

## **Marian Research Forum Ethical Framework for Research Integrity**

The **Research Advisory Committee (Marian Research Forum)** of St. Mary's is dedicated to fostering a culture of academic excellence, integrity, and ethical conduct in all its research activities. The Ethical Framework of the committee serves as a protocol for the actions and behaviours of all individuals involved in research at the institution, including faculty, students, and collaborators. It is formulated to ensure that the research conducted at St. Mary's College upholds the highest standards of honesty, responsibility, and respect for human dignity.

The college adheres to the regulations of UGC and Centre for Research, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and ensures that there is no misconduct in research.

### **Integrity and Honesty**

- All research activities conducted at the institution must be guided by the principles of honesty and transparency. Researchers must strive to ensure that their work is free from falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of data.
- Researchers are expected to acknowledge the contributions of others in their work and provide accurate citations for ideas, methodologies and existing research work.

### **Respect for Intellectual Property**

All intellectual property, including research data, publications, and innovative ideas, must be treated with respect adhering to legal and ethical standards. Researchers must respect copyright, patent laws, and the intellectual property rights of others.

- Collaborators must be acknowledged appropriately for their contributions in any research outputs, and authorship must reflect substantial contributions to the work.

### **Research Transparency and Reproducibility**

- Researchers are expected to share methodologies, datasets, and findings in a manner that allows for the verification and reproducibility of results.

- Any conflicts of interest, whether personal, financial, or professional, must be disclosed before the initiation of a research project and throughout the research process.

### **Respect for Human and Non-human Subjects**

- Research involving human participants must be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles that prioritise their privacy, well-being, dignity and rights of individuals. Informed consent must be obtained from all human subjects, and confidentiality must be maintained.
- Any research involving non-human living subjects (animals/ plants) must comply with ethical guidelines for the humane treatment of fauna and flora.

### **Ethical Use of Data and Technology**

- Researchers must handle all data, including personal and sensitive information, in a secure, confidential, and ethical manner, in compliance with relevant data protection laws.
- The use of advanced technologies, including AI and data analytics, must be conducted in ways that do not infringe upon privacy, promote harm, or perpetuate bias.

### **Collaboration and Respectful Engagement**

- Collaboration in research activities should be grounded in mutual respect, fairness, and constructive engagement. Researchers should foster a collegial atmosphere, valuing the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds in academic discussions.
- Discrimination, harassment, or any form of abusive behaviour towards colleagues, students, or participants is strictly prohibited.

### **Ethical Use of Financial Resources and Grants**

- Researchers and faculty must ensure that any funds received for research, teaching, or student support are used responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with the terms of the funding agency.

- Misuse of research funds for personal gain or unapproved purposes is strictly prohibited.

### **Academic Freedom and Open Inquiry**

- Marian Research Forum encourages open inquiry and the free exchange of ideas. Researchers are free to pursue their academic interests and engage in critical discourse, provided they do so within the bounds of ethical conduct.
- Researchers should avoid personal, political, or ideological biases in their work and aim to present research findings in an objective, evidence-based manner.

### **Accountability and Oversight**

- All researchers at Marian Research Forum are accountable for their work and are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct. Researchers should be prepared to explain their research decisions and methodologies whenever necessary.
- Any instances of unethical conduct, including plagiarism, fraud, or violation of this Code, must be reported to the Research Coordinator of the Marian Research Forum. Violations will be taken seriously and addressed in a timely and transparent manner.

### **Social Responsibility**

- Research conducted at Marian Research Forum should aim to contribute positively to society and address global challenges. Researchers must be mindful of the potential societal impact of their work and strive to ensure that their research does not cause harm to individuals, communities, or the environment.
- Researchers should consider the ethical implications of their research outcomes, particularly in areas such as public health, policy, and technology, and seek to promote the greater good.

## **Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility**

- Research activities should enforce a positive environmental impact. Researchers must consider the sustainability of their methods, the responsible use of resources, and the potential ecological consequences of their work.
- When applicable, researchers should strive to promote environmentally friendly practices in research design, material usage, and waste management.

The Marian Research Forum is committed to fostering an environment of respect, integrity, and collaboration, where research is conducted with the utmost ethical responsibility. By adhering to this ethical framework, researchers will contribute not only to the advancement of knowledge but also to the betterment of society and the global community.

All individuals associated with the Marian Research Forum are expected to read, understand, and comply with these ethical guidelines to ensure that the research conducted under the Forum's auspices upholds the highest standards of professional conduct.

### **Ethical Conduct Charter for Departments functioning under various Schools as Research Centres**

#### **School of Language and Culture - Research Departments of English and History**

##### **Honouring Diverse Perspectives:**

- In both English and History research, scholars should engage themselves with a wide range of perspectives, viewpoints, and traditions. The Marian Research Forum values interdisciplinary approaches and encourages researchers to explore diverse narratives and interpretations.
- Research work from the departments of English and History should contribute to a deeper understanding of the human experience, recognising the richness of diverse histories, literatures, traditions, cultures, and voices.

### **Ethical Treatment of Sources and Subjects:**

- For research in English, ethical treatment extends to the interpretation of literary texts, ensuring that the analysis respects the integrity of the work and does not distort the author's intentions or message.
- For History, ethical research involves a careful and responsible use of historical documents, oral histories, and archival materials. Researchers must be diligent in preserving the authenticity of sources and avoid manipulating or misrepresenting historical records.

### **School of Physical Sciences - Research Department of Chemistry**

#### **Safety and Environmental Responsibility:**

- As the research work of the department of Chemistry involves activities with chemical compounds and solutions, the safety of researchers, participants, and the public is of paramount importance. All work conducted in the laboratory must comply with the safety protocols, and researchers must receive proper training in the handling of chemicals, equipment, and potentially hazardous materials.
- Research that has the potential for harmful consequences, whether to individuals, society, or the environment, must be conducted with caution and foresight. Efforts must be made to anticipate and mitigate any potential risks associated with the research.

#### **Social Responsibility and Sustainability:**

- The outcomes of chemical research should serve the greater good and be applied in a way that benefits society. Researchers should consider the social, economic, and environmental implications of their work and strive to address global challenges such as sustainability, health, and climate change.
- Waste minimization, the sustainable use of resources, and the careful disposal of chemicals and materials must be prioritised to reduce the environmental footprint of research activities.

## **School of Biological Sciences - Research Departments of Botany and Zoology**

### **Ethical Treatment of Flora and Fauna:**

- Any research involving animals must comply with the national and the institutional ethical guidelines and regulations for the humane treatment of animals. Researchers must minimize pain, distress and suffering and prioritise alternatives such as non-invasive methods whenever possible.
- Research involving plants must respect ethical guidelines regarding the collection, the conservation, and the study of plant species. Collecting plants for research purposes must be done responsibly, ensuring that the native species are not endangered or harmed by over-collection. Researchers must comply with the local, the national, and the international regulations on plant protection and biodiversity.

### **Conservation of Flora and Fauna:**

- Researchers of Botany and Zoology must adhere to the Three Rs: Replacement (using alternatives wherever possible), Reduction (minimizing the number of animals used), and Refinement (enhancing the techniques to reduce animal suffering).
- Efforts should be made to promote the conservation of species and the ecosystems that are included in the study. Researchers must be mindful of the potential environmental impact of their work, including habitat disruption or the introduction of non-native species.

## **School of Computing Sciences - Research Department of Mathematics**

### **Ethical Use of Mathematical Tools and Methods:**

- Researchers must ensure that any mathematical models, simulations, or computational tools used in their work are accurate, well-founded, and appropriately applied. Ethical issues arise when models are misused, simplified beyond what is appropriate, or presented as representing reality when they actually don't.

- When working with data (including numerical data, simulations, or empirical results), mathematical researchers must adhere to the highest standards of data integrity, ensuring that the data is not manipulated or cherry-picked to fit preconceived hypotheses.

### **Social Responsibility and Impact**

- Mathematical research should strive to serve society by contributing to practical solutions for real-world problems, while maintaining the integrity and purity of mathematical inquiry. Researchers should consider the potential societal implications of their work, particularly in areas like cryptography, **surveillance**, **security**, **automation**, finance, environmental science and technology.
- Mathematical researchers should engage in research activities with other disciplines, applying their skills to solve problems in fields such as Medicine, Climate Science, Economics, and Engineering, while maintaining the ethical principles.

### **School of Management and Economics – Commerce and Economics**

#### **Research Integrity**

- Researchers are responsible for collecting, analysing, and reporting data accurately and transparently. Methods and data should be clearly documented, allowing other researchers to reproduce or verify the results. Researchers must be honest about the limitations of their data and methodologies.
- Researchers in Economics and Commerce should apply sound **statistical techniques** and **econometric models** that are appropriate for the research question and data type. The application of these methods should be done with intellectual rigour and without distortion of findings to fit preconceived results.

#### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- While conducting research involving proprietary data, industry collaborations, or sensitive financial or economic information, researchers must protect the confidentiality of all data and information unless explicit permission is granted to share or publish it.

- All research involving human subjects, including surveys, interviews, or personal economic data, must comply with the applicable privacy laws and institutional guidelines regarding **confidentiality** and **data protection**.

This ethical conduct charter is designed to ensure that all members of the Marian Research Forum align with best practices in ethical research and contribute to a positive, responsible academic community.