

# UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

## Faculty of Agriculture

### Ethical Review Committee (ERC)

Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya  
Peradeniya 20400, Sri Lanka

#### Operational Procedure of Ethical Review



#### Scope of Ethical Review of Research Proposals

Universities are expected to conduct high-quality research responsibly, promoting and adhering to ethical principles in research. The scope of the ethical review process is to review research proposals submitted by academic staff members/students of the Faculty of Agriculture/Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and grant clearance to conduct research. It also includes review of research proposals submitted by researchers of other faculties of the university/other institutions and grant clearance to conduct research. An Ethical Review Committee (ERC) has been established for this purpose. The ERC provides an independent review, offering suggestions to improve the ethical aspects of the research following the standard procedure. This approval process serves as a supportive mechanism for researchers, facilitating the timely submission of proposals, the conduct of research, and the publication of findings. Additionally, the committee may advise on obtaining approvals from relevant regulatory agencies and ensuring compliance with applicable laws for certain activities in the proposed study.

#### Ethical Review Committee (ERC)

The ERC is an independent committee within the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and is appointed by the Faculty Board of Agriculture. The committee, prepares guidelines and operational procedures that adhere to university policies, considering the diverse interests and needs of researchers. These guidelines and operational procedures for the ethical review process are approved by the Faculty Board of Agriculture. The committee is authorized to review and update or amend the guidelines and operational procedures as necessary, subject to the approval of the Faculty Board of Agriculture.

The committee is composed of 12-15 members from both within and outside the Faculty of Agriculture, representing various disciplines as listed in Table 1. Members are appointed for a three-year term, with the Faculty Board retaining the right to reappoint or terminate memberships as necessary. When specific expertise is not available within the committee, the service of external experts may be sought to review research proposals. In cases of conflict of interest, the relevant member(s) must abstain from the review process. The Faculty Board has approved and confirmed the nominations for the Ethical Review Committee members for the period of three years (Table 1, FB - 312).



<b>Discipline</b>		<b>Member</b>
1.	Molecular Biology - Plant Science	- Dr. D.V. Jayatilake, Dept. of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture
2.	Molecular Biology - Animal Science	- Dr. Lakmal Ranathunga, Dept. of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture
3.	Animal Welfare	- Dr. T.S. Samarakone, Dept. of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture
4.	Human Behavior	- Prof. S. Kumar, Dept. of Agricultural Economics & Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture
5.	Social Sciences specialist	- Dr. L.N.A.C. Jayawardena, Dept. of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture - Dr. S.P. Weligamage, Dept. of Agricultural Economics & Business Management
6.	Animal Science	- Prof. J.K. Vidanarachchi, Dept. of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture
7.	Animal Nutrition	- Dr. M.B.P. Kumara Mahipala (Chairperson), Dept. of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture
8.	Food & Nutrition of Human	- Dr. D.M.S.S. Daundasekara (Secretary), Dept. of Food Science & Technology, Faculty of Agriculture
9.	Environmental Science	- Prof. M.I.M. Mowjood, Dept. of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture
10.	Clinical Sciences	- Prof. Niroshini Soysa, Faculty of Dental Sciences - Dr. D. Madura S. Munasinghe, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine & Animal Science
11.	Medical Sciences	- Prof. S.D. Dharmaratne, Dept. of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine
12.	Psychology	- Dr. Ramila Usoof-Thowfeek, Dept. of Psychology, Faculty of Arts
13.	Legal Aspects	- Mr. Saman Sanjana Tantirige
14.	Chairman / Faculty Research Committee*	

### **Disclaimer**

The committee does not address issues related to authorship or plagiarism. It does not monitor the conduct of research projects unless necessary. The committee is not responsible for aspects related to data integrity, privacy, responsible data use, or the interpretation and disclosure of data to the public.

## **Responsibilities of the Committee Members**

- 1. Members are expected to:**
  - (a) Understand and fulfill their roles as members of the ERC.
  - (b) Stay informed about national and international research ethics and regulations and participate in ethics-related education.
  - (c) Support the ERC's functions.
  
- 2. Regarding confidentiality, transparency, and conflicts of interest, members should:**
  - (a) Make their names, designations, and affiliations publicly available as members of the committee.
  - (b) Maintain confidentiality about meeting deliberations, applicants, and application content.
  - (c) Disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to submitted applications.
  - (d) Remain impartial and objective when reviewing proposals/protocols, ensuring that the design and conduct of proposed studies protect participants' safety, rights, and welfare.
  
- 3. During meetings, members agree to:**
  - (a) Attend meetings regularly and remain until adjournment.
  - (b) Abstain from reviewing protocols where there is a potential conflict of interest and leave the room during discussions and voting on such protocols.
  - (c) Lead discussions and present applications assigned to them.
  
- 4. When conducting meetings and during the review process, members are expected to:**
  - (a) Respect other members' views and the deliberative process.
  - (b) Perform expedited reviews of minimal-risk research.
  - (c) Serve as primary reviewers for research within their expertise.
  - (d) Actively participate in decisions, whether to approve, request revisions, disapprove, or defer proposals following full committee deliberation.
  
- 5. Regarding membership:**
  - (a) Members are appointed for a three-year term.
  - (b) Membership will lapse if a member misses three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse unless exceptional circumstances exist.
  - (c) Members may resign from the ERC by giving written notice. The Chairperson will inform the Dean to fill the vacancy.

## **Review process for Ethical Clearance**

The ethical review process follows these stages:

- 1. Assignment of Application Reference Number:** Upon receiving an application for ethical review (i.e. soft copy of all documents via email and hard copy of the application), an application reference number (UoP/FoAg/ERC/Year/E or R/No) will be assigned, and the applicant will be notified via email.

2. **Review Duration:** The review process requires a minimum of two weeks for expedited reviews of undergraduate research projects and three months for regular reviews.
3. **Reviewer Appointment and reappointment:** The Chairperson and Secretary will appoint two reviewers for regular review application and one reviewer for expedited review applications. If the appointed reviewer/s are unable to provide the completed review report within two weeks for expedited reviews and two months for regular reviews new reviewers will be reappointed by the Chairperson and Secretary. These appointments will be presented at the next ERC meeting for approval.
4. **Submission of Documents to Reviewers:** Relevant documents will be sent to the reviewer/s, who will then return their review reports within two weeks for expedited reviews and within two months for regular reviews.
5. **Decision on Ethical Clearance:** Based on the reviewers' comments, the decision will be communicated to the applicant.

#### **Guidelines for Application for Ethical Review**

1. Ethical reviews are conducted only for research projects involving human and animal subjects, using primary or secondary data.
2. The principal investigator must be a permanent staff member of a university or institution. For undergraduate or postgraduate research projects, the principal investigator should be the supervisor of the undergraduate/postgraduate research student.
3. Applicants must submit documents (i.e. soft copy of all documents via email and hard copy of the application) according to the format provided by the ERC of the Faculty of Agriculture.
4. The Ethical Review Committee (ERC) charges a fee for the ethical review of research project proposals. However, undergraduate research projects from the University of Peradeniya are exempt. The following fees apply for submission of each research project proposal:
  - Undergraduate Research Projects of other universities: Rs. 4,000.00
  - Postgraduate Research Projects: Rs. 5,000.00
  - Research projects funded by local donor agencies: Rs. 7,500.00
  - Research projects funded by international donor agencies: Rs. 10,000.00
  - Research projects for expedite review: Rs. 25,000.00
5. The following documents must be submitted for an ethical review:
  - (a) Application for ethical review of the research proposal
  - (b) Research proposal/ brief of research proposal for ethical review (Maximum 10 pages)
  - (c) Study instruments in English and translations into Sinhala and Tamil (if applicable)
  - (d) Invitation to participate (Attachment 1) and Consent to participate (Attachment 2) in the research project, along with translations into Sinhala and Tamil languages (if applicable)

- (e) Review form for the application for ethical review of the research proposal (in MS Word and PDF formats)
  - (f) Any other relevant documents
  - (g) Proof of the payment for ethical review
6. The ERC will not review applications until all required documents are received.
  7. Upon receiving the application and relevant documents, the ERC will issue a reference number, which should be used in all subsequent communications.
  8. If revisions are required, they must be submitted within one month. If revisions are not submitted within this period, the application will be considered withdrawn.
  9. Retrospective approval will not be granted for research already started or completed.