RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)
Gërmia Campus, Dr. Shpëtim Robaj st. nn
10000 Prishtina, Republic of Kosovo

Terms of Reference
Institutional Ethics Committee

RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)
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1. Committee Name

RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) Institutional Ethics Committee - IEC

2. Reporting Line

The Institutional Ethics Committee is a standing committee of the Academic Senate and reports directly to the Academic Senate of RIT Kosovo (A.U.K). The Committee may submit recommendations, reports, and policy proposals to the Senate for review and approval, in accordance with institutional governance structures.

3. Purpose and Scope

3.1. The Ethics Committee in collaboration with Rochester Institute of Technology (Main Campus), RIT Kosovo (A.U.K), the RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) Academic Senate, Student Affairs Offices, and other interinstitutional offices support academic integrity and freedom; staff, faculty, and student ethical standards, codes of conduct, etc.; mechanisms for reporting and reviewing cases; anti-discrimination and inclusion policies; disciplinary procedures and regulatory bodies; and intellectual property ownership. It functions include:

3.1.1. Serving as an Academic Senate standing committee that fulfills Kosovo and international accreditation standards.

3.1.2. Interinstitutional collaboration with other RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) and RIT Main campus offices.

3.1.3. This body also includes an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approving ethical standards for research engaging human subjects.

3.1.4. Providing administration of the functions of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

3.1.5. Providing guidance on all regulatory aspects of research engaging human subjects.

3.1.6. Developing operating and administrative policies that deal with human subjects' protections.

3.1.7. Reviewing all research activities at RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) that include human subjects.

3.1.8. Providing educational activities (e.g. training workshops) related to human subject protection.

3.1.9. Conducting an initial review to determine the classification of research as excluded, exempt, or exceeds minimal risk thereby requiring an IRB committee for review.

3.2 Based on the Ethics Committee initial review of research engaging human subjects that exceeds minimal risk; an **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** will be formed to review the proposed research activities.

3.2.1. Review research to ensure it meets global ethical research standards as well as Kosovo laws.

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3.2.2. Confirm that the research doesn't expose participants to unreasonable risk.

3.2.3. Conduct continuing review as appropriate to make sure protections remain consistent.

3.2.4. Consider adverse events and other information that may be relevant to the research.

3.2.5. Assess suspected or alleged research protocol violations, complaints from research participants, and violations of RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) policies.

4. Responsibilities and Duties

4.1. Ethics Committee and responsibilities include the following:

4.1.1. Coordination with relevant Academic Senate Committee and RIT offices in reviewing, developing, assessing ethical guidelines for policies and procedures.

4.1.2. Coordination with other committee activities relevant to ethical policies, procedures, code of conduct, academic integrity.

4.1.3. The external IRB members shall be nominated and approved by the Ethics Committee and other relevant RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) staff.

4.1.4. Informing the RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) Academic Senate of nominated external members of the IRB.

4.1.5. Vetting of external IRB member nominees ensuring their relevant research experience locally and internationally and representativeness of diverse professional competencies and sectors.

4.2. The IRB committee is responsible for:

4.2.1. Ensure communication with Ethics Committee and Academic Senate.

4.2.2. Maintaining its membership structure (a minimum quorum of five members, four faculty and at least one external member with relevant expertise).

4.2.3. Ensuring communication with research applicants seeking review.

4.2.4. Maintain up to date and relevant CITI certification for conducting research engaging human subjects.

4.2.5. Maintain standards aligned with United States, international, and Kosovo ethical research standards and laws.

4.2.6. Review, using the same RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) IRB criteria and process, research proposals approved by other institutions.

4.2.7. Schedule timely meetings as necessary for reviewing research engaging human subjects as determined by the Ethics Committee.

4.2.8. Coordinate with the Ethics Committee to establish a rolling submission calendar for reviewing research activities.

4.2.9. Follow the approved IRB Review Procedures.

RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)
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4.2.10. Provide feedback to Ethics Committee and Academic Senate for necessary amendments to the approved IRB policy.

4.2.11. Review proposed safeguard and protection for human subjects in research design.

5. Authority and Decision-Making

5.1. The Ethics Committee has the following authority and decision-making competencies:

5.1.1. Nominate external members to IRB to be voted on by the Ethics Committee.

5.1.2. Decide on external member to serve on IRB.

5.1.3. Notify the Academic Senate and relevant offices of the selected external members to serve on the IRB.

5.1.4. Inform the nominated external member of role, functions, and compensation for serving as an IRB member.

5.1.5. Collaborate with HR in the process of officially engaging (contractually) the external member to serve in the IRB.

5.1.6. Maintain communication with external IRB members and other relevant RIT staff, faculty, administration, and offices, as relevant.

5.2. The IRB has the following authority and decision-making competencies:

5.2.1. Establish calendar and review procedures.

5.2.2. Develop and organize tutorials, workshops, and support as needed to student, faculty, staff researchers.

5.2.3. Determine extent of risk and ethical mitigation requirements.

5.2.4. Approve research practices.

5.2.5. Request additional information or revisions from primary researcher.

5.2.6. Deny IRB approval of research proposal.

5.2.7. Extend IRB extension of a previously approved research activity.

5.2.8. Deny IRB extension of a previously approved research activity.

5.2.9. Propose to nominate and add new members and expertise as research efforts evolve.

6. Membership and Composition

6.1. Ethics Committee membership is as follows:

6.1.1. It is comprised of four full-time faculty members (Chair and committee) and one student member (non-voting). (The student member will not serve on the IRB.)

6.1.2. All committee members and student members are appointed by RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) Academic Senate, in accordance with Senate Charter standing committee procedures.

RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)
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6.1.3. The term of service for faculty committee members shall be three (3) years, renewable.

6.1.4. Chair will serve a three (3) year term, renewable.

6.1.5. Student members serve one (1) year, renewable.

6.2. IRB membership is as follows:

6.2.1. Members have a variety of backgrounds, skillsets, and expertise.

6.2.2. Comprised of four (4) standing Ethics Committee members (full-time faculty) and one external member not directly affiliated with the institution, or outside expertise, as determined in collaboration with the IRB and Ethics Committee.

6.2.3. Additional members from RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) faculty may serve as needed based on expertise relevant to research activities.

7. Meetings Procedures

7.1. Ethics Committee:

7.1.1. The Committee shall convene at least once per academic year and additionally on an as-needed basis.

7.1.2. Meeting minutes will be recorded by committee members and available to Academic Senate members and RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) community as relevant.

7.1.3. Shared minutes will be available in such a way, and as necessary, to ensure privacy and confidentiality of RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) community are secured.

7.1.4. A quorum shall consist of three (3) committee members.

7.1.5. Decisions shall be made by majority vote, with consensus encouraged wherever possible.

7.2. IRB:

7.2.1. Follows an established review calendar and/or as needed in accordance with ethical (expedited) and IRB policy review timelines.

7.2.2. Meeting minutes will be recorded by committee members and available to Ethics Committee, Academic Senate members, and relevant Administration.

7.2.3. Shared minutes will be available in such a way to ensure privacy and confidentiality of RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) community.

7.2.4. To approve research activities, a consensus of the IRB review team is required.

7.2.5. For revision of IRB policy, a quorum shall consist of three (3) Ethics Committee members and Academic Senate vote.

7.2.6. Decisions shall be made by majority vote of Ethics Committee faculty members, with consensus encouraged wherever possible.

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8. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

8.1. Ethics Committee and IRB members shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding all deliberations and documents.

8.2. Members must declare any conflict of interest and recuse themselves from related discussions and decisions.

8.3. Chair of Ethics Committee will collaborate with HR to contractually engage external experts serving the IRB.

8.4. Chair of Ethics Committee will collaborate with HR requiring external experts serving in the IRB to declare conflicts of interest.

8.5. Chair of Ethics Committee will collaborate with HR requiring external experts serving in the IRB to sign a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement.

9. Reporting Requirements

9.1. Ethics Committee:

9.1.1. Chair of Ethics committee, in collaboration with Ethics Committee members and IRB members, will provide an annual report to Academic Senate and Administration.

9.1.2. Chair of Ethics Committee will update other relevant committees, Academic Senate, and Administration as needed concerning any updates to Ethics Committee activities and IRB activities.

9.1.3. Chair of Ethics Committee will update the ethical review submission log with all relevant information.

9.1.4. Chair of Ethics Committee will save all research application materials in shared application folder.

9.1.5. Chair of Ethics Committee will maintain correspondence with research applicants.

9.2. IRB (adhoc) Committee:

9.2.1. Chair of adhoc IRB committees will update Chair of Ethics Committee regarding all activities within one week.

9.2.2. Chair of adhoc IRB committee will update the ethical review submission log with all relevant information.

9.2.3. Chair of adhoc IRB committee will save all research application materials in shared application folder.

9.2.4. Chair of adhoc IRB committee will maintain correspondence with research applicants.

10. Review and Amendment of Terms of Reference

10.1. Committee will review the Ethics Committee ToR and IRB ToR annually.
10.2. Committee can review the Ethics Committee ToR and IRB ToR as the need

RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)
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arises.

10.3. Committee will collaborate with relevant RIT Kosovo (A.U.K) committees, Academic Senate, Administration as needed to review and amend Ethics Committee ToR and IRB ToR.

10.4. Committee will provide a summary of any ToR assessments and/or recommendations for amendments as relevant and timely.

10.5. Academic Senate will review the ToR every two (2) years or as needed.

11. Alignment with Institutional Policies

The committee ensures that all procedures and decisions align with RIT Kosovo (A.U.K)'s mission, academic standards, shared governance principles, and applicable RIT Global policies.