St.Paul University Quezon City

RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDE

for Senior High School, Undergraduate, and Graduate School Student-Researchers

Center for Innovation, Research, and Planning

Our Vision

Empowered Paulinians making a difference for Church and Society.

Our Mission

Proclaim the Good News enabling Paulinians to reach full potential through:

- Transformative Formation,
- Tranquil-daring Innovations,
- All-to-all Service.

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Research Ethics Guide for Senior High School, Undergraduate, and Graduate School Student-Researchers

St. Paul University Quezon City
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Foreword

Research is the lifeblood of tertiary education, and it is undoubtedly one of the primary ways that knowledge gets created, honed, and disseminated. Research entails specific moral obligations, whether it is pursued as part of an undergraduate thesis, a graduate dissertation or capstone project, feasibility study, or independent scholarly inquiry. Research quality is not only a function of methodological rigor or academic contribution. It is also determined by the integrity with which that research was conceived, conducted, and communicated.

Research in St. Paul University Quezon City is our way of expressing a commitment to truth, service, and the search for excellence in education, all anchored on our core values. Ethical research exemplifies the University's Core Values of Christ-Centeredness, Charism, Charity, Community and Commitment to Mission.

As a Catholic and Paulinian institution, we affirm that research and scholarship serve the advancement of knowledge in the pursuit of truth, while remaining firmly committed to upholding human dignity, fostering social responsibility, and promoting the common good.

Rapid developments in digital technologies, especially in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have changed the way that research is done. These transformative technologies present incredible opportunities but also pose challenges relating to academic integrity, authorship, transparency, privacy and responsible innovation. This means students need to use their

discretion and be discerning in utilizing these technologies, making sure any such usage amplifies learning rather than replaces good academic research. These expectations are mirrored in the University's Implementing Guidelines on the Use of AI-Powered Language Models, which promote transparency, accountability and human intellectual work first.

This **Research Ethics Guide** is designed to accompany senior high school, undergraduate and graduate students through settings of research practice from identifying a research problem and obtaining ethics approval, data collection, interpretation and reporting of findings. It also offers practical advice regarding academic integrity, responsible use of AI, the protection of research participants, and ethical decision-making in today's fast-moving research landscape.

This is more than a compendium of directives. It is a call to develop the character of a good researcher. Doing ethical research is honesty, humility, respect for others, and lifelong commitment to the truth. In embodying these values, Paulinian researchers serve not only as contributors to academic excellence but also as assets for the betterment of society.

May this guide reach every student researcher, inspiring them to seek knowledge with integrity, compassion, and wisdom, to serve as true stewards of truth, and responsible members of the academic community.

Dr. Antoniette Z Lacerna
Director, Center for Innovation, Research and Planning

Chapter 1 | The Paulinian Researcher: Research Ethics and Responsible Scholarship

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this chapter, the students should be able to

- Appy the meaning and importance of research ethics in the conduct of scholarly inquiry.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical responsibilities of senior high school, undergraduate and graduate students
- Apply the Paulinian Core Values in promoting responsible and ethical research practices.
- Integrate ethical decision-making into every stage of the research process.
- Demonstrate integrity in conducting research that is credible, ethical, and socially responsible.

1.1 What is Research Ethics?

Research is a systematic process of developing new knowledge through careful observation, inquiry, analysis, and interpretation. It empowers citizens and institutions to make sense of complex problems, design solutions, refine practice in their profession, and advance society, but what really determines the value of research is not only the level at which its methodology operates but also the ethical principles underlying the conduct of that research.

Research ethics is defined in the broadest sense as a descriptive and prescriptive ethical framework regulating how research should be planned, conducted, reported, and disseminated. General principles include respecting the dignity of persons, keeping participants from harm, maintaining

academic honesty, and providing trustworthy results by adhering to these principles.

To develop ethically sound research, we start from the premise that the pursuit of knowledge must never place at risk an individual's rights, welfare, or dignity. It also acknowledges that researchers are answerable not just to their subjects and mentors, but to the academic community and society at large.

Research ethics instills integrity and accountability into senior high school and undergraduate students, providing a foundation for their later professional practice. The ethical behaviors expected of graduate students represent the advanced level of responsibility attached to independent scholarship, knowledge creation, publication, and leadership in one's discipline.

All researchers, whether at a senior high school, an undergraduate, or post-doctoral level, have the responsibility to ensure that ethical considerations are integrated within every step of the research process.

1.2 Why Research Ethics Matters

Research ethics is fundamental to the process of scholarly inquiry that is conducted with honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for human dignity. It protects the rights, well-being, and privacy of research participants, enhances the credibility and reliability of research findings, which in turn bolsters public confidence in academic scholarship. Ethical research also necessitates that researchers honor other people's work, report data correctly, do not engage in research misconduct, and utilize emerging technologies with respect and clear transparency, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). Research ethics, for Paulinian researchers, is beyond compliance with institutional policies. It is a commitment to the University's core values of

Christ-centeredness, charism, charity, community, and commitment to mission, ensuring that research contributes meaningfully to knowledge, serves the common good, and upholds the highest standards of academic excellence.

1.3 The Paulinian Researcher

A Paulinian researcher is not just a competent academic scholar. A Paulinian researcher is an honest individual who believes that the quest for knowledge is inextricably linked to the quest for truth.

The Paulinian core values serve as an ethical underpinning that complements known international guides to research accountability.

Christ-Centeredness

Truth is at the core of the question of ethics. The researchers are to pursue knowledge with sincerity, humility, and ethical reasoning. Each step of the research process from the literature review to dissemination should be grounded in a true commitment to truth, rather than convenience or self-advancement.

Charism

Different researchers are endowed with individual skills and intelligence. It is an ethical scholarship that uses these gifts of critical thinking, creativity, and a commitment to lifelong learning in their most responsible use. Paulinian researchers hone critical minds and proven intellects, instead of passively depending on mechanized tools or outside help.

Charity

Research is an obligation to enhance the dignity and welfare of person, community. Research with participants, especially vulnerable populations, is an honor, not a right, and Charity urges researchers to do just that.

Community

Knowledge is created through collaboration. Ethically oriented researchers honor the roles of advisers, peers, research participants, and scholars. They give credit where credit is due, practice honesty in communication, and work toward relationships based on trustworthiness and mutual respect.

Commitment to Mission

Research, at its core, is a service for others. When addressing local problems or global issues, Paulinian researchers pursue knowledge that serves justice, sustainable development, and the well-being of human beings and societies.

1.4 The Responsibilities of Student Researchers

Every student researcher has both academic and ethical responsibilities. These include

- Conducting research honestly and objectively
- Respecting participants' rights and welfare
- Protecting confidential information
- Acknowledging the work of others through proper citation
- Complying with institutional policies and ethics review requirements
- Maintaining accurate research records
- Reporting findings truthfully, including unexpected or negative results

- Using digital technologies and AI responsibly and transparently

These responsibilities extend well beyond the completion of a research project. Researchers are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of published studies, the long-term maintenance of all research records, and the subsequent use of research data.

1.5 Ethical Responsibilities Across the Research Process

Stage	Ethical Responsibility	Explanation
1. Topic Selection	Social relevance, avoidance of harm	Select a research topic that contributes to knowledge or addresses a genuine societal need while ensuring that the study does not intentionally cause harm, discrimination, or unnecessary risk to individuals, communities, or the environment.
2. Literature Review	Honest scholarship, proper citation	Review the existing literature in a broad and unbiased manner. Cite other authors' work properly, do not plagiarize, and accurately represent previous results.
3. Research Design	Scientific rigor, fairness	Formulate a valid and feasible research methodology to obtain accurate and

		consistent results. Do not apply bias when sampling/utilizing data. Include all demographic groups in your research and provide equitable treatment of each participant.
4. Ethics Review	Participant Protection	Seek approval from the ethics review board before conducting studies with human participants or sensitive data, minimizing potential risks and protecting the welfare of participants.
5. Recruitment	Voluntary participation	Engage participants voluntarily, without coercion, undue influence or deception. Participation should also be completely voluntary, with individuals given the option to refuse or pull out at any point without being penalized.
6. Consent	Respect for autonomy	Researchers must provide potential participants with

		complete and understandable information about the research study, including the purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their rights as participants before obtaining informed consent.
7. Data Collection	Accuracy, Honesty	Collect data truthfully and systematically. Researchers must not falsify or fabricate any data, and should consistently follow an approved research protocol.
8. Data Storage	Privacy and confidentiality	Protect participants by making sure personal data is collected, stored securely, limiting who has access to this data, and ensuring confidentiality both during and after the research.
9. Data Analysis	Objectivity	Utilize objective, correctly applied analytical methods. Report findings as they are, without changing, omitting, or fabricating data to make a case for

		preconceived conclusions.
10. Writing	Transparency	Present the research process and findings accurately and comprehensively. Utilize well-defined methodological reporting, disclose potential conflicts of interest or funders, and give appropriate credit where credit is due.
11. Publication	Integrity	Publish research responsibly. Avoid duplicate publication. Follow ethical standards of scholarly publishing.
12. Dissemination	Social responsibility	Communicate research results responsibly, safeguarding the confidentiality of participants; preventing potential misuse or misinterpretation of study results and disseminating findings to relevant stakeholders accurately.

These explanations highlight that research ethics is not limited to obtaining ethics approval but should be viewed as an ongoing duty from choosing a meaningful question to carrying out responsible dissemination of findings. Following these ethical principles promotes academic integrity, the protection of participants and the creation of credible and socially responsible knowledge.

Research Tip

Begin every research project by asking not only "Can this study be conducted?" but also "Should this study be conducted?" Ethical research requires both methodological competence and moral reflection.

Chapter 2 | Fundamental Principles of Ethical Research

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this chapter, the students should be able to

- explain the recognized principles of research ethics
- apply ethical principles to decisions made throughout the research process
- recognize ethical issues that may arise in research undertakings
- integrate the Paulinian Core Values into ethical research practice
- demonstrate sound ethical judgment in conducting and communicating research.

Introduction

All research should be governed by some core ethical principles, regardless of discipline or methodology. These principles serve as guidance for making ethical decisions during

research planning, implementation, analysis, and dissemination when researchers are faced with ethical dilemmas.

Even if research methods be different from one academic field to another, ethical standards are surprisingly uniform. Internationally, the ethical landscape of research has been defined by landmark documents, including the Belmont Report (1979), Declaration of Helsinki (1964), and Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010). These accentuate the significance of human dignity, scientific integrity, justice, and accountability.

These universal principles, however, are augmented for Paulinian researchers by the core values of the University that serve to remind us that ethical research is not just compliance with regulations but a manifestation of our moral character as Christians called to be stewards.

2.1 Respect for Persons

The principle of respect for persons recognizes that every individual has inherent dignity and the right to make informed decisions about participating in research.

For this principle, researchers must acknowledge that participants have a right to:

- be provided with full and comprehensible information about the study
- decide voluntarily whether to participate
- ask questions before carrying out the study and during it
- cancel participation, at no charge to you, at any time
- protect its secrecy and remain confidential.

Respect also entails more than just the formal participants. Researchers must also ensure that the communities,

organizations, institutions, and cultural groups involved in the research are treated with thoughtfulness and sensitivity at all stages of the research process.

Vulnerable Populations

Some people might need more ethical protection because they lack the ability to give fully informed consent or are at greater risk of coercion. These include

- children and adolescents;
- older adults with cognitive impairment;
- persons with disabilities;
- economically disadvantaged individuals;
- hospitalized patients;
- indigenous peoples;
- persons deprived of liberty.

In research involving vulnerable populations, researchers need to make sure that all necessary permissions are obtained and participation is voluntary with no risk.

2.1.a. Respect for animals

While animal research is necessary for science to progress, it must comply with established ethical principles that balance the goals of scientific advancement against humane treatment. Among the principles that shape ethical animal research are Replacement, Reduction and Refinement, or the Three Rs; foundational concepts that Russell and Burch (1959) first proposed to replace more advanced methods with less sentient organisms, using fewer animals for the same biological endpoints in experiments, and reducing pain or suffering. Replacement always promotes the use of non-animal alternatives whenever possible, for example by simulation using computers or the use of cell cultures. Reduction means using the least

number of animals possible to generate scientific data, and Refinement is the improvement of research practices to minimize or eliminate the use of pain, stress and suffering to enhance the welfare of laboratory animals.

In addition to following the Three Rs, investigators are also required to make a scientific case for animal use and demonstrate an acceptable balance between the potential benefits of research and any adverse effects experienced by animals (National Research Council, 2011). In addition to human trials, animal studies must also be approved via an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or equivalent ethics committee. IACUC assesses research protocols for humane and ethical treatment of animals. Researchers, too, are required to supply proper housing, nutrition, veterinary care, and humane handling by trained personnel over the course of the study. Researchers should also set humane endpoints to avoid unnecessary suffering or distress. These ethical principles promote responsible scientific practice, safeguard animal welfare, and enhance the credibility and integrity of research findings (National Institutes of Health, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, 2015).

Paulinian Reflection

Respecting persons reflects the Paulinian value of Charity. Every participant is not merely a source of data, but a person created with dignity, deserving respect, compassion, and fairness.

2.2. Beneficence

The principle of beneficence stipulates that researchers must maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harm.

It is the duty of researchers that their research should make a positive contribution to knowledge, education, professional practice, or society as a whole.

Potential harms include

- physical injury;
- psychological distress;
- emotional discomfort;
- financial loss;
- reputational damage;
- invasion of privacy;
- social discrimination

Researchers should constantly assess whether the expected benefits outweigh any associated risks.

Asking participants about their past traumatic experiences may provide useful data, but it can potentially trigger more emotional distress. Researchers should also provide counselling referrals or the option for participants to skip sensitive questions.

Beneficence also translates into accurate interpretation of research results. Sensationalizing results or making claims without any supporting evidence should be avoided by researchers.

Research Tip

Whenever designing a study, ask, "If I were the participant, would I feel respected, safe, and fairly treated?"

2.3 Justice

Justice is about the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens that research entails.

Make sure that as researchers, you do not pick participants purely because they can easily be found or prefer to have higher acceptance rates. Likewise, researchers should not restrict individuals who may benefit from the knowledge acquired in the study.

Justice requires equitable treatment regardless of

- age
- gender
- religion
- ethnicity
- socioeconomic status
- disability
- political affiliation
- sexual orientation
- educational background

Inclusion research leads us to more valid outcomes and is also a means of contributing to wider social justice.

2.4 Honesty

Academic research is built on honesty. Researchers are required to report information honestly at every stage of the research process.

Honesty requires researchers to

- report data accurately
- acknowledge limitations
- disclose errors when discovered
- avoid misleading interpretations
- communicate findings objectively

When it comes to research, academic dishonesty erodes public trust and harms the reputation of researchers and their institutions.

Examples of dishonest conduct include

- administering the instrument prior to the approval in a defense
- inventing data
- altering participant responses
- misrepresenting findings
- exaggerating conclusions

2.5 Integrity

Integrity means acting according to ethical values regardless of how convenient or inconvenient it may be.

Researchers demonstrate integrity by:

- following approved research procedures
- honoring commitments made to participants
- maintaining complete research records
- respecting institutional policies
- accepting responsibility for mistakes

Integrity also implies that researchers must adhere to principles even when external pressures influence research outcomes.

Graduate students, especially, might be pressured to publish fast or achieve results. Ethical researchers understand that finding the truth, even if it contradicts what was hypothesized, is much more rewarding than publishing paper showing whatever they wanted to show through misleading results.

Paulinian Reflection

Christ-Centeredness calls researchers to seek truth rather than personal recognition. Integrity means doing what is right even when no one is watching

2.6 Accountability

It is the responsibility of researchers to exercise high professional standards in their practice and conduct themselves ethically.

Accountability extends to

- participants
- advisers
- collaborators
- funding agencies
- the University
- society

Researchers are responsible for everything that a study entails, even if their work is assisted by research assistants, collaborators or digital technologies.

The responsibility for the accuracy or originality of research outputs is not transferred by using AI or statistical software. As always, researchers are responsible for verifying this material before submission or publication and in line with the University expectations around responsible AI use.

2.7 Transparency

Transparency increases trust by communicating research methods, procedures and findings in an open manner.

Researchers should

- explain how data were collected
- disclose limitations
- acknowledge funding sources
- identify potential conflicts of interest
- disclose the use of AI tools when allowed by institutional policy.

Transparency allows other researchers to assess and replicate or build on top of previous work.

2.8 Stewardship

Researchers are the custodians or stewards of knowledge and resources deployed to them.

Stewardship involves responsible management of

- research funds
- laboratory resources
- participant information
- research data
- intellectual property
- environmental resources

Researchers should properly preserve research records, protect confidential information, and use institutional resources responsibly.

2.9 Social Responsibility

Research should ultimately benefit society. Ethical researchers think about the way their work could affect

- public policy
- education
- healthcare
- business
- environmental sustainability
- technological innovation
- community development

Researchers should avoid producing knowledge that intentionally promotes discrimination, misinformation, or harm.

Socially responsible research addresses real-world global issues while also honoring society, individual human rights, and cultural diversity.

Ethical Scenario

A graduate school student discovers that several survey responses appear inconsistent with the expected findings. A colleague suggests removing these responses because they "will only confuse the results."

Questions for Reflection

1. Is removing the data ethically justifiable?
2. Under what circumstances, if any, may data be excluded?
3. Which ethical principles are involved?
4. How should the researcher document any decision regarding data exclusion?

Research Tip

When faced with an ethical dilemma, ask yourself 4 questions

1. Is it legal?
2. Is it ethically defensible?
3. Is it consistent with Paulinian values?
4. Would I be comfortable explaining this decision publicly to my adviser, participants, or future employer?

If the answer to any of these questions is "No," reconsider your decision.

Chapter 3 | Conducting Ethical Research: From Proposal to Dissemination

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this chapter, the students should be able to:

- apply ethical principles throughout the research process.
- understand the ethical responsibilities involved in planning, conducting, and reporting research.
- recognize the importance of ethics review, informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible data management.
- demonstrate ethical decision-making when working with participants, collaborators, and research data.
- conduct research that complies with institutional policies and accepted scholarly standards.

Introduction

Ethics is an ongoing process, not a one-time event or a document written before data collection. Instead, it is a lifelong commitment that informs every single decision made by a researcher from defining a research question to writing up the final report.

Most ethical issues do not stem from an intention to deceive, but rather a lack of appreciation for how decisions might impact participants or the quality of data obtained and the overall credibility of research. Responsible researchers and ethical consumerists would thus treat each stage of the research process with forethought, transparency, and accountability.

This chapter outlines the ethical obligations related to each major stage of the research process.

3.1 Choosing an Ethical Research Problem

Every research project starts with a question. However, not all research questions are ethically appropriate.

Researchers should ask

- Does this study solve a real problem?
- Will the results add to the body of existing knowledge?
- Does the study pose needless risk?
- Are there appropriate safeguards in place to protect participants?
- Is the study practical in terms of resources and time?

Good research must make a difference to scholarship, professional practice or community development.

Researchers are prompted to choose themes targeting true societal demands, while respecting the cultural values of humans and the dignity of individual persons.

Paulinian Reflection

Research is a form of service. Choosing a meaningful research problem reflects the Paulinian commitment to use knowledge for the betterment of individuals, communities, and society.

3.2 Conducting an Ethical Literature Review

The literature review serves as the academic underpinning of a research study. It shows how the current research is based on existing knowledge.

Researchers have an ethical responsibility to

- consult credible and current sources
- represent previous studies accurately

- acknowledge all sources appropriately
- avoid selective quoting that misinterprets the existing literature
- distinguish clearly between the ideas of others and their own interpretations.

The literature review should not only support the conclusion that a researcher would like to reach. Instead, it must also provide a balanced perspective of the current research landscape.

Scholarly integrity is damaged by a misrepresentation of research that could lead to faulty conclusions.

3.3 Developing an Ethical Research Design

Ethical research begins with sound methodology.

Studies that are poorly designed waste resources, inconvenience participants unnecessarily and may end up generating findings that do not respond to the research question(s).

Researchers should ensure that

- research objectives are clearly stated
- methods utilized are appropriate
- sample selection is fair and substantiated
- instruments are valid and reliable
- risks are minimized
- participant burden is reasonable

3.4 Ethics Review and Institutional Approval

Many studies involving human participants require review by the University's appropriate ethics or research review body before data collection begins.

Ethics review is intended to

- protect participants
- evaluate potential risks
- ensure informed consent procedures are adequate
- review confidentiality measures
- verify that the benefits justify any potential risks

Researchers should wait until all administrative and institutional clearances have been obtained before collecting data that require ethical approval.

University policy may require research with human data to be cleared through relevant institutional processes before being conducted.

Research Tip

Obtaining ethics approval is not simply an administrative requirement. It is an important safeguard that protects both participants and researchers.

3.5 Recruiting Participants Ethically

Recruitment of participants should always be respectful, equitable and voluntary.

Researchers should avoid

- coercion
- excessive incentives
- misleading advertisements

Researchers are recruiting people who may feel pressured to engage due to power dynamics and the potential threat of social and academic sanctions.

For example, faculty should be particularly careful if they decide to recruit their own students because students may feel pressured to participate. Likewise, supervisors should not recruit employees who report directly to them unless appropriate safeguards are triggered.

Participation must always remain voluntary.

3.6 Informed Consent

Getting consent is one of the most fundamental ethical responsibilities of researchers.

Informed consent refers to the free choice made by the participants after receiving enough information about the study.

Participants should understand

- the purpose of the study
- their participation involvement
- expected duration
- possible risks
- potential benefits
- confidentiality procedures
- voluntary nature of participation
- the right to withdraw at any time
- contact information for the researcher

Whenever appropriate, written consent is necessary.

When conducting research online, electronic consent procedures might be acceptable as long as they sufficiently inform participants.

Example Statement

I understand the purpose of this study and voluntarily agree to participate. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3.7. Research Involving Minors

Children and adolescents are classified as a vulnerable population therefore other ethical considerations need to be taken into account when conducting research in this demographic group. Young people provide an important voice to research, however generally cannot provide informed consent alone due to their limited legal capacity. The research community thus has heightened responsibilities to safeguard the rights, welfare, dignity, and best interests of individuals participating in such research.

Under Philippine law, minors (those under eighteen (18) years of age) are generally those in life stages in which one is not yet legally considered an adult. In general, the involvement of children in research must always be accompanied by appropriate parent or legal guardian informed consent and minor assent, if any child is to be researched who can understand the nature and purpose of a study. Assent is the affirmative agreement of a child who might agree to participate and should not be confused with simply a failure to object.

3.7.1 Parental or Guardian Consent

Written informed consent must be obtained from the parent / legal guardian prior to research. The consent form should explain the following things clearly:

- the purpose of the study
- the reason for extending an invitation to the child

- what participation involves
- the expected duration of participation
- potential risks and benefits
- privacy and confidentiality safeguards
- the optional nature of participation; and
- the right of the child to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or motivation.

Researchers should give ample time and opportunity for parents or guardians to ask questions before giving consent.

3.7.2. Child Assent

Whenever the minor's age, maturity, and level of understanding make it appropriate, in addition to parental permission, researchers should seek the assent of the minor. Material must be conveyed in very simple, appropriate, and easily understandable terms.

- Children should know that
- participation is voluntary
- they might not answer any question
- they can withdraw from the study anytime
- saying "no" means they will not be punished or have their right to benefits taken away

Normally, if a minor declines to participate, or at any time wishes to withdraw after having provided consent in the context of their parent consenting for participation on behalf of such minors, that wish should be honored unless there are exceptional ethical or legal reasons requiring otherwise.

3.7.3. Minimizing Risk

Unless otherwise justified and properly reviewed by an ethics committee, research involving minors should involve no

more than minimal risk. Researchers should avoid any procedures or maneuvers that may cause them to suffer adverse physical, emotional, psychological, or social effects.

Extreme caution must be exercised when discussing sensitive topics such as

- family relationships
- abuse or neglect
- mental health
- bullying
- sexuality
- substance use
- violence; and
- traumatic experiences

3.8 Protecting Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy refers to an individual's right to control access to personal information.

Confidentiality refers to the researcher's responsibility to protect information shared by participants.

Researchers should

- assign participant codes rather than names
- remove identifying information whenever possible
- store files securely
- restrict access to research data
- destroy confidential records according to institutional policy

Maintaining confidentiality encourages honest participation and protects participants from potential harm.

3.8.1 Protecting Privacy in Focus Group Discussions

In contrast to an individual interview that does not permit hearing others' responses, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is conducted with several participants. The researcher has to use all reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of participants and keep research records private. Before the FGD, each participant should be asked to sign a Confidentiality and NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) as a measure of safeguarding privacy protections. Participants are expected not to disclose, discuss, record, or share any details of other participants spoken of during the FGD, guaranteeing to maintain external confidentiality and hold those who take part in precisely the same regard they are expected to follow at all times. The facilitator should also include at the start of the discussion a reminder to respect each other's privacy, not to mention any other participants in any discussion that comes up afterwards, and confidentiality across all stages, including after carrying out the research. While none of these measures can eliminate all risks, they create clear ethical expectations and cultivate a culture of mutual trust and respect among participants.

3.9 Data Collection

Ethical data collection requires accuracy, fairness, and consistency.

Researchers should

- administer instruments uniformly
- avoid influencing participant responses
- record observations objectively
- document unexpected events
- respect participant time and preferences

Researchers should never

- invent responses
- modify participant answers
- pressure participants to answer uncomfortable questions
- continue interviews after participants request to stop

Ethical Scenario

During an interview, a participant becomes visibly upset while discussing a personal experience.

What should the researcher do? Ethically, the researcher should

- pause the interview
- ask whether the participant wishes to continue
- remind the participant of the right to withdraw
- provide appropriate referrals if emotional distress continues

Participant welfare always takes priority over data collection.

3.10 Responsible Data Management

Research data are a type of scholarly resource.

Researchers must ensure that data are

- accurate
- complete
- secure
- confidential
- accessible only to authorized individuals

Good data management includes

- password-protected storage
- encrypted digital files when appropriate

- secure backup copies
- organized documentation
- retention according to institutional requirements

Sensitive information about the University and personally identifiable information must never be uploaded to unsecured AI platforms or any other unapproved online digital services, as per University policy.

3.11 Data Analysis

Ethical analysis requires researchers to interpret evidence objectively

Researchers should avoid

- statistical analysis to get the results the researcher's want.
- selectively reporting favorable findings
- excluding data without scientific justification
- exaggerating significance

Unexpected findings are not failures. Even negative or inconclusive results can add valuable knowledge to the pool by opening new avenues for research, or refuting prior assumptions.

Research Tip

If you must exclude data, document (1) why it was excluded, (2) when the decision was made, (3) who approved the decision, (4) how exclusion affects interpretation. Transparency strengthens credibility.

3.12 Writing the Research Report

The research report should present findings honestly and clearly.

Researchers should

- distinguish facts from opinions
- discuss limitations openly
- acknowledge contributions
- cite all references accurately
- avoid overstating conclusions
- avoid misleading statements due to deliberate use of inappropriate language
- observe decency in language expressions

Strong research acknowledges uncertainty rather than pretending certainty where evidence is limited.

3.13 Responsible Dissemination of Findings

Research findings shape professional practice, institutional policy and the general public's understanding. Researchers therefore have a responsibility to, at least, communicate their findings correctly.

Responsible dissemination includes

- presenting findings accurately
- acknowledging limitations
- avoiding sensationalized claims
- respecting participant confidentiality
- crediting collaborators appropriately

Researchers should also consider how findings may impact communities represented in the study.

3.14 Collaboration and Authorship

Many research projects involve collaboration.

Ethical collaboration requires

- mutual respect
- open communication
- shared accountability
- appropriate recognition of contributions

Individuals should be listed as authors only when they have made substantial intellectual contributions to:

- study conception
- research design
- data analysis
- interpretation
- manuscript preparation

Simply providing funding, administrative support or general supervision does not normally justify authorship.

Any disagreement about authorship should be addressed at the earliest opportunity in the research process.

Paulinian Reflection

Community reminds researchers that knowledge grows through collaboration founded upon trust, honesty, and mutual respect. Ethical partnerships strengthen both scholarship and relationships.

Research Ethics Checklist

Whenever you are about to start data collection, ask

✓ Is my research question well-justified in ethical terms?
✓ Am I in possession of all required approvals?
✓ Are participants adequately informed?
✓ Is participation voluntary?
✓ Have I protected confidentiality?
✓ Is my plan for data management secure?
✓ Am I able to justify each methodological decision?
✓ Am I prepared to report findings truthfully, whatever the outcome is?

Chapter 4 | Academic Integrity: The Foundation of Responsible Scholarship

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to

- explain the meaning and importance of academic integrity.
- distinguish between ethical and unethical scholarly practices.
- recognize various forms of research misconduct.
- understand the ethical responsibilities associated with authorship, citation, and publication.
- apply the University's expectations regarding responsible scholarship and AI-assisted learning.

Introduction

Quality education and research rely upon academic integrity. Every thesis, dissertation, feasibility study, capstone project, or scholarly paper speaks to the character of its author as much as it does to his or her knowledge and skills.

Research Integrity is an honest reporting, accurate attribution of work by others, honoring intellectual property, and taking accountability for the work performed. If the integrity of research becomes compromised, then societies can no longer trust their institutions and knowledge starts to lose validity.

For Paulinian researchers, integrity runs deeper than mere compliance with institutional regulations. It is a moral obligation based on Christ-Centeredness and an authentic disposition toward truth-seeking, honesty, and humility.

4.1 What is Academic Integrity?

Academic integrity is the act of doing academic work honestly, responsibly, fairly and openly.

Researchers demonstrate academic integrity when they

- produce original scholarly work
- acknowledge the ideas of others
- collect and report data honestly
- respect intellectual property
- accept responsibility for their research
- respect institutional and professional ethical standards

Academic integrity applies throughout the entire research process, not only during writing. It influences

- literature review
- research design
- data collection
- analysis
- interpretation
- presentation
- publication

Paulinian Reflection

Truth is the heart of scholarship. Every honest citation, every accurate data table, and every truthful conclusion reflect the Paulinian commitment to Christ-Centeredness and integrity.

4.2 Forms of Research Misconduct

Research misconduct is the violation of human and animal rights and any other ethical concepts or standards.

While differences in interpretation or honest mistakes arise in the course of scientific inquiry, intentional deception is never acceptable.

The three most known categories of research misconduct are fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

Collectively, they are known as FFP.

4.3 Fabrication

Fabrication is the process of concocting data, statements, interviews, or results that did not exist.

Examples include

- creating fictitious survey responses
- inventing interview quotations
- reporting experiments that were never done
- generating fictional participants

Example

One researcher requires 300 responses but gets just 220. The researcher generates 80 fictitious responses instead of collecting more data.

This is fabrication.

Fabricated research is scientifically invalid because it is based on false information.

4.4 Falsification

Falsification refers to manipulating research materials, equipment, protocols, or data to produce a desired outcome.

Examples include

- changing participant responses
- deleting data without justification
- altering laboratory measurements
- manipulating statistical analyses
- adjustments in figures/photographs to reinforce conclusions

Example

A researcher removes responses that contradict the hypothesis solely to achieve statistically significant results.

This is unethical unless there is a documented methodological reason approved before the analysis.

Researchers should report results no matter what the outcome, even if these outcomes contradict their original expectations.

4.5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as passing off someone else's words, ideas, images, data or creative work as your own.

Plagiarism is a blatant infringement of intellectual property rights and an assault on scholarship.

It could be intentional or unintentional.

Common forms include

- Direct Plagiarism

Using words verbatim without using additional double-entry point and writing

- Mosaic Plagiarism

Use of another author's phrases and sentences, where only a few words are changed.

- Paraphrasing without Citation

Paraphrasing an idea from another source without properly crediting that source.

- Self-Plagiarism

Reusing substantial portions of one's own previously submitted or published work without disclosure or permission.

- Image and Figure Plagiarism

Graphs or tables, photographs, illustrations, or diagrams without attribution or where permission is required.

Research Tip

When in doubt, cite the source. Proper citation demonstrates scholarship rather than weakness.

4.6 Citation and Referencing

Accurate citation allows readers to

- verify information
- acknowledge original authors

- discriminate between background knowledge and new contribution
- continue scholarly conversations

Researchers should comply with citation practice required by the University (APA 7)

Good citation practices include

- citing sources whenever possible
- acknowledging ideas even when paraphrased
- providing complete reference information
- verifying every citation before submission

Researchers should never cite sources they have not personally consulted.

4.7 Authorship and Acknowledgment

With authorship comes both glory and accountability. Only those who have made a meaningful intellectual contribution should be named authors.

Examples of substantial contributions include

- conceptualizing the study
- designing the methodology
- analyzing data
- interpreting findings
- writing or significantly revising the manuscript.

Others who contributed to the work, including persons providing administrative support, data collection, technical assistance, or project support and funding or general oversight without intellectual contribution, should also be acknowledged but not named as authors.

Graduate students and advisers should discuss authorship expectations at the beginning of collaborative projects to avoid future misunderstandings.

4.8 Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest arise when personal, financial, professional or institutional factors may compromise the impartiality of research

Examples include

- evaluating one's own organization without disclosure;
- accepting financial incentives that may affect interpretation;
- reviewing the work of close collaborators without declaring the relationship

Having a conflict of interest is not necessarily unethical. Failing to disclose it is.

Transparency allows others to evaluate the credibility of the research fairly.

4.9 Responsible Collaboration

Research has become more interdisciplinary and collaborative. Ethical collaboration requires

- honesty
- mutual respect
- shared responsibility
- open communication
- equitable recognition of contributions

Researchers should keep clear agreements about

- responsibilities
- timelines

- authorship
- ownership of data
- publication plans

Successful collaboration depends upon trust.

Paulinian Reflection

Community reminds us that research is rarely a solitary endeavor. Respectful collaboration strengthens scholarship while reflecting the values of trust, fairness, and mutual responsibility.

4.10 Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence is now increasingly used as a research support tool. It can assist researchers in

- organizing ideas
- improving grammar
- summarizing information for preliminary understanding
- generating outlines
- formatting citations (subject to verification)

But AI must never substitute a researcher's own intellect.

In line with the University's Implementing Guidelines on Use of AI-Powered Language Models, researchers are required to

- disclose AI use whenever required by the adviser or instructor
- verify the accuracy of AI-generated content
- avoid relying on AI for original analysis or conclusions
- ensure that major intellectual contributions remain their own

- refrain from generating fictitious references, fabricated data, or misleading content through AI
- protect confidential and sensitive information by avoiding its disclosure to unsecured AI platforms

The researcher, even with all the help of AI is responsible for every word, reference, argument, and conclusion in the manuscript.

4.11 Publication Ethics

The ethical obligations continue beyond the completion of research.

Researchers should avoid

- duplicate publication
- simultaneously submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal unless permitted
- selective reporting of favorable findings
- honorary or "gift" authorship
- undisclosed conflicts of interest.

It is also the ethical responsibility of researchers to issue corrections to substantial errors found after publication.

Integrity of the scholarly record allows current and future researchers to have faith in scholarly communication.

Ethical Scenario

A student discovers an online article whose discussion section closely matches the findings of the student's thesis.

The student copies words from several paragraphs, alters a couple of words, and lists the article in the reference list but does not cite it anywhere in the text.

Questions for Reflection

- Is this plagiarism?
- Why is changing only a few words insufficient?
- How should the information have been incorporated ethically?
- What Paulinian core values apply in this situation?

Academic Integrity Checklist

Before submitting the research manuscript, ask yourself

✓ Is every source properly cited?
✓ Have I reported all findings honestly?
✓ Have I acknowledged every contributor appropriately?
✓ Have I avoided fabrication and falsification?
✓ Have I disclosed AI assistance when required?
✓ Have I verified every citation and quotation?
✓ Are all tables, figures, and images properly credited?
✓ Would I confidently defend every part of this manuscript before my adviser or a research ethics committee?

If the answer to any question is "No," revise the manuscript before submission.

Chapter 5 | Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- explain the opportunities and limitations of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research.
- use AI tools responsibly and ethically throughout the research process.

- recognize the ethical risks associated with AI-generated content.
- apply the University's guidelines on the responsible use of AI-powered language models.
- demonstrate transparency and accountability when incorporating AI into academic work.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing Higher education and scholarly research. Researchers can perform a plethora of tasks like searching for literature, managing information, enhancing writing, creating computer code, summarizing documents, or translating text, and help analyze data using AI-powered tools today.

These technologies offer significant opportunities to enhance productivity and learning, but at the same time, they also raise significant ethical dilemmas. AI systems can produce false information, make up references, perpetuate biases, violate privacy, and promote overreliance on technology at the cost of critical thinking.

AI therefore needs to be seen as a tool for research that supports human intelligence rather than replaces it. Student researchers are solely responsible for all aspects of their research project, even if AI is used during that research.

This chapter supplements more general information on the University's Implementing Guidelines on the Use of AI-Powered Language Models by introducing practical considerations for senior high school, undergraduate and graduate researchers.

5.1 Understanding Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.

Examples include

- generating text
- answering questions
- translating languages
- summarizing documents
- creating computer code
- organizing information
- generating images
- assisting with statistical analysis

Generative AI systems work by spotting patterns from large amounts of previously existing information to generate meaningful content.

5.2 AI as a Research Assistant, Not the Researcher

AI can be a valuable assistant throughout the research process.

It may help researchers

- brainstorm research ideas
- refine research questions
- organize literature reviews
- improve grammar and readability
- translate academic writing
- format references (subject to verification)
- explain unfamiliar concepts
- suggest coding structures for data analysis

However, AI **cannot replace** the intellectual responsibilities of researchers.

The following tasks should always remain the work of the student researcher

- identifying meaningful research problems
- designing research methodology
- interpreting findings
- evaluating evidence
- exercising ethical judgment
- developing conclusions
- making recommendations

Critical thinking remains a uniquely human responsibility.

Paulinian Reflection

Charism reminds us that our intellectual gifts are meant to be tivated, not delegated. AI may support learning, but wisdom, discernment, and moral judgment remain human responsibilities.

5.3 Acceptable Uses of AI in Research

When permitted by an adviser or instructor, acceptable uses of AI include

A. Brainstorming

- Generating possible research topics
- Exploring alternative research questions
- Developing preliminary outlines

B. Language Support

- Improving grammar
- Enhancing readability
- Checking sentence structure
- Improving academic writing style

C. Organization

- Developing outlines

- Creating tables
- Organizing references
- Summarizing notes for personal understanding

D. Programming Assistance

- Generating statistical scripts
- Writing programming code
- Debugging software
- Automating repetitive computational tasks

Researchers remain responsible for validating all generated code.

E. Learning Support

- Understanding unfamiliar theories
- Explaining statistical concepts
- Comparing methodological approaches
- Generating practice questions

These activities support learning rather than replace scholarship

5.4 Unacceptable Uses of AI

Researchers should never use AI to

- write an entire thesis or dissertation
- generate original research findings
- fabricate interview transcripts
- invent survey responses
- create fictitious citations
- generate references that do not exist
- produce literature reviews
- replace independent analysis
- write conclusions or recommendations on behalf of the researcher

- complete graded assessments requiring independent work

Such practices violate academic integrity and undermine the credibility of research.

Research Tip

A useful question to ask is "Am I using AI to improve my learning, or am I allowing AI to replace my learning?"

The answer often distinguishes ethical from unethical AI use.

5.5 Verifying AI Outputs

AI systems sometimes produce information that appears convincing but is inaccurate.

These inaccuracies are commonly called AI hallucinations.

Examples include

- fabricated references
- incorrect quotations
- nonexistent laws
- inaccurate statistics
- false research findings

Researchers should therefore verify every citation, every quotation, every statistical claim, every legal or policy reference, and every factual statement generated by AI.

Verification should be completed using credible academic sources rather than relying solely on AI responses.

5.6 AI and Critical Thinking

The gradual erosion of independent learning is one of the biggest ethical risks with AI.

Researchers should continue to question assumptions, compare multiple perspectives, evaluate evidence critically, recognize bias, and formulate independent conclusions.

Instead of rushing for quick answers, good research is about asking the right questions

While AI can speed up information processing, it cannot substitute for judgment in scholarly work.

5.7 AI, Privacy, and Data Protection

Researchers frequently work with confidential information. These may include

- interview transcripts
- medical information
- financial records
- educational records
- institutional documents
- unpublished research data

Uploading private information to unprotected AI platforms has the potential to breach privacy laws and institutional practices and may undermine participant trust.

According to University policy, researchers should never share personally identifiable information, proprietary university data, or sensitive research data with third-party unsecured AI platforms.

Researchers should anonymize data before using digital tools, as needed.

5.8 Transparency and Disclosure

Transparency is important whenever AI plays a role in scholarly work. When required by their adviser, department, or University policy, researchers should disclose AI use. Disclosure enables readers to see how AI played a role in the research.

Examples of appropriate disclosure include

- brainstorming
- language editing
- grammar correction
- formatting assistance
- outline development

Researchers remain fully responsible for verifying AI-generated outputs.

Sample AI Disclosure Statement

Portions of this manuscript were developed with the assistance of an AI-powered language model for brainstorming, language editing, and organizational support. All research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations were independently completed by the author(s). All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, verified, and revised before submission.

5.9 Copyright and Intellectual Property

Researchers need to understand that AI content raises copyright and ownership issues. Before using AI-generated images, illustrations, figures, software code, or datasets, students must check if they can legally use and ethically rely on the content.

Researchers must also be aware of copyright and other restrictions on published articles when they are uploaded into AI systems. Make sure to respect institutional and publisher policies.

5.10 AI and Bias

AI systems are trained from past data. This may cause them to mistakenly recreate cultural bias,
gender bias, racial bias, political bias, and historical inaccuracies. Thus, researchers must be vigilant and critically analyze the output of AI for fairness, inclusivity, and culture. Responsible researchers never take AI-generated responses at face value.

Ethical Scenario

A graduate student prompts an AI chatbot to summarize 20 journal articles. The summary by the AI is superb. The student introduces the summary in the literature review without even reading the other articles.

Questions

1. Is this ethical?
2. What major scholarly duty has been overlooked?
3. What are the risks of relying only on AI summaries?
4. How can AI be used responsibly?

5.11 Responsible AI Practices for Student Researchers

The following principles summarize ethical AI use.

DO

✓ Use AI to support learning
✓ Verify every AI-generated citation
✓ Edit and improve AI-generated language
✓ Think critically about AI responses
✓ Disclose AI use when required
✓ Protect confidential information
✓ Follow University policies

DO NOT

✗ Submit AI-generated work as your own
✗ Fabricate data using AI
✗ Generate false references
✗ Replace critical thinking with AI outputs
✗ Upload confidential participant information
✗ Depend exclusively on AI for literature reviews
✗ Allow AI to write your conclusions

Paulinian Reflection

Commitment to Mission calls Paulinian researchers to embrace innovation responsibly. Technology should always serve truth, justice, and humanity rather than convenience alone. Ethical AI use reflects wisdom, accountability, and respect for the dignity of every person.

Chapter 6 | Ethical Decision-Making in Research: Learning Through Real-life Cases

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this chapter, students should be able to:

- apply ethical principles to real-world research situations.
- analyze ethical dilemmas using sound reasoning and the Paulinian Core Values.
- make responsible decisions that protect participants, uphold academic integrity, and promote trustworthy scholarship.
- recognize that ethical decision-making often involves balancing competing values while remaining faithful to professional and institutional standards.

Introduction

Most ethical research is not as cut and dry as a decision of right and wrong. Researchers more frequently face situations where multiple competing interests, obligations, or values need to be weighed against each other. We call these types of situations ethical dilemmas.

An ethical dilemma refers to when there is no apparent solution, and every decision that can be made has consequences for the participants, researchers, institutions, or society.

Ethical decision-making is not about avoiding punishment or complying with regulations. It is to ensure that all research decision-making reflects integrity, fairness, respect for persons, and a commitment to the common good.

In the case of Paulinian researchers, ethical decision-making entails prayerful reflection, discernment on the moral act, and a commitment to live out the Paulinian core values.

A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making

When confronted with an ethical dilemma, student researchers may use the following five-step framework.

Step 1: Identify the Ethical Issue

Ask yourself

- What is the problem?
- Who may be affected?
- Which ethical principles are involved?

Sometimes the ethical issue is not immediately obvious. Carefully examine the facts before making a decision.

Step 2: Gather Relevant Information

Consider the following

- institutional policies
- adviser recommendations
- disciplinary standards
- participant rights
- legal requirements
- possible consequences

Avoid making decisions based solely on convenience or personal preference.

Step 3: Consider Alternative Actions

List every reasonable course of action the ask

- Which option causes the least harm?
- Which option best protects participants?
- Which option best reflects academic integrity?

Ethical decisions often require choosing the option that best protects human dignity and research integrity.

Step 4: Evaluate the Decision

Reflect on the following questions

- Is this action honest?
- Is it fair?
- Would I be comfortable explaining my decision publicly?
- Does it reflect the Paulinian core values?
- Does it uphold the University's research and AI policies?

Step 5: Act Responsibly and Reflect

After making a decision

- document important decisions
- consult your adviser when uncertain
- evaluate the outcome
- learn from the experience

Ethical growth comes through continual reflection.

Sample Cases

Case 1 | The Missing Responses

Stephanie needs 300 completed surveys. A few weeks later, she only gets 255 replies. Asks the classmate if he should then do the rest of the answers because “No one will know anyway.”

Ethical Issues

- Fabrication
- Academic dishonesty
- Reporting of different results

Discussion

Invention of data leads to erroneous findings invalidating the entire research work.

Researchers should instead extend data collection, revise the sample size if statistically justified, and consult the adviser.

Paulinian Reflection
Truth cannot be built upon false evidence.

Case Study 2 | The Helpful AI

Jonas asks an AI application to analyze his interview transcripts.

The AI generates themes and writes the discussion section. Jonas copies the text into his thesis without reviewing it.

Ethical Issues

- Overreliance on AI
- Lack of Independent analysis
- Failure to verify AI output
- Lack of disclosure

Discussion

AI may assist in organizing ideas, but interpreting qualitative data is an intellectual responsibility of the researcher.

Jonas should conduct his own thematic analysis, compare AI suggestions with original transcripts, disclose AI assistance if required, write his own interpretation.

Case Study 3 | The Confidential Spreadsheet

A researcher uploads a spreadsheet containing participant names, addresses, medical history, and interview responses into a public AI platform.

Ethical Issues

- Breach of confidentiality
- Privacy violation
- Data Security
- Institutional policy violation

Discussion

Researchers should never upload confidential participant information into unsecured AI systems. Sensitive information should be anonymized before using digital tools. This responsibility is explicitly emphasized in the University's AI Implementing Guidelines.

Case Study 4 | The Gift Author

A faculty member asks that his name appear as coauthor even though he has done no significant research.

Ethical Issues

- Honorary authorship
- Misrepresentation
- Abuse of authority

Discussion

It should not be counted as authorship, but as an authentic intellectual contribution.

When disagreements occur, researchers should discuss authorship expectations at the beginning of the project and politely refer to institutional policies.

Case Study 5 | The Convenient Participant

A researcher wants to find out more about classroom experiences. Rather than asking for volunteers, the researcher informs students that they must participate.

Ethical Issues

- Coercion
- Lack of voluntary participation
- Abuse of authority

Discussion

Research participation should always be voluntary.

Students need to know that if they opt to withdraw, it will have no impact on their grades, jobs, or relationship with the institution.

Case Study 6 | Selective Reporting

After analyzing the data, a graduate student discovers that several findings do not support the original hypothesis. Only favorable results are included in the thesis.

Ethical Issues

- Selective reporting
- Misleading conclusions
- Research bias

Discussion

Researchers should report findings honestly, including unexpected or negative results. Studies with unexpected findings can yield novel insights that may prompt future investigations.

Case Study 7 | Pressure to Finish

A thesis deadline is approaching. One student even relates that it was not necessary to get informed consent because "everyone in the organization already knows about the study."

Ethical Issues

- Respect for persons
- Participant autonomy
- Institutional compliance

Discussion

Informed consent is necessary even when participants know the researcher.

Never compromise on ethics. No matter how pressing or rapid the deadline is.

Ethical Decision-Making Checklist

Before making an important research decision, ask yourself

✓ Is this action truthful?
✓ Does it respect participant dignity?
✓ Will it protect confidentiality?
✓ Does it comply with University policy?
✓ Is it fair to everyone involved?
✓ Could this decision damage public trust in research?
✓ Would I proudly defend this decision before my adviser, ethics committee, or future employer?
✓ Does this decision reflect the Paulinian core values?

Paulinian Reflection

Ethical decisions are ultimately decisions about character. A Paulinian researcher does not choose the easiest path or the quickest solution but the one that best reflects truth, justice, compassion, and responsible stewardship of knowledge. Ethics is therefore not simply about following rules. It is about becoming the kind of researcher whom others can trust.

Chapter 7 | Addressing Suspected Research Ethics Violations

Students are expected to conduct research with integrity and responsibility. Research advisers, professors, panel members, or other University officials may discover instances of alleged research misconduct by uncovering violations of established ethical standards for scholarly conduct such as plagiarism, data fabrication or falsification, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI), citation manipulation, or other academic dishonesty during research supervision, manuscript review, or academic evaluation.

If a possible violation is identified, the University shall handle it in accordance with its disciplinary procedures. Reported cases are evaluated by the Student Affairs Office and the Student Welfare Committee to ensure that due process is followed and that any corrective action is taken when warranted. Students are allowed to respond to the allegations, and all hearings proceed confidentially.

Students who suspect research misconduct may report their concerns to the committee or to their research adviser, professor, Program Chairperson, or Student Affairs Office. Reports should be made responsibly, in good faith, and supported by factual information. The University's procedures emphasize fairness, restorative justice, and students' educational development while safeguarding the integrity of research.

Conclusion

Research is both an intellectual undertaking and a moral one. A research project is a character study. Every question asked, every participant invited to take part, every bit of data analyzed, and conclusion reached reveals something about the researcher.

For both undergraduates and graduates, research is more than a graduation requirement. It is an opportunity to contribute to knowledge, address real-world challenges, and cultivate the habits of mind and character expected of professionals and scholars.

Note that none of the ethical principles articulated in this guide, particularly respect for persons, beneficence, justice, honesty and integrity, accountability and transparency, as well as stewardship, operate in isolation. They form a framework for responsible scholarship by safeguarding the interests of participants, enhancing research quality, and supporting public trust.

Student researchers, as part of the Paulinian academic community, are challenged to incorporate these principles into their work with the Paulinian core values. These values help us remember the ideal of research that it is not merely for knowledge but for knowledge to be used properly and in service of people.

Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies are generating new ways of learning. But they also require us to exercise greater judgment, responsibility, and ethical sensibility. Well implemented, AI has the potential to enhance scholarship; misused, it indicates abuses of quality and erodes the critical role that human judgment plays in taxonomy. Therefore, student researchers need to engage with technological innovation responsibly, transparently, and accountably without losing sight of the fact that their own critical thinking must be at the heart of the research process.

Finally, ethical research itself is a long-term process, and Paulinian researchers are admonished to uphold the heights of responsible and ethical scholarship.

We hope this Research Ethics Guide reminds students that research excellence can only be achieved with ethical integrity. In striving for truth that is wise, compassionate, and responsible, every Paulinian researcher adds to the body of knowledge that not only advances academic excellence but nourishes the history and experience of building a more relevant community committed to progress, advancing the University's mission.

CARITAS CHRISTI URGET NOS!

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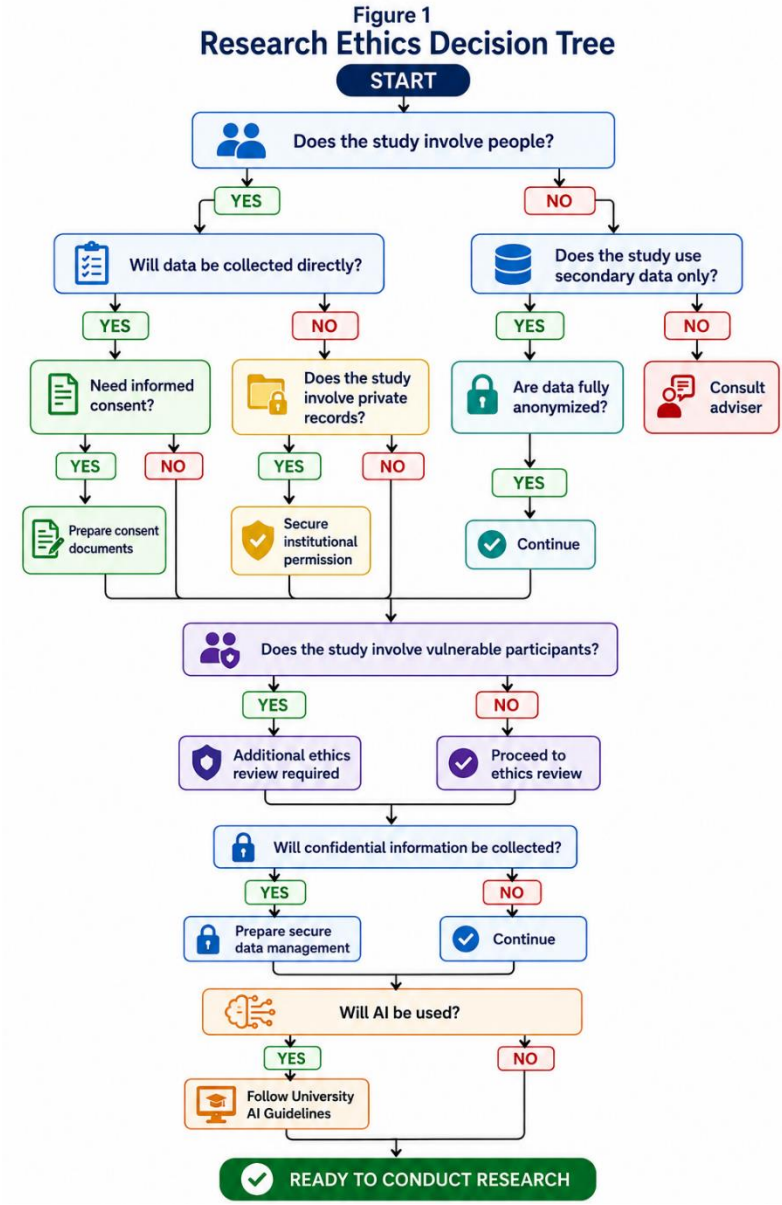
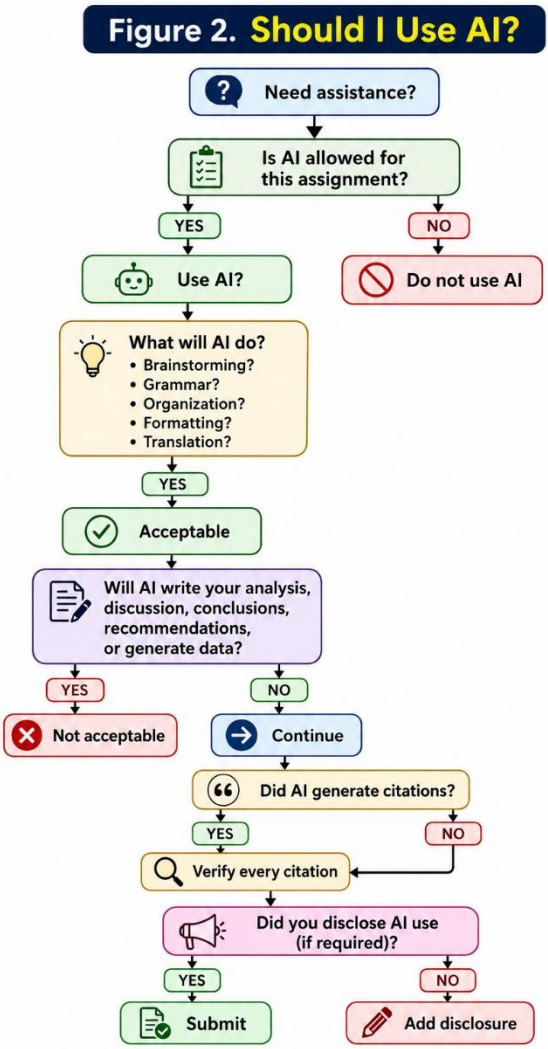
Appendices

Appendix A

Rsearch Ethics Decision Tree



Appendix B
Should I Use AI?



Appendix C
Student Research Ethics Checklist

Use this checklist before submitting your research proposal, beginning data collection, or submitting your final manuscript.

A. Research Planning

☐ My research addresses a meaningful and relevant problem.
☐ My objectives are clear and achievable.
☐ My methodology is appropriate for my research questions.
☐ I have considered potential ethical risks.
☐ I have consulted my research adviser regarding ethical concerns.

B. Ethics Review

☐ My study requires ethics clearance.
☐ Necessary institutional approvals have been obtained before data collection.
☐ Required permissions from organizations or institutions have been secured.
☐ My research complies with University policies.

C. Human Participants

☐ Participants have received complete information about the study.
☐ Participation is voluntary.
☐ Written or documented informed consent has been obtained.
☐ Participants understand that they may withdraw at any time.
☐ Additional safeguards have been considered for vulnerable populations.

D. Privacy and Confidentiality

☐ Participant identities are protected.
☐ Personal information is securely stored.
☐ Data are accessible only to authorized individuals.
☐ Confidential information will not be disclosed without permission.
☐ Data retention and disposal plans have been established.

E. Academic Integrity

☐ All sources are properly cited.
☐ All quotations are correctly identified.
☐ Figures and tables are appropriately acknowledged.
☐ No data have been fabricated or falsified.
☐ Findings are reported honestly.

F. Responsible AI Use

☐ AI was used only for acceptable purposes.
☐ Every AI-generated citation has been verified.
☐ AI-generated content has been critically reviewed.
☐ AI did not replace my own analysis or conclusions.
☐ AI use has been disclosed when required.
☐ Confidential information has not been entered into unsecured AI platforms. These expectations are consistent with the University's Implementing Guidelines on the Use of AI-Powered Language Models.

G. Before Submission

☐ The manuscript has been proofread.
☐ References have been checked for accuracy.
☐ All appendices are complete.
☐ My adviser has reviewed the manuscript.

☐ I am prepared to defend every statement contained in this research.

Appendix D
Sample AI Use Disclosure Statement

AI Use Disclosure

Portions of this manuscript were developed with the assistance of an AI-powered language model for brainstorming, language editing, organizational support, and formatting assistance. All research design, literature review, methodology, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations were independently completed by the researcher(s). All AI-assisted outputs were critically evaluated, verified using appropriate scholarly sources, and revised before submission.

Appendix E
Research Protocol & Ethics Review Application

Name of Researcher/s		Adviser	
Department/ Program		Date	
Research Title			

Section 1 - Research Objective/s and Problems

Section 2 - Proposed Methods and Data Gathering Procedures, including research participants and sample determination

Section 3 - How do you plan to gain access to prospective research participants?

Section 4 –Ethics Checklist

1.	I have read and discussed with my adviser/supervisor the ethical guidelines for research as contained in the SPUQC research handbook and other relevant ethics guidelines for educational research.	
2.	Data gathering activities involving students of SPUQC, other schools, or external organizations will be done only with the signed agreement of the head or authorized representative of the department, school, or organization. Written permissions must be seen by the adviser or supervisor.	
3.	The purpose and procedures of the research, and the potential benefits and costs of participating (e.g. the amount of their time involved), will be fully explained to prospective research participants before the actual research is conducted.	
4.	My full identity and contact details will be disclosed to potential research participants.	
5.	All my prospective participants must sign an informed consent form. The prospective participants will be given a copy of the signed consent form.	
6.	If my prospective research participants are minors or whose mental and cognitive capabilities or other vulnerable circumstances may limit the extent of their understanding and full and conscious participation (voluntariness) in the research, a consent to participate shall be signed by their parents, guardian or 'responsible other'. In case the minor is emancipated, he/she can sign the consent form. For non-emancipated minor participants, a signed assent form is required, together with the consent form of parents, guardians or 'responsible other'. The manner and form by which a child provides his/her assent shall be as follows: a. Children below 7 years-old do not need to sign an assent form, but dissent on the part of the child must be respected and documented. b. If the child is 7 to 12 years-old a verbal assent is acceptable. c. If the child is 12-15 years-old, a signed Assent Form is required. d. If the child is 16-17 years old, he/she can sign on the same informed consent document signed by the parents, guardian or 'responsible other.'	
7.	Prospective research participants will be informed that data collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be reported in anonymized form.	

8.	My prospective research participants will be informed that I will be compelled to disclose certain information only if there are reasonably strong grounds for believing that such non-disclosure will result in harm to research participants or others, or the continuation of discovered illegal activity.	
9.	Unwarranted pressure will not be placed on individuals or institutions to participate in research activities.	
10.	Participants will be made aware that they may freely withdraw their participation from the project at any time without risk or prejudice.	
11.	The treatment of potential research participants will in no way be biased if they choose not to participate in or withdraw from the project.	
12.	The dignity and interests of research participants will be upheld and respected at all times, and steps will be taken to ensure that no harm will result from their participation in the research.	
13.	The views and opinions of all participants in the research will be respected, and I will not discriminate and/or stigmatized my research participants.	
14.	I will provide participants with my contact details, including those of my supervisor/adviser, so that they can make contact in case they have queries, concerns or complaints related to my research.	
15.	Research will be carried out in a manner that is not disruptive to schedules and burdens of the participants.	
16.	I have carefully considered, and am aware of the extent, if any, to which my research might expose me to any kind of risk to personal safety. I have also discussed this with my adviser/supervisor, and appropriate steps to be taken to respond to any risks are already in place. Attached herewith are the agreed steps in response to potential risk/s (in case there is/are).	
17.	That I will behave appropriately and prudently at all times during the conduct of the research, and I will not do or get involved in any act that shall compromise my dignity and integrity or the name of my school.	
18.	Data generated by the research will be kept in a safe and secure place and will be used purely for the research project. It will never be used in any other projects without written permission from the respondents. No one other than research colleagues, supervisors/advisers or examiners will have access to any of the data collected.	
19.	Research participants will have the right to access their data.	
20.	I will make sure that the privacy, anonymity and non-traceability of participants are always protected and in all circumstances.	
21.	When requested, research participants will be provided with a summary of research findings.	

22.	Does your research involve (please tick ALL that apply): ☐ Schools? ☐ Public Institutions? ☐ Private Institutions ☐ None of these groups?	
23.	Does your research involve (please tick ALL that apply): ☐ Minors? ☐ Vulnerable Adults? ☐ Disabled persons? ☐ Adults?	
24.	a) Will your research be conducted in (please tick ONE BOX only): ☐ SPUQC only ☐ Outside SPUQC only? ☐ SPUQC and outside SPUQC? b) If outside SPUQC, please name the schools or institutions involved: _____	
25.	FOR ALL STUDENTS UNDERTAKING RESEARCH INVOLVING CHILDREN (UNDER 18) AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS, THEIR RESEARCH MUST BE REVIEWED BY AN ETHICS COMMITTEE.	

If you have not ticked any of the items above, please explain the reason/s below:

_____

Attachments:

(1) **consent form to be used with prospective participants**
(2) assent form to be used for prospective minor participants

Section 5 - Attestation

Thesis Adviser

I have discussed thoroughly the research proposal and the entries made on this form with the student, and I am satisfied that the research work will be done with care and professionalism, and with due regard to ethical protocol and participants' interests.

Signed:

Name: _____
Date:_____

Appendix F
Information Sheet

Dear participants:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research entitled _____. This research is in partial fulfilment to the requirements of the degree in _____.

Kindly read the following for your guidance and information.

- The aim of this research is _____
- Rest assured that all information and personal data you will be asked to provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and security of information. Only you and I can access personal data. Others may be permitted to have a look at the data, but only for educational purposes. In case the result is published, your identity will be kept secret.
- Your participation is completely voluntary; that is, you may withdraw from the research anytime without prejudice or negative consequences, and non-participation in the research will never affect your standing in my class or in the school.
- This is a simple _____research, and there are no activities that are invasive or dangerous. Rest assured that you will never be asked to demonstrate or perform any activity or procedure that will cause you any harm or trauma.
- In case you have questions and clarifications, complaints or suggestions, you may contact me at _____
- In case you have complaints about the conduct of the research or behavior of the researcher, you may contact my CIRP Director via cirp@spuqc.edu.ph.

Appendix F
Sample Research Participant Consent Form

Project title:

_____

Researcher's name:

_____

Institutional Affiliation:

_____

Supervisor's name:

_____

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and purpose of the research project have been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified, and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that data will be stored in the researcher's personal computer only, and I can access my own data freely if I want to. Others may access the data upon permission but only for educational purposes.
- I understand that this will not cause me harm or put my security, autonomy, physical integrity and psychological state at risk. And if I sense any danger or risk in my participation, I am free to withdraw, and if I was not informed of the risks or dangers in this research, I may file a complaint against the researcher.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics

Committee of the School if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ……
(Research participant)
Print name ……
Date ……

Contact details
Researcher: _____
Supervisor: _____

Appendix G
Researcher's Ethical Pledge

As a Paulinian student researcher,

I solemnly affirm that I shall pursue knowledge with honesty, integrity, humility, and respect for human dignity.

I will conduct my research responsibly and ethically.

I will protect the rights, welfare, privacy, and confidentiality of all research participants.

I will report findings truthfully without fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.

I will acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others through proper citation and responsible scholarship.

I will use Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies responsibly, transparently, and only in ways that support not replace my own learning and critical thinking.

I will respect the policies of St. Paul University Quezon City and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

Above all, I will strive to ensure that my research contributes to the advancement of knowledge, the service of humanity, and the realization of the Paulinian mission.

Appendix H
The Ten Commitments of a Paulinian Researcher

A Paulinian researcher commits to

1. seek truth with honesty and humility.
2. respect the dignity, rights, and welfare of every research participant.
3. conduct research that serves the common good.
4. protect confidential information entrusted by participants and institutions.
5. practice fairness, respect, and professionalism in collaboration.
6. acknowledge the work of others through accurate citation and ethical authorship.
7. report research findings truthfully, regardless of whether they support personal expectations.
8. use Artificial Intelligence responsibly, transparently, and ethically in accordance with University policy.
9. accept responsibility for every aspect of scholarly work.
10. live the Paulinian core values through every stage of the research process.

Appendix I
Declaration of Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research Output

Research Title _____
Researcher(s) _____
Program/Department _____
Academic Year _____

Declaration
I/We, the undersigned researcher(s), hereby declare that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, if any, were used only to assist in selected aspects of the preparation of this research manuscript.
The use of AI was limited to activities such as:
☐ Grammar and language editing
☐ Improving clarity and readability
☐ Formatting and document organization
☐ Brainstorming or idea generation
☐ Summarization of researcher-reviewed literature
☐ Creation of presentation graphics or visual materials (with proper disclosure)
☐ Other (please specify):
_____

I/We further declare that:
□ The research topic, objectives, methodology, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations are entirely our own work.
□ No research data, interview transcripts, survey responses, statistical results, references, citations, or conclusions were fabricated, falsified, or generated using Artificial Intelligence.
□ All AI-assisted outputs were carefully reviewed, verified, revised, and approved by the researcher(s) before inclusion in this manuscript.

□ We assume full responsibility and accountability for the originality, accuracy, integrity, and ethical compliance of the entire research output.
□ Any AI-generated images, graphics, or visual materials included in this research are properly disclosed and used solely for visual presentation purposes.

AI Tool(s) Used (if applicable)

AI Tool	Purpose of Use	Sections/Outputs Affected

Researcher's Certification
We certify that the information provided in this declaration is true, complete, and accurate. We understand that failure to disclose the use of Artificial Intelligence or the misuse of AI tools in research may constitute a violation of the University's policies on academic integrity, research ethics, and responsible conduct of research.

Researcher(s)

Name	**Signature**	**Date**
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Adviser's Certification
I have reviewed this declaration and acknowledge that the researcher(s) disclosed the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), if applicable, in accordance with the University's policies on responsible AI use and academic integrity.

Research Adviser _____
Signature _____
Date_____

==========

For CIRP Use Only
Reviewed by

_____
Position

_____
Date Received _____

Remarks:
Status
☐ Accepted
☐ Returned for Revision
☐ Others:

_____

Important Reminder
The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) shall supplement and not replace the intellectual work of the researcher(s). Researchers remain fully responsible for the originality, accuracy, validity, ethical compliance, and integrity of the entire research output. Any AI-assisted content must be critically reviewed, validated, and properly disclosed in accordance with the policies of the Center for Innovation, Research and Planning (CIRP) and St. Paul University Quezon City.

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This guide serves as an educational tool for the Senior High School, Undergraduate, and Graduate School students of St. Paul University Quezon City. It is in line with existing University policies, national regulations, and internationally recognized ethical guidelines. Where institutional policies or applicable laws differ from the examples shown in this guide, University official policies and the requirements of applicable law take precedence.

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