KARUNYA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES

Institutional Ethics Manual

Academic, Research & Administrative Ethics Policy Compendium

KITS/IEC/2025/01

Institutional Ethics Manual

Academic, Research & Administrative Ethics Policy Compendium

1. PREAMBLE

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS) is committed to nurturing an academic ecosystem grounded in the principles of the Constitution of India, including equality, justice, liberty, dignity and fraternity. The institution strives to create an environment that reflects the highest ethical and professional standards mandated by the Government of India, statutory bodies, and national regulatory frameworks. The institution's ethical foundation rests upon the Constitution of India, particularly the principles of equality, justice, dignity, non-discrimination, and safety for all.

To realize excellence in teaching, learning, and research, the institution fosters a culture of:

- Mutual trust and accountability
- Respect for fundamental rights
- Compliance with national laws, educational regulations, and institutional governance policies
- Zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or any unethical practices

The institutional ethics framework ensures that every member: students, faculty, staff and administrators acts responsibly and ethically, thereby contributing to a safe, inclusive, and law-abiding campus environment.

1A. ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR & VALUE FRAMEWORK

KITS follows an ethics model built upon:

1. Integrity: Honesty in Academics, Research, Administration
2. Inclusivity: Respect irrespective of caste, sex, religion, economic status
3. Equity: Fairness in Evaluation, Opportunities and Resources
4. Professionalism: Responsible behaviour in classrooms and campus
5. Compassion: Empathy, Social responsibility, Community engagement
6. Accountability: Owning decisions, Upholding institutional values

Every member of the institution is individually responsible for their conduct and collectively responsible for maintaining the ethical climate of the campus.

1B. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This manual applies to:

- Students (UG, PG, Ph.D.)
- Faculty (regular, contract, adjunct)
- Administrative & Technical staff
- Research scholars & Project staff
- Hostel & support staff
- Visiting faculty, consultants, collaborators
- External persons participating in institutional activities

All members are expected to adhere to the ethical and professional standards defined by KITS.

2. VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

Vision

- True to its name Karunya which means 'Compassion' shall be an institution with social concern to address the problems of humanity through technical education, research and development, products, patents and extension.
- The faculty and students of Karunya will be nurtured in character, ethics and spiritual discernment to serve the society with fervor and zeal.

Mission

- To raise students to serve humanity by attaining high levels of academic excellence and professional competence with exemplary values and social concern.
- To find solutions to human problems in areas relating to water, food, health and sustainable energy through scientific, social and technological research.
- To setup care homes for physically and mentally challenged, the elderly and the terminally ill, enabling students to understand human needs through participation and dedication, solving problems through research, development, innovation and spiritual care.

Core Values

- Ethical integrity
- Respect for all
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Social justice
- Diversity & inclusivity
- Professional responsibility

3. CONSTITUTIONAL & NATIONAL COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

The Institution upholds and operationalizes the following constitutional and regulatory principles:

a. Constitutional Principles Followed

- Article 14 — Equality before law
- Article 15 — Prohibition of discrimination
- Article 19(1)(a) — Freedom of speech
- Article 21 — Protection of life and personal liberty
- Article 21A — Right to education
- Article 51A — Fundamental duties: respect, harmony, scientific temper, responsibility

b. Compliance with Government of India Acts

- UGC Regulations — Grievance Redressal
- UGC Anti-Ragging Regulations
- UGC Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions (2013)
- AICTE Regulations on Student & Faculty Conduct
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 (POSH Act)
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- National Education Policy (NEP 2020)
- Data Protection & Confidentiality Norms (Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023)
- ICMR / DBT / DST Research Ethics Guidelines

c. Institutional Obligations

- Establishment of mandatory committees
- Ensuring fair access, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination
- Transparent grievance mechanisms
- Ethical academic and research practices
- Student protection and welfare measures

4. DOMAINS OF ETHICS

1. Academic Ethics
2. Teaching–Learning Ethics
3. Classroom Ethics
4. Examination Ethics
5. Research Ethics
6. Administrative Ethics
7. Student Conduct Ethics

5. INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE (IEC)

Composition

- Chairperson – Director (Students Affairs)
- Member Secretary – Ethics Coordinator (Deputy Registrar(Student Affairs))
- Academic Ethics Member
- Teaching - Learning Expert
- Examination Section Representative
- Research Ethics Expert
- Legal Expert

- Student Representative (case-based)
- Administrative Nominee

Tenure
- Committee: 3 years
- Student member: 1 year

Roles
- Review complaints
- Ensure national legal compliance
- Conduct hearings
- Finalize recommendations
- Oversee departmental ATRs
- Annual ethics report to Registrar

6. MEETING FREQUENCY

- Regular Meetings: Every 3rd Friday once in 3 months
- If a holiday → Next working day
- Emergency Meetings: Within 24 hours of serious case

7. GENERAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- Honesty & integrity
- Respect for all persons
- Zero discrimination
- Academic & research honesty
- Confidentiality
- Non-retaliation
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Dignity & safety

8. COMMON SOP (Applicable to ALL Domains)

- Complaint submission (portal/email)
- Acknowledgement within 48 hours
- Preliminary review within 7 working days
- Evidence collection
- Hearing by IEC/subcommittee
- Decision within 21 working days
- ATR within 15 days
- Closure and documentation

8A. REFERRAL TO OTHER STATUTORY COMMITTEES

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences (KITS) functions in compliance with all mandatory regulatory bodies and statutory committees prescribed by the Government of India, UGC, and AICTE.

If any complaint received by the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) falls under the jurisdiction of a specific statutory committee, the case shall be immediately redirected to the concerned body for appropriate action.

The following committees operate independently and carry statutory authority:

1. Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) – POSH Act

Handles:

- Sexual harassment complaints
- Gender-based misconduct
- Workplace-related harassment

IEC will forward such complaints to ICC within 24 hours, as mandated by the POSH Act.

2. Anti-Ragging Committee (ARC) – UGC Regulations

Handles:

- Ragging (physical, verbal, psychological, cyber)
- Bullying or intimidation connected to student life

IEC will transfer these cases immediately to ARC for inquiry and action.

3. Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) – UGC Regulations

Handles:

- Discrimination based on caste, gender, disability, language, religion, economic status
- Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities
- Inclusion and accessibility issues

IEC will refer such cases to EOC for redressal and compliance.

4. Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)

Handles:

- General student grievances
- Administrative difficulties
- Service delays
- Staff behaviour issues not amounting to ethical misconduct

IEC will send appropriate grievances to GRC when they do not involve an ethics violation.

8B. COORDINATION BETWEEN COMMITTEES

To avoid duplication and ensure fairness:

- IEC shall conduct initial screening to determine the correct committee.
- Cases redirected will be formally recorded in the IEC Register.
- IEC will not interfere with the proceedings of statutory committees.
- The final decision will rest with the committee having legal/statutory jurisdiction.
- IEC may offer supportive recommendations if requested.

8C. CASES UNDER MULTIPLE DOMAINS

If a case involves more than one domain, e.g.,

- Harassment with academic bias
- Discrimination with exam grievance
- Misconduct involving research and classroom behaviour

Then:

- Primary jurisdiction = statutory committee
- Secondary evaluation (professional behaviour, ethics) = IEC

Both committees may act simultaneously but with clear separation of duties.

8D. REFERRAL TO DOMAIN-SPECIFIC COMMITTEES

Some ethical issues fall under specialised committees already functioning at KITS. In such cases, the IEC shall transfer the matter to the appropriate committee for domain-specific handling.

1. Examination Malpractice Committee (EMC)

Jurisdiction:

- Use of unfair means
- Paper leakage
- Impersonation
- Invigilation lapses
- Tampering of marks or answer scripts

IEC Action:

- IEC will forward all exam malpractice cases to the Examination Malpractice Committee constituted by the Controller of Examinations.
- The EMC will conduct inquiry as per Examination Ordinances.
- IEC may review behavioural aspects (if any), but penalties will follow COE norms.

2. *Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC / IRB)*

Jurisdiction:

- Human participant research ethics
- Animal research
- Biosafety, consent, data handling
- Ethical approval for research projects
- Research involving vulnerable populations

IEC Action:

- IEC does not process research proposals requiring ethical clearance.
- IEC handles only misconduct (plagiarism, unethical behaviour).
- All ethics-approval–related matters are redirected to the IREC/IRB.
- Research misconduct affecting ethics (plagiarism, authorship dispute) → handled jointly by IEC + IREC when required.

9. MICRO-SOPs (Domain-Wise)

9.1 MICRO-SOP: ACADEMIC ETHICS

Covers unfair grading, bias, attendance issues and syllabus deviation.

Steps:

- Submission of issue
- HoD screening
- Evidence: scripts, logs, CO-PO sheets
- Subject expert review
- Decision: Re-evaluation, correction, faculty counselling
- ATR + closure

9.2 MICRO-SOP: TEACHING–LEARNING ETHICS

Covers behaviour, pedagogy, professional conduct.

Steps:

- Complaint submission
- HoD screens (teaching/behaviour)
- Class observation + LMS review
- Faculty discussion
- Remedial action/training
- Monitoring for 2–4 weeks

9.3 MICRO-SOP: CLASSROOM ETHICS

Covers discipline, behaviour, misuse of devices.

Steps:

- Report from faculty
- Class Advisor/ HoD inquiry
- Hearing
- Decisions: warning, counselling.

9.4 MICRO-SOP: EXAMINATION ETHICS

Covers malpractice, leakage, invigilation lapses.

Steps:

- Incident report + CCTV
- COE verification
- Malpractice committee hearing
- Penalty as per ordinance
- ATR + documentation

Cases involving major exam malpractice (impersonation, paper leakage) are mandatorily referred to the Examination Malpractice Committee.

9.5 MICRO-SOP: RESEARCH ETHICS

Covers plagiarism, authorship disputes.

Steps:

- Complaint/plagiarism flag
- Plagiarism report
- Ethics approval check
- Expert panel review
- Decisions: revision, withdrawal, suspension
- ATR + closure

Ethics approvals for research proposals are handled by the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC). IEC handles only misconduct and integrity violations.

9.6 MICRO-SOP: ADMINISTRATIVE ETHICS

Covers delays, bias, confidentiality breaches.

Steps:

- Complaint to Registrar
- File movement audit
- Confirmation of violation
- Decisions: Training, warning, disciplinary action

9.7 MICRO-SOP: STUDENT CONDUCT ETHICS

Covers ragging, bullying, harassment, property misuse.

Steps:

- Complaint (anonymous allowed)
- Risk assessment
- Evidence review
- Hearing
- Decisions based on severity

10. ETHICAL AMBIENCE & NATIONAL COMPLIANCE SECTION

KITS ensures a campus climate that encourages mutual respect, ethical practices, psychological safety and adherence to national laws.

10.1 Ethical Ambience Initiatives

- Mandatory ethics education
- Professional behaviour training
- Confidential grievance redressal
- Transparent governance
- Inclusive practices respecting diversity

10.2 Research Integrity

- Mandatory awareness of national ethics guidelines
- Data protection norms
- Authorship transparency
- IRB/IEC approvals

10.3 Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination

- Committees constituted as per national mandates:
- Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) – POSH Act
- Anti-Ragging Committee – UGC Regulations
- Equity & Non-Discrimination Committee – UGC 2012
- Examination Malpractice Committee
- Student Welfare Office

10.4 Student Support & Well-being

- Counselling services
- Mental health support
- Substance abuse awareness
- Lost & found honesty awards
- Leadership training

11. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1 Students

- Maintain discipline and respect.
- Avoid plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty.
- Respect diversity and avoid discriminatory practices.
- Report ethical issues responsibly.

11.2 Faculty

- Uphold fairness in teaching and evaluation.
- Maintain punctuality, professionalism, and respect.
- Ensure confidentiality of student information.
- Avoid bias and harassment.
- Report academic misconduct immediately.

11.3 Class Advisors

- Monitor student behavioural and academic issues.
- Provide counselling or referral as needed.
- Report misconduct to HoD/IEC.

11.4 Heads of Departments

- Conduct preliminary inquiry into complaints.
- Ensure syllabus completion, teaching quality, academic fairness.
- Facilitate documentation for IEC cases.

11.5 Deans

- Ensure curriculum integrity and examination transparency.
- Monitor compliance with academic regulations.

11.6 Controller of Examinations (COE)

- Oversee examination integrity.
- Handle malpractice cases.
- Ensure confidentiality of exam processes.

11.7 Research Supervisors

- Maintain ethical research practices.
- Ensure originality and proper authorship.
- Guide scholars on national research ethics guidelines.

11.8 Administrative Officers

- Ensure timely, transparent, and bias-free administrative services.
- Maintain confidentiality of institutional records.

11.9 Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC)

- Review complaints.
- Conduct hearings.
- Recommend actions.
- Submit annual ethics report.

12. ENFORCEMENT & DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

1. All decisions of the IEC are final and binding, subject to appeal before the Registrar/Vice-Chancellor.
2. Non-compliance with IEC recommendations will result in disciplinary action as per:
   - University Rules
   - UGC/AICTE Regulations
   - Indian Penal Code (where applicable)
3. Penalties include:
   - Warning / Counselling
   - Written reprimand
   - Re-evaluation / Redo of tasks
   - Suspension (temporary)
   - Debarment (exams/research)
   - Termination (for severe cases)
   - Legal action (if mandated by law)

12A. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROCEEDINGS

All complaints, documents, inquiry reports, hearing details, and decisions handled by the IEC shall remain strictly confidential.

Information shall be shared only:

- With authorised institutional officers
- On a need-to-know basis
- When legally mandated by Government or Courts

Any breach of confidentiality will itself be treated as an ethical violation.

12B. APPEAL PROCESS

Any student, staff, or faculty member aggrieved by an IEC decision may file an appeal within 10 working days of receiving the communication.

Appeals shall be submitted to:

- The Registrar (first appeal)
- The Vice-Chancellor (final appeal)

The decision of the Vice-Chancellor shall be final.

13. AMENDMENT & REVIEW POLICY

- This manual shall be reviewed once every 3 years, or earlier if mandated by statutory bodies.
- Amendments require approval by:

- Director (QAA)
- Registrar
- Vice-Chancellor
- IEC may propose revisions based on regulatory updates.

DEFINITIONS

Ethical Misconduct: Any action that violates institutional ethics, national law, academic norms, or professional standards.

Academic Misconduct: Includes plagiarism, cheating, falsification, bias, unfair grading, syllabus deviation, absenteeism without justification.

Research Misconduct: Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism (FFP), unethical data handling, misuse of research funds.

Discrimination: Any disadvantage based on caste, religion, gender, disability, nationality, economic status.

Harassment: Any verbal, physical, psychological act causing discomfort, humiliation, or intimidation.

Confidentiality: Preservation of privacy of personal, academic, or sensitive information.

Bias: Unfair inclination for or against an individual or group.

Professional Misconduct: Failure to maintain decorum, courtesy, punctuality, or mandated responsibilities.

Student Misconduct: Ragging, bullying, property damage, cyber abuse, abuse of privileges, exam malpractice.

Complaint: Any grievance submitted by a student/staff/faculty regarding ethical issues.

ANNEXURE A - IEC Committee Structure

Sl. No	Role	Designation	Description
1	Chairperson	Director (Students Affairs)	Provides leadership, ensures neutrality
2	Member Secretary	Deputy Registrar (Student Affairs)	Coordinates meetings, records minutes
3	Academic Ethics Member	Senior Faculty	Reviews academic-related ethical cases
4	Teaching–Learning Ethics Member	Teaching Expert	Reviews pedagogy & behaviour issues
5	Examination Ethics Member	COE Nominee	Handles malpractice & exam integrity issues
6	Research Ethics Expert	Senior Research Faculty	Evaluates research integrity cases
7	Administrative Ethics Member	Deputy Registrar/Administrator	Reviews office/administrative ethics

8	External Expert	Legal/Academic Expert	Ensures unbiased and independent viewpoint
9	Student Representative (Case-Based)	Final-Year Student	Invited for student-related matters
10	Special Invitees	HoD, Counsellor, Dean	Called when required for specific cases

ANNEXURE B - ETHICAL VIOLATION CLASSIFICATION GRID

Category	Description	Examples	Level of Penalty
Minor	Unintentional errors	Minor clerical mistakes, accidental behaviour	Warning / Counselling
Moderate	Negligence or repeated violations	Repeated tardiness, syllabus delay, minor misconduct	Corrective measures / Monitoring
Major	Serious breach of ethics	Bias in evaluation, plagiarism, disruptive behaviour	Formal reprimand / Redo work / Suspension
Severe	Violations affecting safety, legality, or institutional reputation	Harassment, ragging, impersonation, exam malpractice	Suspension / Debarment / Legal action

ANNEXURE C – ETHICS COMPLAINT LIFECYCLE

(Applicable to All Ethics Complaints)

1. Submission
- Student/Faculty/Staff files complaint via portal/email/form

2. Acknowledgment
- IEC acknowledges within 48 hours

3. Verification / Preliminary Review
- Member Secretary reviews within 7 days

4. Detailed Inquiry & Hearing
- Evidence collection
- Faculty/student hearing
- Subcommittee review

5. Decision
- IEC final recommendations

6. Action Taken Report (ATR)
- Concerned department submits ATR within 15 days

7. Closure
- Case archived and reported in Annual Ethics Report

ANNEXURE D – STATUTORY REFERENCES

(Government of India Acts, Rules & Regulations Followed by KITS)

1. Constitutional Provisions

- Article 14 – Equality
- Article 15 – Non-discrimination
- Article 19 – Freedom of expression
- Article 21 – Right to life & dignity
- Article 21A – Right to education
- Article 51A – Fundamental duties

2. UGC Regulations

- UGC (Grievance Redressal) Regulations, 2019
- UGC (Anti-Ragging) Regulations, 2009
- UGC Regulations on Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions, 2012
- UGC Plagiarism Regulations, 2018

3. AICTE Regulations

- AICTE Code of Conduct for Students & Staff
- AICTE Examination & Evaluation Norms

4. Ministry of Education / Govt. of India Policies

- National Education Policy (NEP 2020)
- National Academic Depository Guidelines
- Safety & Security Guidelines

5. Research Ethics Guidelines

- ICMR National Ethical Guidelines for Human Participants (2017)
- DBT / DST / SERB Research Integrity Framework
- Indian Animal Ethics Committee Guidelines

6. Legal Acts Applicable

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 (POSH Act)
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- Juvenile Justice Act (for student protection)
- Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023
- Information Technology Act (for cyber ethics & digital misconduct)