SACAP Research Ethics Policy

The South African College of Applied Psychology Research Ethics Committee (SACAP REC)	
Title	SACAP Research Ethics Policy
ToR No.	SACAP_R&E 1.1
Date of approval	January 2022
Revision date	October 2021
Pages	26

1. COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

Action	Designated Person	Date	Signature
Compiled for SACAP by	Academic Team	01/10/2021	
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2. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version no	Reason for revision/
October 2021	1	Development of the document in accordance with NHREC

PART 1:

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

1. PREAMBLE

1.1. South African College of Applied Psychology (SACAP) is committed to:

1.1.1. Undertaking and promoting research that aims to benefit the people of South Africa and/or beyond its borders;

1.1.2. Being guided by integrity, accountability and rigor in research;

1.1.3. Supporting an institutional ethos that is conducive to systematic knowledge development, critical discourse, intellectual curiosity, tolerance and diversity of views within a framework of academic freedom;

1.1.4. Maintaining an environment for researchers in which they are autonomous, yet ethically responsible in their research practice; and

1.1.5. Enabling researchers to maintain ethically responsible research practice.

1.2. SACAP promotes high standards of scientific work and strives for excellence in research that is open to public scrutiny.

1.3. SACAP espouses the constitutional values of human dignity, equality, social justice and fairness.

1.4. SACAP promotes the internationally recognised moral principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

1.5. The SACAP Policy on Research Ethics aims to ensure that:

1.5.1. An ethical and scientific culture prevails within the SACAP community of students, educators and staff members and is followed in research practice.

1.5.2. The rights and interests of human participants, institutions, communities, animals and the environment are protected. This is particularly important where the information that has been gathered has the potential to invade the privacy and dignity of participants and third parties, and where participants and third parties are vulnerable owing to their youth, disability, gender, age, poverty, disease, ignorance or powerlessness.

1.5.3. All research activities are conducted with scholarly integrity, excellence, social responsibility and ethical behaviour.

1.5.4. The ethical and scientific soundness of research is not compromised.

1.6. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant SACAP guidelines, policies and relevant legislative frameworks including the SACAP Research Ethics Committee (REC)'s Terms of Reference (TOR) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

2. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Academic freedom	Is the recognition of academics' right to freedom of investigation, thought, expression, publication and dissemination of results, free of institutional intolerance and of internal or external coercion.

Academic dishonesty	Is the conduct or omission in any academic endeavour that violates the values associated with academic integrity and includes any act that is designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage. It includes cheating, plagiarism, falsification, fabrication and violation of research ethics.
Academic integrity	Is the honest, fair and responsible research and tuition, associated with honesty, truth, equity, respect, responsibility and accountability.
Academic outputs	Refer to all works created by employees and students for tuition and/or research purposes.
Collaborative research	Is research that involves the cooperation of researchers from different academic institutions, organisations and/or communities.
Copyright	Is the specific intellectual property rights, which an author acquires in accordance with the Copyright Act, No. 98 of 1978 ("the Act") in respect of a protected work.
Curation	Is the selection, preservation, maintenance, collection and archiving of research data and artefacts.
Ethical review	Is an objective appraisal of the effect of the proposed research on the wellbeing of potential participants, animals, the environment, institutions, collectives and communities by an established SACAP REC.
Faculty	Is an academic operational unit.
Gatekeepers	Are persons who by the right of their position of authority are recognised as a channel of access to a research site and/or participants.
Health research	Includes, but may not be limited to, research that contributes to knowledge of: • biological, clinical, psychological, or social welfare matters including processes relevant to humans • the causes and effects of and responses to disease • effects of the environment on humans • methods to improve health care service delivery • new pharmaceuticals, medicines, interventions and devices • new technologies to improve health and health care
Human participant/ co-researcher	Is generally a living person about whom a researcher obtains data through intervention or interaction with the person or through the use of their identifiable information. However, this definition may be extended for the purpose of this policy to protect the rights of deceased persons.
Intellectual property	Is a patentable invention or any copyrightable subject matter such as a trade mark, a design, a traditional work as defined in the Intellectual Property Amendment Act of 2010 and a trade secret or knowledge of how to do something.
Integrity	Is fundamental to all forms of scientific research and is anchored in the values of "truth" and "honesty". Trust by peers and the public in the truth of research is exemplified by the responsible conduct of researchers, trust in their

	competence and trust in their devotion to do research according to internationally acceptable ethical norms and values.
Interdisciplinary	Means drawing from, relating to, or involving two or more fields of study which are usually considered distinct, resulting in an integration of concepts in a coherent synthesis that crosses disciplinary boundaries.
Non-therapeutic research	Is research that benefits people other than the research participant. The acquisition of knowledge may be of no immediate benefit to the participant, but they may unexpectedly become a direct or indirect beneficiary of such research.
Research	Means a systematic investigation aimed at the development of, or contribution to, knowledge.
Researcher	Is a permanently appointed SACAP employee and an employee on a contract of less than three years who has been tasked with conducting research as well as a valid, current Academic Associate (excluding an Emeritus Professor) and a postdoctoral fellow.
Student	Is any student registered at SACAP.
SACAP	Abbreviated form for the South African College of Applied Psychology (Pty) Ltd.
Therapeutic research	Means research that benefits the individual research participants by treating or curing their condition.
Vulnerable participants	Include children (i.e. those individuals under the age of 18 years), the elderly, pregnant women, people with a cognitive or mental impairment, prisoners or people on parole, students, people living with HIV/AIDS, people in dependent relationships, persons with disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged people, indigenous people and indigents.

3. PURPOSE

The Research and Ethics Policy is not intended to restrict or discourage research at SACAP. On the contrary, this policy aims to:

3.1. Inform the researcher of their responsibilities in conducting ethical research;

3.2. Understand and promote adherence to all applicable procedures and processes; and

3.3. Protect the rights of all stakeholders.

4. SCOPE

The definition of research is based on a number of important principles, namely:

4.1. Research is at the most basic level a human activity. This implies that research is never value-neutral or mechanistic. Researchers have preconceptions determined by social, political, cultural, personal and gender influences. These preconceptions influence both their theories and findings.

4.2. Research is a communal activity. Researchers work as part of a national and international community of scholars. This community influences the paradigms within which research is undertaken in and across certain disciplines and/or subjects.

4.3. Acceptable research may be interdisciplinary, or discipline-, field- and/or subject-specific.

4.4. Research is theory-dependent. Research is informed by the dominant theories within certain fields and theories which, in turn, are influenced by the paradigms referred to above.

4.5. The purpose of research is the study of natural, social and metaphysical phenomena in order to improve our understanding of how the world functions as well as to addressing its needs.

4.6. Research involves creative, innovative, systematic and original work that explains phenomena. In addition, research embraces the critical evaluation of such phenomena in both the natural and social sciences.

4.7. Research includes basic, applied, strategic and reflexive research.

5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SACAP IN ENABLING ETHICAL RESEARCH

5.1. SACAP should respect the autonomy and academic freedom of researchers.

5.2. SACAP should create and maintain an enabling environment in which researchers are able to conduct ethical research.

5.3. SACAP should promote compliance with the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy and take appropriate steps when this policy is breached.

5.4. SACAP has the right to monitor research that has been approved by the SACAP Research and Ethics Committee (REC) and to require submission of regular reports or other information regarding the research. SACAP may impose disciplinary measures or stop research when ethical principles are violated or the integrity of the SACAP is jeopardised.

5.5. As a general rule, all intellectual property resulting from research conducted with SACAP funds or use of its facilities, vests in the institutions in accordance with SACAP's Intellectual Property Policy.

5.6. Ethics clearance will not be granted retrospectively from the SACAP Research and Ethics Committee (REC).

5.7. All research conducted by SACAP employees, educators and students must have ethics clearance from the SACAP Research and Ethics Committee (REC) before it may commence, to comply with the National Health Research Ethics Council, section 73 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003.

5.8. SACAP is accountable only for research which has been approved by the SACAP Research and Ethics Committee (REC).

5.9. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant SACAP guidelines, procedures, policies and relevant legislative frameworks.

5.10. SACAP will ensure that a register is maintained of all research that has been given ethics clearance.

6. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS AT SACAP

6.1. Researchers have the fundamental right to academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

6.2. **Integrity in research:**

6.2.1. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that they do not undertake research without ethical clearance. Researchers may only undertake research that has been approved by the SACAP REC.

6.2.2. Researchers should be competent and accountable. They should act in a responsible manner and strive to achieve the highest possible level of excellence, integrity and scientific quality in their research.

6.2.3. Researchers have a right, as well as an obligation, to refrain from undertaking or continuing any research that contravenes the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy, violates the integrity and/or validity of research, and/or compromises their autonomy in research. If they feel that the policy or ethical principles are being violated, or that the study is unethical, they must make all possible efforts either to correct or to terminate the research. These would include reporting to the SACAP REC. In the event of failure of remedial measures, they must terminate the study or end their involvement in it and keep the SACAP REC informed of all processes and decisions.

6.2.4. Researchers should only undertake research that will contribute to knowledge on the subject. They should use resources judiciously and avoid the unnecessary duplication of research. In this context, duplication is generally defined as the inadvertent, unconscious, or, more rarely, deliberate repetition of research efforts that fail to acknowledge, confirm or otherwise verify conclusions from previous research undertakings.

6.2.5. Researchers have a right and a duty to make all necessary efforts to bring the research and its findings or results to the public domain in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time. The publishing of research findings should be done in a manner that will not harm research participants or their communities.

6.2.6. Researchers have a responsibility towards those involved in or affected by their work. They should make reasonable efforts to anticipate and to guard against the possibility of their research having undesirable or harmful consequences. They should take reasonable corrective steps when they come across misuse or misrepresentation of their research. They must be prepared to take responsibility and to be held accountable for all aspects and consequences of their research activities.

6.2.7. Researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including generating and analysing data, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

6.2.8. Researchers may not commit plagiarism, piracy, falsification or the fabrication of results at any stage of the research. The research findings should be reported accurately and truthfully, and historical records and study material should be preserved and protected according to the Data Storage Policy.

6.2.9. Plagiarism, falsification, the fabrication of results, and scientific misconduct in general are regarded as serious offences. These will be investigated by the SACAP REC and recommendations made to the college which refers to the Academic Integrity Policy and relevant handbooks to outline disciplinary action.

6.2.10. Researchers may be required to report regularly to the SACAP REC. Any researcher who experiences unexpected adverse events or changes in the research design should inform the SACAP REC as soon as possible.

6.2.11. Researchers should adhere to relevant requirements arising in respect of data curatorship and data management. Whereas the first-mentioned refers to the collection, validation and preservation of data for various purposes, the last-mentioned refers to a broad range of data applications such as data design, re-use, storage and security.

6.3. **Relationship among researchers:**

6.3.1. Principal researchers and/or academic supervisors are responsible for the ethical conduct of research by students under their supervision. At the same time students have a responsibility to act ethically and to observe the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy.

6.3.2. Principal researchers have a responsibility to provide proper guidance on all aspects of research, including ethical conduct. The principal researchers should delegate to students only those responsibilities that they are reasonably capable of performing based on their education, training or experience, either independently or under supervision.

6.3.3. Researchers should not engage in discriminatory, harmful or exploitative practices, coercion or harassment in the research process. They should not impose their views or beliefs on or try to seek personal, sexual, or economic gain from anybody, including other researchers or students.

6.3.4. Researchers should not deceive or coerce other researchers, including employees and students into serving as research participants. Employees or students, as research participants, have the right to end involvement in the research without having to face adverse consequences.

6.3.5. In addition to researchers and students, other individuals such as administrative employees of SACAP who may have access to data or identifying information, as well as private organisations that are contracted to handle research data should be briefed on ethical issues and the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy, including the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality.

6.3.6. In the event of a researcher contravening the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy it will be investigated by the SACAP Research Ethics Committee and the findings reported to the college and other relevant stakeholders.

6.4. **Data sharing:**

6.4.1. Researchers should ensure the protection of the interests of co-researchers and participants, including the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality, when sharing data or making it public in any form.

6.4.2. Data may be commonly shared when it does not identify participants or when the right to anonymity has been waived.

6.4.3. Data may be shared among researchers and peer reviewers, and may be made available to the public in the form of conference presentations or workshops, with the informed written consent of the participants.

6.4.4. As far as possible, researchers should ensure that relevant findings of the research are taken back to the research participants, institutions or communities in a form and manner that they can understand, and does not cause harm.

6.5. **Reporting and publication of research:**

6.5.1. Reporting of research findings advances scientific knowledge. Researchers who conduct the study have the right and the duty to publish research findings in scientific journals, books, and/or other media. When they agree to delegate this responsibility to other individual(s) or organisation(s) they should do so only if they have received and signed a written contract of agreement to publish or disseminate the results within an agreed period, with an agreed content and in an agreed manner and with due recognition of the relevant researchers and SACAP as an institution.

6.5.2. Research results should be reported irrespective of whether they support or contradict the expected outcome(s).

6.5.3. Researchers should disclose in their publications the source(s) of funding and sponsors, if any, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.

6.5.4. Researchers should in their publications explain the methodology used, and explain how any ethical dilemmas they encountered were resolved.

6.5.5. The following guidelines should be followed for giving authorship credit while reporting the research in any form:

6.5.5.1. Authorship, and its sequence in case of more than one author, should be based on the quantum of contribution made in terms of ideas, conceptualisation, and actual performance of the research, analysis and writing of the report or any publication based on the research. Authorship and its sequence should not be based on the status of the individual in the institution or elsewhere.

6.5.5.2. All other individuals not satisfying the criteria for authorship, such as communities or community members in the case of community engaged research, but whose contribution made the conduct and completion of research or publication possible, should be properly acknowledged.

6.5.5.3. A student should be listed as principal or first author on any multiple-authored publication that substantially derives from the student's dissertation or thesis.

6.5.5.4. When data or information from other studies or publications is quoted or included, appropriate credit should be given.

6.5.6. When results are disseminated through popular media, researchers should endeavour to ensure that media people comprehend the limitations and implications of research results, and that distortions and misrepresentations in media reporting are minimised.

6.6. **Peer review**

6.6.1. Sound methodology and scientific validity are the entry points of ethical research. Apart from ethical review, peer (scientific) review is an essential part of research. The purpose of peer review is to improve and advance research, and to facilitate observance of ethics. Researchers should be encouraged to subject their own work to such a process.

6.6.2. Researchers should be encouraged to make themselves available as peer reviewers for research in the fields in which they have adequate knowledge and expertise.

6.6.3. Peer reviewers should be aware of the ethical aspects of research and publication. They have to act objectively, impartially and constructively.

6.6.4. If peer reviewers have any actual or potential conflicts of personal or professional interest with the research under review that could jeopardise their ability to undertake the review in a scientific and ethical manner, they should either disclose the same or decline to review the work concerned. In such situations, their decision should be based on the type and severity of the conflict of interest.

6.6.5. When scientific misconduct or violation of ethics is discovered, the peer reviewer should take appropriate steps to report it to the SACAP REC.

7. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Research proposals submitted for funding or sponsorship by researchers to SACAP must contain the necessary information on ethical issues and comply with the SACAP Research Ethics policy.

7.1. Before submission of a collaborative research proposal to the SACAP REC, agreement should as far as practically possible be reached between the host research institution and the collaborating institution on all aspects of the research. These include the ownership of intellectual property, management of the research process, data management, division of responsibilities, finances, research output, publication strategy, sharing of benefits and burdens, development of infrastructure and research capacity in the host country and an ombudsman to settle disputes.

7.2. Intellectual property rights of parties should be respected and acknowledged before the research commences.

8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FUNDERS, CLIENTS AND SPONSORS

8.1. Researchers should ensure that they have an explicit written research mandate from the client/sponsor/funder in which the conditions, scope and terms of the research are set out clearly (e.g. research problem, expected deliverables, financial commitments, and time frames).

8.2. The acceptance of a mandate should be sealed by a legally binding, written contract between the parties. This contract should specify the terms agreed on, including the rights and obligations of the parties involved, and the ownership of intellectual property rights and benefits.

8.3. The position with regard to the dissemination and publication of findings from the research study should be clarified.

8.4. Researchers should recognise the right of the client/sponsor/funder to request information from them at any stage in the course of the research. However, interference that may jeopardise the scientific integrity of the study or the interests of the research participants may oblige SACAP to cancel their cooperation and the research mandate.

8.5. Clients/funders/sponsors should be made aware of the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy. They have the right to receive a copy of the policy.

8.6. Clients/funders/sponsors should respect the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy and should not expect researchers or SACAP to undertake research which is in any way contrary to the policy, or other related SACAP policies and/or legislative frameworks.

8.7. Where clients/sponsors/funders act, directly or indirectly, as gatekeepers and control access to the participants, researchers should not transfer or delegate onto the gatekeepers their responsibility to obtain separate and informed written consent from participants and to protect their rights.

Acknowledgements and works consulted

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6. Stellenbosch University. (2013). *Policy for responsible research conduct at the university of Stellenbosch.* (http://www.sun.ac.za/research/assets/files/Integrity_and_Ethics/SU%20Research%20Ethics%20policy%20approved%20by%20Council_24%20June%202013.pdf)
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PART 2:

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH

1.1. Moral principles: SACAP promotes the following four internationally recognised moral principles of ethics as bases for research:

1.1.1. **Autonomy**: research should respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants;

1.1.2. **Beneficence**: research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people;

1.1.3. **Non-maleficence**: research should not cause harm to the research participant(s) in particular or to people in general; and

1.1.4. **Justice**: the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people.

These principles are not ranked in any order of preference. In disputes a balance between the four principles should be pursued.

1.2. General ethics principles: In addition to, and expanding on, the above moral principles, the following ten general ethics principles should be adhered to by researchers. Again, the ethics principles may not, by themselves, resolve all ethical problems and dilemmas which confront researchers. Researchers may be required to balance the demands made by moral principles of research and to privilege one principle over another, depending on the context and circumstances of the research involved.

1.2.1. **Essentiality and relevance:** Before undertaking research, adequate consideration should be given to existing literature on the subject or to the issue under study, and to all available alternatives. In view of the scarcity of resources in South Africa, it should be clearly demonstrated that the research is in pursuit of knowledge and/or the public good.

1.2.2. **Maximisation of public interest and of social justice:** Research should be carried out for the benefit of society, and with the motive of maximising public interest and social justice. All efforts should be made to make public information on the research undertaken, in an appropriate manner and form, and at an appropriate time, as well as the results and implications of the completed research.

1.2.3. **Competence, ability and commitment to research:** Researchers, research supervisors and student researchers should be both personally and/or professionally qualified for the research that they undertake. A commitment to research in general and to the relevant subject in particular is an essential prerequisite for good and ethical research.

1.2.4. **Respect for and protection of the rights and interests of participants and institutions:** Researchers should respect and protect the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of participants and where relevant, institutions and communities. Researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants is used for research purposes and is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorised access as required by Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013. Researchers should never expose participants and institutions to procedures or risks not directly related to the research project or its methodology. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should not, in itself, be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of the rights of participants and institutions.

1.2.5. **Informed and non-coerced consent:** Autonomy requires that individuals' participation should be freely given, based on informed consent and for a specific purpose, as required by the POPI Act, Belmont Report and Professional Guidelines (HPCSA). Direct or indirect coercion, as well as undue inducement of people in the name of research must be avoided. Coercion acts as a barrier to autonomous decision making and may result in participants consenting against their better judgment to participate in studies that may involve risks or potential to harm them.

1.2.6. **Respect for cultural differences:** Researchers should treat research participants as unique human beings within the context of their community systems. Researchers should respect what could be traditionally sacred and secret. Research should preferably be undertaken with the written consent of members of an identified community or communities, rather than merely about such communities. In some situations, the written consent of "gatekeepers" may have to be obtained in addition to that of research participants.

1.2.7. **Justice, fairness and objectivity:** Criteria for the selection of research participants should be fair, as well as be scientific. Participant selection should be on the basis of distributive justice/fairness. Easily accessible individuals or groups should not be inordinately burdened with repeated demands on their time and knowledge by the researcher.

1.2.8. **Integrity, transparency and accountability:** The conduct of the researcher should be honest, fair and transparent. Researchers must be honest about their own limitations, competence, belief systems, values and needs. The contribution of other researchers or members of the research team should be properly acknowledged. Researchers should not abuse their positions or knowledge for personal power or gain. Should any conflict of interest arise over the course of the research, this must be explicitly acknowledged and how the conflict of interest will be handled.

1.2.9. **Risk minimisation:** Researchers should ensure that the actual benefits to be derived by the participants or society generally from the research clearly outweigh any possible risks, and that participants are subjected only to those risks that are clearly necessary for the conduct of the research. Researchers should ensure that these risks are assessed via a risk-benefit ratio and that adequate precautions are taken to minimise and mitigate risk in line with the SACAP Research Ethics Risk Assessment Standard Operating Procedure for proceeding with the research.

1.2.10. **Non-exploitation:** There should be no exploitation of research participants, researchers (including students and junior members), communities, institutions or vulnerable people. The researchers should ensure that the use of the participants' personal information is done in line with the requirements of the POPI Act (4 of 2013) and should ensure that the information is not used for unlawful and secondary purposes incompatible with the original purpose consented by participants. There should be benefits to the community in which research is conducted. As far as possible, feedback should be given to participants and other relevant stakeholders. When research is carried out with communities they must receive feedback on the results of the research.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND PARTICIPANTS

2.1. Participants should be seen as indispensable and worthy partners in research. Researchers should respect and protect the rights and interests of participants at every stage and level of research and acknowledge their contribution.

2.2. The risks and benefits of the research to the prospective participants should be fully weighed up and the participants must be informed of them. Research that could lead to unnecessary physical, social and/or psychological harm should not be undertaken. Researchers should identify potential risks to participants and make provision for avoiding them. When risks form part of the conduct of the study, efforts should be made to mitigate the risks and protect the participants.

2.3. All steps should be taken to prevent harm (physical, psychological and/or spiritual), injury or loss of opportunity to participants. In the event that harm, injury or loss of opportunity should occur, the researcher should manage and handle the adverse event in accordance with the relevant policy and/or legislative frameworks.

2.4. If during the course of the research it becomes evident that a participant has suffered harm in a way not foreseen by the researcher, this should immediately be reported to the SACAP REC for immediate investigation and action. Such action may, for example, include the need to refer the participant for counselling.

2.5. The criteria for selecting research participants should be fair.

2.6. A mutually beneficial agreement or memorandum of understanding should be in place if a community or research setting is used as a continuous and long-term resource for collecting data to be used for curricular research or training.

2.7. The relevant social, cultural and historical background of participants should be taken into consideration in the research proposal and conduct of community/organisational research.

2.8. Researchers should not infringe the autonomy of participants by resorting to coercion, undue influence or the promise of unrealistic benefits. Coercion may include taking undue advantage of individuals or abusing their participation in the research. Inducement may include a promise of material or financial gain, services or opportunities. No financial or other inducement should be offered to research participants, whether children or adults, parents or guardians of children. Reimbursement of expenses (e.g. transport costs, meals) or compensation for the time or effort expended or any opportunity that may be lost is allowed due to voluntarily participating in the research, on condition that all participants are offered similar reimbursements, and such reimbursement is only aimed at recompensing the participants.

2.9. Participants should be informed of the existence of the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy and given email details of the SACAP REC through the information sheet and consent form of the research study. The policy should be made available to them if it can help them make an informed decision regarding their participation.

2.10. Participants may not be instructed by researchers to participate in research under conditions that can be burdensome, abusive or threatening. Unfairness or anything that prevents the participant from freely terminating their participation is not permissible nor should there be any negative implications should the participant choose to do so.

3. INFORMED CONSENT

3.1. Personal information should be collected in adherence to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.

3.2. The participation of individuals should be based on their freely given, specific and informed written consent. Researchers should respect their right at any stage to refuse to participate in particular aspects of the research or to decide to withdraw their previously given written consent without demanding reasons or imposing penalties.

3.3. Participants should give their consent in writing and preferably be accompanied by their signature. They, in turn, should be given written information containing adequate details of the research, including any risks associated with the study. If participants refuse to provide their consent in writing, consent may be recorded verbally, provided that verbal consent can be linked to the individual providing such verbal consent. For example, where a participant is illiterate, consent should be obtained in the presence of a literate witness who should verify and sign a document stating that informed consent had been given. Where the research is done on-line or electronically, informed consent can be obtained electronically but in a format separate from the on- line research in order to protect the identity of the participant.

3.4. Consent for participation in research is freely given and informed if:

3.4.1. It is given without any direct/indirect coercion or inducement;

3.4.2. Prospective participants have been informed on the purpose of the intended research;

3.4.3. Prospective participants have understood this information and have indicated so as per paragraph 3.3;

3.4.4. The researcher has answered any question(s) about the research and their participation; and/or

3.4.5. It is given before research commences.

3.5. If research is conducted in a foreign country, the relevant standards as set out in the SACAP Research and Ethics Policy will take precedence and will apply.

3.6. **Non-disclosure of all information**

3.6.1. In some situations, the methodology or practicalities of a research project may necessitate the concealment of information. This may be due to the possibility that behaviour changes may result or responses be affected when such details are revealed to participants. In such a case the researcher should determine the following beforehand:

3.6.1.1. Whether the use of such a methodology is justified by its potential scientific, educational or applied benefits; and/or

3.6.1.2. Whether alternative procedures which do not require the concealment of information should rather be used.

3.6.2. If the use of such methodology is deemed justified by the researcher, there are steps which they should take:

3.6.2.1. When obtaining informed consent, a detailed justification for not revealing all necessary information should be provided in the research proposal and methodology. This justification should be subject to scientific and ethical review by the SACAP REC. Only after the committee has given its approval should such research be undertaken.

3.6.2.2. The participants' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality gains additional importance in such cases as they do not know the real purpose or objectives for which they are providing information.

3.6.2.3. Even should both scientific and ethical reviews allow that some of the information about the study need not be revealed, participants should be provided with all other information. In no case, however, should researchers withhold information regarding risks, discomfort, unpleasant emotional experiences, or any such aspect that would be material in making the decision to participate.

3.6.2.4. Participants should be given the reasons for not providing full information as soon as possible after completion of the research. Where needed, services such as counselling and referral should be offered.

3.7. **Consent where gatekeepers or organisational structures are involved**

3.7.1. It is the responsibility of the principal researcher to ensure compliance with the research policy/directives of gatekeepers or organisational structures.

3.7.2. In some situations, there may be a need to obtain permission from the “gatekeeper” to access the participants, information and/or research sites. Care should be taken in the following situations:

3.7.2.1. Permission obtained from the gatekeeper may not be substituted for the need to obtain separate and informed consent from the participants. The rights of participants in such a situation are the same as in all other cases.

3.7.2.2. In the process of research or data collection, care should be taken to ensure that the relationship between the gatekeeper and the participants is not jeopardised.

3.8. **Vulnerable participants**

3.8.1. Researchers should take particular care of the rights and interests of vulnerable participants.

3.8.2. Research results that can be obtained if carried out on adults should never be carried out on children. Children should participate only when their participation is indispensable to the research. The protection and best interests of children are of prime importance.

3.8.3. Therapeutic research on a child under the age of 18 years may be conducted only if it is in the best interest of the child, and if the assent of the child (if they are capable of understanding the risks and benefits of the research), and the written informed consent of their parent or guardian has been obtained.

3.9. Where research involves the participation of persons unfamiliar with the language in which the research is to be conducted, the principle researcher must ensure that:

3.9.1. The participant's information statement has been translated into the participant's language by an approved translator;

3.9.2. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the participant understands the information statement; and/or

3.9.3. An interpreter is present during discussions with the participants about the project. As a rule, the interpreter should be independent to avoid conflict of interest or bias in the data collection process.

4. PRIVACY, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1. All research participants have the right to privacy to the extent permitted by law or as directed by legal frameworks.

4.2. Privacy includes autonomy over personal information, anonymity and confidentiality, especially if the research deals with stigmatising, sensitive or potentially damaging issues or information. When deciding on what information should be regarded as private and confidential, the perspective of the participant(s) on the matter should be respected.

4.3. All personal information and records provided by participants should remain confidential. It should be made clear during data collection that confidentiality and anonymity will be safeguarded unless waived by the participant. Whenever it is methodologically feasible, participants should be allowed to respond anonymously or under a pseudonym to protect their identity and privacy.

4.4. All personal information obtained directly or indirectly on or about the participants (e.g. names obtained by researchers from hospital and school records), as well as information obtained in the course of research which may reveal the identity of participants, should remain confidential and anonymous. This guarantee should also be given when researchers ask consent to use data which is not already available within the public domain (e.g. classified data on prisoners held by the Department of Correctional Services).

4.5. In the case of observation (e.g. of a public scene) steps should be taken to ensure that the information will not be used or published in a form in which the individuals could be identified.

4.6. Researchers should maintain privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of information in collecting, creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of personal records and data under their control, whether these are written, automated or recorded in any other medium, including computer equipment, graphs, drawings, photographs, films or other devices in which visual images are embodied.

4.7. Researchers should preserve research records for a minimum of five years (or as required by policy or legal frameworks) after the submission of the report or the results.

4.8. Researchers should take reasonable technical and operational steps to ensure that research records are stored in such a manner as to protect confidentiality of records and the anonymity of participants.

4.9. Codes or other identifiers should, where possible, be used to break any obvious connections between data and individuals/organisations/institutions. Where there is a mixture of information obtained from the public domain and that is obtained with the participants' informed consent, there should be no traceable link between the two sets of information.

4.10. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants and their localities should be maintained when reporting to clients/sponsors/funders. Participants should not be identified or made identifiable in the report unless there are clear reasons for doing so. If the researcher or institution needs to identify participants or communities in the report, their informed written consent allowing such disclosure should be obtained, preferably in writing.

4.11. Research findings published in the public domain (e.g. theses and articles) which relate to specific participants (e.g. organisations or communities) should protect their privacy. Identifiers which could be traced back to the participants in the study should not be included. However, public interest may outweigh the right to privacy. As such, all information pertinent to answering the research question(s) will be treated as strictly confidential, except under the following circumstance:

  4.11.1. With a participant (or the participant's guardian in applicable cases) who expresses consent for identification of information; and/or

  4.11.2. Where the researcher is obliged to provide information in a court of law or in terms of a statutory provision or because it is in the public interest (e.g. reporting of suspected child labour or reporting of suspected child abuse).

4.12. Participants' written consent should be sought where data identifying them are to be shared with individuals or organisations who are not part of the research team.

4.13. The obligation to maintain privacy, anonymity and confidentiality extends to the entire research team, other researchers at SACAP, SACAP administrative employees, and all persons (from or outside SACAP) not directly associated with the research who may possibly have access to the information.

5. COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

5.1. In national and international collaborative research, the parties involved include host institutions, collaborating institutions, researchers from both institutions, research participants and/or communities.

5.2. There should be clear justification for the need for and benefit of collaborative research.

5.3. Research involving human participants must not commence without ethics approval by the RECs of all collaborating institutions.

5.4. Research cannot commence without informed consent from participants and/or communities.

5.5. There may be no exploitation of institutions, researchers, research participants or communities.

5.6. Institutions and researchers should assist indigenous communities and traditional societies to protect their knowledge and resources, and should respect those which are traditionally sacred and secret.

5.7. Researchers involved in international collaborative research should have some understanding of, and be sensitive to, the social, economic and political conditions in which the research is carried out. This will alert them to the need to protect research participants who are, for example, subject to deprivations through poverty.

Acknowledgements and works consulted

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PART 3:

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH

1. PREAMBLE

1.1. Community engagement within academia is understood as the scholarly activity of partnering and engaging with communities to exchange mutually beneficial knowledge and resources to the benefit of all. It recognises that academics will share the privileged domain of "knowledge production" with community members. It blends more traditional forms of knowledge production with "lived experience".

1.2. It is recognised that community engaged research such as community-based participatory research (CBPAR) and participatory action research (PAR) are not methods of conducting research but are rather an orientation to research. Community engaged research can involve quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method designs, depending on the issues under investigation. This orientation emphasises ownership, participation, access, control and possession by non-academic researchers/communities embedded values in the process of creating knowledge and change.

1.3. Community engaged research (CER) combines knowledge with action and social change.

1.4. Decisions that arise from community context and the research foci of the research collaborations and partnerships. Often the collaborative enquiry is a precursor to an intervention or planned activity.

1.5. Although most of the scientific research methods used in CBPAR and PAR are not dissimilar from those used in other approaches, researchers may not be aware of the methods they will need to use until the research begins. Community-engaged researchers can often not anticipate the specific questions they will need to ask and methods they will use before becoming involved with the community of interest as these questions and methods may only be formulated after their entry into the community.

2. ABBREVIATIONS

CBPAR	Community-Based Participatory Action Research
CER	Community Engaged Research
PAR	Participatory Action Research

3. PURPOSE

3.1. Researchers need to demonstrate how they foresee the community participating in the identification of the specific issues to be researched.

3.2. Researchers must demonstrate how they will enable community members to contribute their resources to the research, such as local and indigenous knowledge and other pragmatic contributions. In this regard intellectual property rights will have to be negotiated and safeguarded.

3.3. Training community members needs to be considered with the aim of empowering them to participate in the research.

4. SCOPE

The cyclical nature of CER might require researchers to seek ethical approval for each cycle of the research process if the research is rated as being of moderate or high risk. In low risk interventions, the researcher must in the initial application for ethical clearance ensure that all methods that are chosen will adhere to ethical standards and guidelines. It is understood that the committee cannot evaluate the scientific validity and ethical merit of a research proposal that has not yet described its methods.

5. FAIR SUBJECT SELECTION

5.1. Researchers must consider how the selection of certain research participants and co-researchers will aid them in achieving their research goals. It is recognised in community research that some stakeholders may drop out and others may join the project. The same ethical considerations must apply to all participants who form part of the collaborative research project.

5.2. A concerted effort must be made by researchers to consider how the research participants will benefit from the research. They could also consider how the outcomes of the research could have wider applicability. Benefits might include:

5.2.1. **Enhanced scientific knowledge:** Society/community gains from knowledge about the problem. Scientific progress made. A contribution made to the evidence base.

5.2.2. **Education:** Knowledge is used to further curriculum development. participants receive education/training they would not otherwise have gained. Information provided by the research enhances lifestyle/opportunities.

5.2.3. **Service delivery:** Study enhances the provision of service to the community.

5.2.4. **Individual gains:** Participants may gain personally from the opportunity to air concerns; potential catharsis from sharing problems with the researcher/research team as an independent observer.

5.3. Beneficiaries should be directly involved in the research. Researchers need to carefully consider how and at what stages in the cycle the beneficiaries should be involved.

5.4. Barriers must be removed to enable participation by community members.

5.5. Researchers should consider aspects such as flexibility in scheduling; the need by some participants for childcare; the cost of transport to research sites; etc.

5.6. A researcher must not discriminate in the selection and recruitment of actual or prospective participants by including or excluding them on the grounds of race, age, sex, disability or religious or spiritual beliefs except where these criteria is essential to the purpose of the research and answering the research questions.

6. FAVOURABLE RISK-BENEFIT RATIO

6.1. Community-based research is specifically value driven in that in the process of doing research, it can focus on the emancipation of a wide range of vulnerable groups.

6.2. The risks to the participants need to be proportionate to the possible benefits to individual participants or to the community in general.

6.3. The researcher needs to demonstrate how he/she will go about sensitising themselves to the culture and politics of the community.

6.4. Power plays itself out in community politics and research might have political consequences which will have to be mitigated by the researcher. The researcher needs to consider these risks and provide a satisfactory solution to mitigate any effects that it may have, including how the research team will appropriately acknowledge and negotiate power differentials.

7. INFORMED CONSENT

7.1. Informed consent in community-based research must include the provision of complete information about objectives, risks, and adverse effects on participants.

7.2. Informed consent must indicate the roles and responsibilities of participants and community stakeholders in the project.

7.3. Researchers must provide a fair and just representation of the research. They must caution against the overestimation of the benefits for the community and participants and should caution against formulation being biased to induce a positive answer.

7.4. Agreements must be made regarding the interpretation and ownership of data, authorship and the dissemination of findings and financial accountability.

7.5. The blurring of participant and researcher roles will necessitate special precautions for the protection of confidentiality.

7.6. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that the information provided is understood by participants, communities and stakeholders.

7.7. Researchers should place more emphasis on the information exchange and negotiation process between researchers and potential participants and these should be formalised in an informed consent form.

7.8. Potential research participants should be given the opportunity to discuss their decision with their families or peers.

7.9. Alternative ways to record consent if individuals do not want to sign a consent form but are willing to participate in the proposed research, should be sought. These can include using digital recordings of oral consent or signing a register.

7.10. In cases where the participants refuse or are afraid to sign a consent form or to be recorded, the researcher must keep a written record that participants have been informed, understood and accepted participation in the research but that they declined to sign.

7.11. In some cases, it might be important to obtain consent from respected, traditional or elected community leaders.

8. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESEARCH

8.1. Permission for research must be obtained from state authorities where needed but should not be confused with involvement of community bodies.

8.2. A ‘functional’ community body such as a community advisory board or a community committee should be involved in each research project. This can be an existing body or one created for the specific purpose of the project. At the minimum, the community should be consulted during the planning stage of the research, should be consulted on an *ad hoc* basis while the research is being done, and should be informed in a structured manner at the end of the research about the results.

8.3. Researchers must negotiate the method and particulars (i.e. authorship and co- authorship) of the release/dissemination of data (i.e. scientific journals or popular publications) with the community co-researchers. Researchers must consider the potential repercussions to the community if data (sensitive or not) is released prematurely or in an insensitive or any other manner.

8.4. Community participation needs to be ensured and it is important to be realistic about time and resource constraints.

8.5. SACAP should be careful not to “overuse” a well-engaged community by doing research in that community too frequently.

Acknowledgements and Works Consulted

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PART 4:

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH DATA STORAGE

1. PREAMBLE

The responsibility of collecting and storing data lies with the researchers in accordance with relevant legislation. The guidelines are given below highlight specific areas in which SACAP has identified best practices in terms of data collection and storage.

1.1. **Purpose for Compliance with These Guidelines:**

  1.1.1. Protect the rights of participants in terms of data storage;

  1.1.2. Protect researchers and enable them to meet legal and ethical requirements;

  1.1.3. Protect researchers from accusations of research misconduct in relation to the collection and storage of data; and

  1.1.4. Ensure SACAP compliance with relevant legislation.

1.2. **Management of Research Data and Records:** SACAP is committed to transparency and accountability in research. The data on which published research is based must be available for evaluation by the broader research community. Agreements, under which data are kept confidential for a period to protect intellectual property rights, must conform with this code.

1.3. **Research Data Storage and Maintenance:**

  1.3.1. It is the responsibility of the researcher(s) to arrange for safe storage of all data and on which research is based. Ensuring the safety and integrity of the data set is the responsibility of the researcher.

  1.3.2. Data on which any SACAP thesis or oral and written publication is based should be retained by the researcher(s) and a copy retained in the department/programme for at least five years after publication. This is because when research is in the public domain, the data should, upon request, be available to other researchers by the principal researcher and/or research team. This can include but is not limited to checking any data on which material in the public domain is based.

  1.3.3. If no publications are intended, the data must be destroyed after six years.

1.4. **Confidentiality of Data:** The confidentiality of data collected during any research project is essential. All personal information should be encoded or anonymised as much as possible and be consistent with the needs of the study. Participants should be assigned a reference number or code as early as possible and data should be stored against this number/code rather than against the names of the participants. Researchers may wish to maintain separate lists of people who have taken part in their research, but steps should be taken to ensure that it is not possible to relate a particular set of data back to any given participant. The requirement for data availability does not override the right to confidentiality and privacy of individuals or organizations who are participating in the research.

1.5. **Guidelines for Storage of Different Types of Data Sets:**

  1.5.1. **Numerical and Statistical data**: must be stored in raw data format for six years from completion of the project. After this time the data should be destroyed unless it is to be used in a longitudinal study.

1.5.2. **Interview/Notes/Questionnaire Responses/Transcribed Interviews**: must be stored in their original form for five years from the completion of the project. Unless data is to be used in later longitudinal studies it may be destroyed after this time. Note: Work that informs national policy-making should be archived after 10 years.

1.5.3. **Images/Audio and Video Recordings:** should be retained in their original form. This is particularly important where they are subsequently enhanced/altered or modified. Both the original and enhanced/altered/modified images/audio and video recordings should be kept for five years from the completion of the project. Unless data is to be used in longitudinal studies it may be destroyed after this period.

1.5.4. **Longitudinal Studies Data**: gathered as part of a known longitudinal study should be kept for the duration of the study and retained for ten years after the completion of the study. Participants should be kept informed of how long the study is likely to last. If the study is extended, all participants should be contacted and informed that their data is still being stored and may be used. Participants must be allowed to withdraw their data at any point during the study. Note: The importance of maintaining data in its original form is a necessary precaution, particularly if published results are challenged by others.

1.6. **Recording Methods of Data Collection**: Researchers must keep clear and accurate records of all procedures followed (including approvals granted and interim results) during research projects. This is necessary to demonstrate that proper research practice has been followed, but also in case of questions are subsequently raised about either the conduct of the researcher(s) or the results obtained.

1.7. **Use of Psychometric Measures for Data Collection:**

1.7.1. As per the Regulations Defining the Scope of the Profession of Psychology (No. R. 704. 2 of September 2011), researchers need to ensure that measures used are psychometrically sound, and that their content, construct coverage, and norms are appropriate for the target population.

1.7.1.1. The following tests have been classified by the Professional Board for Psychology as being psychological tests according to the scope of practice of the profession of psychology regulation R993 of the Health Professions Act. These tests can only be used by registered psychologists who have been appropriately trained to administer, score and interpret these measures. https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/PSB_2019/Exams/Classified_tests_MARCH_2020.pdf

1.7.1.2. The following tests have been classified by the Professional Board for Psychology as being psychological tests that can be administered, scored and interpreted by qualified Registered Counsellors and Student Registered Counsellors under supervision. https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/PSB_2019/Form%20258%20%20Registered%20Counsellor%20-%20Framework%20for%20Education%2CTraining%20%2CRegistration%20and%20Scope%20of%20Registered%20Counsellors%20.pdf

1.8. **Withdrawal of Data:** All research participants must be allowed to request that their data be destroyed/withdrawn from a research project. In all cases, researchers should aim to comply with such a request, but compliance may not always be possible, for example, where

  - 1.8.1. Final results have already been published.
  - 1.8.2. A participant's data is no longer identifiable (because of encoding/anonymity, etc.).
  - 1.8.3. A participant's data cannot be extracted from the cohort analysis.

1.9. **Obtaining Consent from Participants:** Participants taking part in a study should be provided with full information on the following:

  - 1.9.1. Who will own the data created in the course of the research.
  - 1.9.2. The format in which the data will be stored.
  - 1.9.3. Who will have access to the data.
  - 1.9.4. The length of time for which data will be stored.
  - 1.9.5. What the data will be used for.
  - 1.9.6. Who will own the final results of the research.

Copies of consent forms should be kept with the raw data, for five years from completion of the project. After this time the data should be destroyed unless it is to be used in a longitudinal study. Note: The importance of maintaining data in its original form is a necessary precaution, particularly if published results are challenged by others.