, which in turn fosters meticulous attention to scientific details, including qualitative analysis, quantitative methodologies, and statistical techniques. Instances of research misconduct, such as plagiarism, are viewed with severity and are subject to sanctions by relevant regulatory bodies. Our code of ethics serves as a compendium of widely accepted practices, guiding both seasoned researchers and emerging scholars in their pursuit of ethical research.

This code of ethics is aligned with the best practices advocated by national and international regulatory bodies, such as the National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 2017.

1.Institutional Research Board:

The Institutional Research Board (IRB) represents the research interests and activities of Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences (MRIDS). It aims to cultivate, design, and execute high-quality multidisciplinary research at MRIDS.

The policy includes the initiation, facilitation, integration, and support of research projects conducted by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as faculty of MRIDS. The IRB provides a mechanism for these research groups to interact within MRIDS and with external collaborating individuals and organizations. The IRB is the responsible body for managing this interaction.

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

The IRB offers timely and comprehensive critical appraisal and technical guidance for submitted research proposals. The review of these proposals is an in-house exercise aimed at assessing feasibility, improving relevance to the regional context, ensuring technical quality, and addressing the ethical aspects of proposed research. The IRB encourages Good Research Practice and Good Authorship Practices at MRIDS.

Submitting and presenting the research proposals:

The investigators are advised to develop their proposals as per the pre-specified pro forma and checklist. Investigators are invited to present their proposed research work at a scheduled IRB meeting. Investigators are advised to make a PowerPoint presentation of not more than eight minutes as per the template prescribed by the Institutional Research Board. There will be three minutes allocated for questions and clarifications, and the members will review the proposals as per the review template. The reviewed proposals will be forwarded to the Ethical Committee.

2. Purpose of Code of Ethics:

The purpose of the Code of Ethics for Institutional Research at Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences is to provide clear guidelines aimed at upholding integrity throughout the research process. Adherence to this code empowers researchers to avoid ethical lapses and prevent serious transgressions that constitute research misconduct. Research misconduct encompasses fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of credentials in research proposals, execution, peer review, or reporting of results.

3. Components of the Research Ecosystem

Research at Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences (MRIDS) is deeply rooted in a framework of core values and principles that underscore Research Integrity and Responsibility (RCR). These guiding values encompass honesty, accuracy, efficiency, fairness, objectivity, reliability, accountability, transparency, personal integrity, and adherence to current best practices. These principles are not merely theoretical but are operationalized through comprehensive policies governing RCR within the institute.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences Hyderabad

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

3.1.1 The Role of Scientists as Responsible Members of Society

At MRIDS, scientists are recognized as integral contributors to societal progress through their efforts in enhancing our understanding of various health-related issues and devising effective solutions. Collaboration and shared ethical standards form the bedrock of all research endeavors, emphasizing the importance of inter-professional ethics. It is acknowledged that unethical conduct within scientific research not only undermines public trust in scientific endeavors but also detrimentally impacts the cohesion and effectiveness of research teams. Therefore, fostering trust, both within research teams and between scientists and the public, is paramount for the meaningful advancement of research. Researchers are encouraged to recognize the precious nature of biomedical research resources and to utilize them judiciously. Moreover, they are urged to actively seek opportunities for translating research findings into tangible public health outcomes.

3.1.2 Addressing Contemporary Ethical Challenges in Biomedical and Health Research

The evolving landscape of biomedical and health research presents novel ethical challenges that demand ongoing deliberation and education. Debates surrounding issues such as the inclusion of underprivileged and vulnerable groups in research, ensuring post-trial access to research benefits for participants and their communities, and the exploration of emerging technologies are actively engaged with at MRIDS. Continuous education and awareness are deemed essential to equip researchers with the knowledge and ethical acumen necessary for navigating these complex issues effectively.

3.1.3 Sensitivity to Societal and Cultural Impacts

An integral aspect of responsible research at MRIDS is the recognition of the societal and cultural implications of biomedical and health research outcomes. Understanding how these outcomes intersect with the broader health sector and public engagement is crucial for fostering public accountability and advocacy. Researchers are encouraged to consider these societal and cultural dimensions throughout the research lifecycle, from planning and execution to evaluation, thereby contributing to enhanced public, private, and political advocacy.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences Hyderabad

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

3.1.4 Mentorship for Responsible Research Conduct

Mentorship plays a pivotal role at MRIDS in fostering a culture of responsible research conduct. Mentors, drawing from their wealth of experience, impart not only knowledge but also instill values and principles in the next generation of scientists. The mentor-trainee relationship is designed to empower trainees to become responsible researchers, emphasizing honesty, respect for others' work, and prudent resource utilization. Mentors are expected to lead by example, dedicate ample time to mentorship activities, and facilitate open communication and decision-making processes with their trainees. Trainees, in turn, are encouraged to actively engage with their mentors, communicate their needs, and take ownership of their research pursuits.

3.1.5. Protection of Human Participants

Institutions are mandated to establish robust policies and mechanisms aimed at safeguarding the welfare of human research participants. These policies should delineate clear responsibilities for the institution, the Ethics Committee (EC), and the researchers involved. Additionally, there must be effective mechanisms and policies in place for the ongoing monitoring of research activities, encompassing data capture, management protocols, management of conflicts of interest, reporting procedures for scientific misconduct, and the provision of appropriate initial and continuous training for both researchers and EC members. These policies should be readily accessible to stakeholders via the institution's or organization's official websites. Furthermore, researchers are expected to adhere to the professional codes of conduct relevant to their respective fields.

3.1.6. Animal Experimentation

Those engaged in animal experimentation must adhere rigorously to all existing regulations and guidelines, including but not limited to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960 (as amended in 1982), the Breeding and Experimentation Rules of 1998 (amended in 2001 and 2006), the Guidelines for Care and Use of Animals in Scientific Research issued by the Indian National Science Academy (initially in 1982 and amended in 2000), the ICMR Guidelines on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals from 2006, the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) Guidelines for Laboratory Animal Facilities, 2003, and the Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Animals Used in Research from 2010.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences Hyderabad

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

3.2. Grooming and Supervision

Ensuring the competency and ethical conduct of researchers is paramount. Institutions should provide comprehensive training in research methodology and data analysis. Ethical training should be integrated into these programs to foster a deep understanding of research integrity and compliance with regulatory frameworks. This training should be mandatory for researchers at all career stages, from junior to senior levels. Senior researchers and supervisors play a pivotal role in mentoring their team members, offering specific guidance, and ensuring that research activities are designed and conducted ethically.

3.3. Research Guidelines and Safeguards

The Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences and Hospital is committed to upholding rigorous ethical standards in research. In accordance with Schedule Y (January 20, 2005), the IEC adheres to guidelines such as good clinical practice (GCP), ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, and ethical guidelines for biomedical research on human subjects established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The Ethics Committee is Registered, Registration No. EC/NEW/INST/2023/TE/0237 issued under new drug and clinical Trails Rules,2019, oversees the protection of human participants' rights, safety, and well-being in research projects. It comprises at least 7 members, with a maximum of 15, representing various stakeholders responsible for ensuring ethical research conduct within the institution. The IEC's responsibilities encompass informed consent procedures, scientific and ethical review of research proposals, data confidentiality, monitoring approved research projects, and maintaining comprehensive documentation.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences Hyderabad

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

Research institute must:	Researcher must:	IEC must:
Develop policies and sops to address COI issues that arc dynamic, transparent and actively Communicated	Ensure that documents submitted to the EC include disclosure of COI (financial or nonfinancial) That may affect their research; Demands on researchers' time and loyalties	Evaluate each study in light of any disclosed COI and ensure appropriate action is taken To mitigate this.
Implement policies and procedures to address COI and conflicts of commitment, and Educate their staff about such policies	Guard against conflicts of commitment that may arise from situations that place competing	Require their members to disclose their own COI and take appropriate measures to rescue themselves from reviewing or decision making on protocols related to their COI
Monitor the research or check research results for accuracy and objectivity and Not interfere in the functioning and decision making of the EC	Prevent intellectual and personal conflicts by ensuring they do not serve as reviewers for Grants and publications submitted by close colleagues, relatives and/or students.	Make appropriate suggestions for management, if COI is detected at the institutional or researchers level

3.4. Data Management

Effective data acquisition, management, sharing, and ownership are fundamental aspects of contemporary research. Researchers bear the responsibility of employing best practices in data collection and management. This involves meticulous recording of data in various formats, including hard copy, electronic formats, or other durable forms. Institutions receiving research funds are accountable for budgeting, regulatory compliance, and the proper management of collected data. Clear protocols should be established regarding data ownership, publication rights, and obligations before data collection begins. Memorandums

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

of Understanding (MoUs), vetted by the institution and/or Ethics Committee, should be in place to address ownership and sharing of data and biological samples.

Regarding biological samples, participants maintain ownership unless specified otherwise in the initial informed consent document. Institutions hosting research projects are custodians of the data and samples, ensuring their proper use and storage. Researchers must employ reliable methods to generate credible data, avoiding practices that compromise research integrity. Attention to detail, adherence to established protocols, accurate recording, interpretation, and publication of results are imperative for conducting quality research. Responsible data handling includes secure storage, protection against damage or loss, and backup procedures. Data sharing should be facilitated to promote scientific collaboration, but considerations of confidentiality and consent must be upheld, with permissions sought when necessary for data sharing or publication in identifiable forms.

3.5. Collaboration Guidelines in Academic and Industrial Partnerships

Biomedical research, especially within dental faculties, often involves collaborations between academia and industry. These collaborations can vary widely, from advisory roles in projects to involvement in product development, microbiological analysis, material testing, and more. Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences (MRIDS) actively promotes collaborations with both academic institutions and industrial entities. Researchers are encouraged to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between relevant departments and their academic or industrial partners before commencing collaborative research projects.

Key components that must be included in the MoU are as follows:

1. Full names of the involved parties in the MoU.
2. Nature and scope of collaborations between the parties.
3. Responsibilities and roles of each party in the collaboration.
4. Commencement and termination dates of the MoU.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences Hyderabad

Principal / Dean
Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences

3.6. Dissemination of Results, Publication, and Review Procedures

Maintaining public trust in published research is crucial for ethical research practices. Institutions, including departments within MRIDS, should establish clear authorship policies. Journal editors typically do not resolve authorship disputes and instead defer these matters to the respective institutions and researchers involved. Authorship should be based on substantial contributions to the research and should never be conferred as a gift. Additionally, ghost authors, individuals who significantly contributed but are not acknowledged, are not acceptable.

According to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), authorship criteria should consider the following:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception, design, acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.

2. Drafting or revising the work for important intellectual content.

3. Providing final approval for publication.

4. Agreeing to be accountable for all aspects of the work and addressing any concerns regarding accuracy or integrity.

The primary author should be the individual who has made the most significant contributions to the research work submitted for publication. Adhering to these authorship guidelines ensures transparency, accountability, and integrity in research publications at MRIDS.

Malla Reddy Institute of Dental Sciences * Hyderabad

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