

Soka University Code of Ethics for Human Research

Preamble

The word “Soka” in our name “Soka University” means value creation. In essence, to create value means to enhance life. To persevere in the challenge to build a peaceful society which places the highest value on human dignity; to be undaunted by hardship – the mission of Soka University is to nurture such creative humanity.

When taking this mission and responsibility into consideration, any person in the world of academia is naturally required to have the highest ethics; it is obligatory for them to respect fundamental human rights, to commit to intellectual honesty and to fulfill their social responsibility, but moreover, it is essential to contribute to the development of the university and the peace of humankind by fully understanding and implementing the noble mission and goals of the university.

This code is set forth as a foundation for realization of this mission and goal and as an ethical code of conduct that every person in Soka University who engages in research activities involving human subjects should observe.

Chapter 1 General Provisions

(Purpose)

**Article 1** The purpose of this code is to enable persons who engage in research and survey activities involving human subjects inside and outside Soka University (hereinafter referred to as the “University”) to contribute to the improvement of the credibility of such research and survey activities by stipulating the necessary matters when they act according to the spirit stated in the Preamble.

(Definitions)

**Article 2** In this code, the following terms shall have the following meanings.

- (1) “Research and Survey” means any research and survey that requires ethical considerations concerning the public announcement of the implementation and the results of collecting information and data relating to actions, mental and physical conditions, circumstances, etc. of individuals or groups.
- (2) “Researcher” means any person who engages in the Research and Survey prescribed in the preceding item.

(Scope of Application)

**Article 3** This code shall apply to any Research and Survey involving human subjects inside and outside the University as conducted by instructors and staff and by graduate students at the University as well as to any Research and Survey involving members of the University conducted by persons outside the University. Provided, however, that this shall not apply to any of the following cases.

- (1) Research and Survey conducted as a part of routine work such as education provided by instructors of the University, administrative duties processed by administrative staff, etc.
- (2) Research and Survey in which the information used is existing and publicly available and where it is impossible to identify the research subjects by any possible means
- (3) Research and Survey that meets all of the following conditions
  - 1) Gives appropriate consideration to protecting the subjects
  - 2) Does not handle personal information (i.e., an anonymous survey)
  - 3) Does not subcontract data collection to an institution or company having no direct relationship with the research
  - 4) Ensures that there are no financial interests that may appear to a third party as having influence on the results of the research or on the protection of the subjects
  - 5) Does not collect image or audio data
  - 6) Does not target groups having aspects that are likely to be considered socially vulnerable
  - 7) Ensures that no psychological burden or harm is imposed on the research subjects
  - 8) In the case of a written questionnaire, ensures that no questions or items go beyond the scope of normal social spheres
  - 9) Ensures that no processes use deceptive explanations regarding the purpose of the research (deceptive procedures)
  - 10) Does not make it a requirement to receive ethical approval from external institutions such as the party funding the research or an academic journal in which the research results are to be published

## Chapter 2 Research Ethics

(Matters to Be Observed for Research Ethics)

**Article 4** The Researcher shall observe the following matters in their Research and Survey.

- (1) To respect human dignity and human rights
- (2) To provide full explanations to the human subjects in advance and to obtain their voluntary consent
- (3) To take measures to protect personal information to the fullest extent

- (4) To take due care and ensure the integrity and honor of the University
- (5) To make and implement a research plan in accordance with this code and ethical standards in each research field (“Nursing research ethics guidelines”, etc.)
- (6) To appropriately use and manage information obtained in the Research and Survey

(Informed Consent)

**Article 5** The Researcher must provide clear explanations regarding the following items to human subjects in advance and obtain voluntary consent from them when conducting the Research and Survey.

- (1) The fact that participation in the Research and Survey is optional and human subjects will not suffer any disadvantage even in cases where they refuse to participate in the Research and Survey. The fact that consent for participation in the Research and Survey may be revoked by human subjects at any time without any disadvantage.
- (2) The meaning, purpose and method of the Research and Survey and the period necessary for participation
- (3) The reasons why human subjects are selected for the Research and Survey
- (4) The name and job title of the Researcher
- (5) Possible risks, dangers or unpleasant situations in the Research and Survey
- (6) Possible benefits for human subjects and society generated by participating in the Research and Survey
- (7) Regarding handling of personal information (a method for protection, preservation period, etc.)
- (8) Contact information for inquiries on the Research and Survey and for the contact point for complaints, etc.
- (9) Possibility of any public announcement regarding the result of the Research and Survey
- (10) The fact that human subjects will receive copies of guidelines for participation in the Research and Survey and letters of consent

2 The Researcher must obtain an agreement from the human subjects which clarifies their intention to participate in the Research and Survey by signing informed consent items prescribed in the preceding paragraph or expressing their intention by actions equivalent to signatures.

3 In the event that the review board stipulated in Item 2 of Article 7 (hereinafter referred to as “Review Board for Human Research”) deems the Research and Survey to fall under any of the following items, exemption or approval for proxy consent shall be accepted for all or part of the items prescribed in Paragraph 1 of this Article.

- (1) Cases in which the Research and Survey is conducted to the extent that risks for human subjects are minimized (any risks must be socially acceptable and within the normal limits of physical, mental or social acceptability in their daily life.)
- (2) Cases in which exemption from informed consent or approval for proxy consent does not cause disadvantage to the rights and welfare of human subjects.
- (3) Cases in which the Research and Survey is not able to be continued without exemption from informed consent or approval for proxy consent. However, in this case, human subjects will receive information related to the Research and Survey after participating in the Research and Survey.

(Public Announcement of Results)

**Article 6** When the Researcher makes a public announcement of the result of the Research and Survey, a plan for the public announcement must be approved by the Review Board for Human Research in advance regardless of the provisions (1), (2), and (3) in the Article 3.

#### Chapter 3 Head Administrator and Executive Institution

(Management System)

**Article 7** For the purpose of maintaining the ethics pertaining to the Research and Survey, the University shall appoint an administrator and establish an executive institution as stipulated in the following item so as to specify the responsibility and authority for the operation and management of the Research and Survey.

- (1) The president of the University shall control the entire University to manage the ethics pertaining to the Research and Survey and be ultimately responsible therefor.
- (2) The “Soka University Institutional Review Board for Human Research” shall be established in the University and the Review Board for Human Research shall implement planning, recommendation and review of the research ethics.

(Organization of Review Board for Human Research)

**Article 8** A chairperson, vice-chairperson and review board members shall be placed in the Review Board for Human Research.

- 2 The president shall appoint the chairperson, vice-chairperson and review board members and the term of service shall be 2 years, provided, however, that their reappointment shall not be prevented.

(Review Procedure by Review Board for Human Research)

**Article 9** Types of review procedures shall be chosen from the following items upon judgment of the chairperson.

- (1) Casting Vote
- (2) Simple Review
- (3) Full Review

- 2 The Casting Vote shall be exercised by the chairperson. In this case, the chairperson may hold a hearing to obtain opinions from the Review Board for Human Research when necessary.
- 3 The Simple Review shall be exercised by forming a sub-committee with the chairperson of the Review Board for Human Research as the sub-committee's chairperson.
- 4 The Full Review shall be exercised by holding the meeting of Review Board for Human Research.
- 5 In the event that applicants object to the result of the review, the Review Board for Human Research shall undertake a second review. On this occasion, when necessary the Review Board for Human Research may hold a hearing to obtain opinions from experts.
- 6 The review board members of the Review Board for Human Research must not leak any information obtained in the course of their duties without a reasonable reason. The same shall apply to the members even after their resignation.
- 7 The details of the review procedure shall be stipulated separately.

(Organization for Administrative Duties)

**Article 10** Administrative duties for the Review Board for Human Research shall be managed by the Faculty Affairs Office.

(Revision or Abolition)

**Article 11** Revision or abolition of this code shall be conducted by the Soka University Education and Research Council after a discussion with the Review Board for Human Research.

#### Supplementary Provisions

This code shall come into effect as of April 1, 2014.

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