Research at UPEACE is seen as fundamental and inherent to its mission, namely:

"...to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace and with the aim of promoting, among all human beings, the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations."

As such, UPEACE guarantees to provide the necessary conditions to conduct research in a meaningful and professional way, for its faculty, staff, and students, as well as different partners, both individual and institutional.

UPEACE encourages the engagement of national and international partners for research, and specifically values the cooperation with Global South academics, practitioners, NGOs and government organizations, state institutions, and public and private universities in collaborative research and publications, as well as collaboration among faculty members and between faculty members and current and former students in research and publication. Collaborative research is seen as valuable as sole-authored work.

Partnerships with organizations linked to any of UPEACE’s academic disciplines either within Costa Rica or throughout the region and internationally are seen as beneficial and essential for the purpose of impactful research. The academic disciplines of UPEACE are diverse and encompass the different M.A. programs present today: Gender and Peacebuilding; Gender and Development; Indigenous Science and Peace Studies; International Peace Studies; Media and Peace; Peace Education; Religion, Culture and Peace Studies; International Law and Human Rights; International Law and the Settlement of Disputes; International Law and Diplomacy; Development Studies and Diplomacy; Responsible Management and Sustainable Economic Development; Environment, Development and Peace; Ecology and Society; Environmental and Social Sustainability of Business; and Resolución de Conflictos, Paz y Desarrollo.

UPEACE encourages and rewards scholarly contributions that advance their academic field’s understanding of key issues and concepts, organizing international symposiums and conferences, editing and publishing synthetic academic research, and other related activities. Research and publications are also essential components of annual evaluations of faculty and considered in the criteria for promotions.
UPEACE values methodological and theoretical innovations, as well as interdisciplinary approaches that contribute to further development of the fields covered in its academic departments and encourages and values research activities and outputs that are helpful to the formulation of peacebuilding policies and strategies of UN agencies and affiliated organizations, including INGOs and NGOs.

UPEACE requires that all research be conducted under institutionally-recognized research ethics guidelines (see Annex 1). It places the highest emphasis on academic freedom and respects and incentivizes the sharing of individual opinions and approaches towards the topics related to its mission.

UPEACE values peer reviewed-articles more highly than other forms of non-book publications, and values peer-reviewed books and book chapters more highly than those that have not undergone the peer-review process. UPEACE encourages and values books and book chapters in academic and other presses that advance the reputation and visibility of UPEACE. Additionally, UPEACE encourages and values research in specific fields of peace-related studies (e.g., peace education, media studies, etc.) that can result in publications of a professional- and /or creative nature such as, but not limited to, textbooks, curriculum resource manuals, documentaries, and publications in open-source venues, and in popular media on current and urgent issues.

UPEACE facilitates and encourages the publication of outstanding student papers and essays. Students are encouraged to publish edited versions of some of their course work in the UPEACE “Ideas for Peace” online journal (please see below for a brief description). Normally, this happens when a professor identifies a written assignment as outstanding and contacts the student, or if a student shows interest in publishing a particular piece, contacting Ideas for Peace or their professor. Exceptional essays and/or theses might be considered worthwhile by professors to be further improved to be published in Costa Rican or international peer-reviewed journals.

Support for resident faculty research

In December 2018, UPEACE established the UPEACE Research Fund to support faculty research activities, including primary field research, as well as attending national and international academic conferences. As described in Annex 2, the exact amount of the fund is determined every year and depends on the overall UPEACE annual budget.

Support for student research and publication

UPEACE Master’s students can select one of three graduation projects: 1) Thesis, 2) Internship, or 3) Capstone project (UPEACE graduation guidelines). The students that choose a thesis as a graduation project are encouraged by their supervisor to publish work depending on the topic in a) academic blogs and/or b) peer-reviewed journals.
Supervisors work with students to determine an appropriate outlet for these publications. To ensure students have training in publishing, UPEACE requires students to take at least one research methods course during their Master’s degree. In this research methods course, students are provided training on publishing in academic journals.

UPEACE also has agreements with other universities to support research abroad for master’s students.

Idea for Peace
This innovative initiative, designed by the University for Peace, aims to share ideas that contribute to peacebuilding on a global scale. The Ideas for Peace multimedia platform, hosts original publications from authors from different countries and backgrounds currently working on matters related to peace and conflict who reflect on their experiences, share new approaches to conflict resolution, discuss their practical experiences, and connect with like-minded people.

UPEACE believes that every voice matters and is eager to take advantage of all the digital means currently available to transmit ideas worth sharing. On the Ideas for Peace platform, articles, book reviews, photo-essays, podcasts, and videos can be found that cover topics related, but not limited, to:

1. Peace and Conflict Studies
2. International Law
3. Human Rights
4. Sustainable Development
5. Gender Studies
6. Media and Peacebuilding
7. International Relations and Cooperation
8. Diplomacy
9. Peace Education
10. Environment and Development
11. Responsible Management
12. Mediation and Conflict Resolution
Annex I
UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines

21 September 2021

Summary

Early in the 2012-2013 academic year, a working group was formed by the Academic Development Committee (ADC), now Academic Council (AC) to draft UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines. The draft guidelines were presented to the ADC in two meetings for discussion.

On March 6, 2013, the ADC approved the creation of an Academic Council which would replace the existing ADC/Academic Board Governance structure. The Academic Council, under its TOR, includes various Standing Committees to formulate and coordinate policies pertaining to specific areas of academic affairs. One of these Standing Committees is the Research Ethics Committee. At the final ADC meeting on April 16, 2013, the proposed Research Ethics Guidelines was approved for implementation by the new Academic Council.

The Research Ethics Committee is responsible for:

1. Assessing and approving the research ethics application of a UPEACE researcher (students, Faculty, staff) to conduct a specific research study;
2. Providing comments and suggestions for a prospective researcher for revising a Research Ethics application to an acceptable standard consistent with the UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines
3. Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines and recommending changes for consideration and approval by the Academic Development Committee and University Management Committee.
4. Keeping abreast of new externally driven developments, policies and regulations concerning research ethics and, where appropriate, ensuring that the University meets all necessary requirements.
The Composition of the Research Ethics Committee

The review and approval of individual research ethics applications is undertaken by an institutionally constituted UPEACE Research Ethics Committee (REC), which is a Standing Committee of the Academic Council of UPEACE. The REC comprises:

1. One or more Faculty representatives from academic departments or programmes to serve for two years;
2. A rotating Chair (one-year term) chosen by the members from among them.

Members of the Research Ethics Committee for the Academic Year 2023-2024

- Dr. Adriana Salcedo: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies
- Dr. Mariateresa Garrido: Department of International Law
- Dr. Jan Breitling: Department of Environment and Development

Introduction

The University for Peace recognizes that all research activities involving human participants or subjects need to consistently follow ethical guidelines to ensure that the participants are treated with respect and care and are not harmed, or their rights violated. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to minimize the potential risks to which their participants may be exposed.

Since the Nuremberg Code governing medical experiments, many international human rights conventions have provided key ethical principles for conducting research in ways that do not violate the rights, freedoms and dignities of human participants. Research that includes human participants or subjects is defined as research in which the researcher(s) is/are gathering data from living human beings through interactions or communications with them (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys, participant observation etc.) and/or interventions (e.g., experiments, testing, treatment, environmental) and/or observing private behavior normally not observed or recorded and/or collecting private identifiable information about or provided by individuals.

Furthermore, researchers and reviewers of a research proposal also have a responsibility to consider ethical issues even for those who are not participants.
in a research study, since they may also be affected by the research. In diverse contexts, research ethics nowadays will also need to consider legal or statutory regulations (e.g., use of official information held by governmental authorities; guardianship; illegal and unprofessional conduct; informing justice and other authorities of abuse, crimes, etc.).

**The term “researcher” when used in the UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines includes:**

a. Any member who conducts research or who accesses UPEACE students or staff as human research participants.

b. any other person who conducts research as connected with UPEACE.

c. Any person who conducts research using UPEACE resources.

d. The term “member,” when used, includes faculty, emeritus faculty, staff, administrators, students, visiting or adjunct scholars, fellows and chairs, paid and unpaid research associates and assistants, and any person in a similar position.

The UPEACE Research Guidelines apply to each person who meets the above stated definition of researcher, whether acting as a principal investigator, a junior collaborator or in some other capacity. Thus, a junior collaborator who meets the definition of researcher must conform to the UPEACE standards even if the principal investigator for the research does not meet the definition of researcher, and accordingly, does not fall under the purview of UPEACE Research Guidelines.

**Values and Principles**

The UPEACE Research Ethics Guidelines are underpinned by the following core values and principles: respect for human beings and human rights; research merit and integrity; and justice and beneficence.

- **Respect for Human Beings and Human Rights:**

  Ethical conduct in research centrally upholds the value and principle of respect for human beings. Consistent with international human rights conventions and declarations, all researchers have an obligation to respect, protect and promote the rights, dignity and autonomy of all their participants.
This conduct includes:

1) humane and respectful treatment of human participants;
2) respect of the capacity of participants to make their own informed decisions, and where vulnerable participants may lack this capacity, empowering and protecting them;
3) informing participants of any potential risks (physical, psychological, social, political, legal) to them due to the research, and minimizing those risks as well as prompt addressing of risks that occur;
4) obtaining informed and voluntary consent from participants to participate in the research study, or where needed, obtaining informed consent from a participant’s lawful guardian or statutory authority based on the participant’s best interests, or where relevant, also obtaining consent from institutions or community elders;
5) recognizing the right of participants to withdraw from the research at any stage without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data provided;
6) respect of beliefs, cultural, individual, collective, and social differences among participants;
7) respect privacy and confidentiality of the participants and, where relevant, their communities;
8) giving participants the opportunity to understand the objectives, methods, findings and conclusions of the research.

- **Research Merit and Integrity**

UPEACE research ethics are also based on the principles and values of research merit and integrity.

In this regard, the following guidelines apply:

1) the research has merit due to its potential benefits, including an original contribution to knowledge and understanding and enhancing the welfare and well-being of individuals, communities and societies;
2) the study is based on a clear theoretical/conceptual framework, systematic review of related literature and appropriate research methodology;
3) the researcher is supervised by, or is/are, a scholar(s) with appropriate competence, experience and qualifications;
4) the research is conducted with integrity, including values of honesty, openness to independent and public scrutiny of data, findings and conclusions;
5) accuracy of all data collected and used in the study;
6) acknowledging fully all sources of data and analysis, including those of other researchers and authors, except when subject to ethical rules of confidentiality;
7) revealing any potential conflicts of interest in undertaking the research

• **Justice**

Another core ethical principle and value in the UPEACE research ethics guidelines is justice, which includes:

1) a fair selection of research participants based on justifiable criteria of inclusion or exclusion;
2) the research will not be an unfair burden on particular categories of participants;
3) the benefits of participation in research are fairly distributed and accessible, and where possible the research itself attempts to maximize benefits to the participants;
4) participants are not exploited during and by the research;
5) the findings of the research study are accessible to participants;
6) fairly attribute to other researchers and authors knowledge based on their research.

• **Beneficence**

UPEACE research ethics also expect researchers to uphold the value and principle of beneficence. This includes:

1) assessing and ensuring that risks of harm and discomfort to participants can be justified by the potential benefits of research to them and to the wider community, which required intensive consultation with participants;
2) minimizing the risks of harm or discomfort to participants;
3) plans in the research design to monitor, respond adequately to any harms or discomforts that may occur;
4) sensitivity to the well-being, welfare and best interests of participants who are involved in determining those interests;
5) disseminating, in a responsible way, findings and conclusions of the research which will alert societies to potential hazards or crises and also benefit human and societal welfare and security.

**Research that Must Undergo an Ethics Review**

All research conducted by UPEACE faculty, staff and students that involves living human participants requires review and approval by the UPEACE Research Ethics Committee (UPREC) before the research is started.

Research about living persons, including persons in public life and artists, based on information contained in publicly-available materials is not subject to UPREC review unless the subject, or a third-party, is approached directly for interviews or for access to private papers or other materials, and then only to ensure that such approaches are conducted according to professional protocols. However, research involving observation of participants in, for example, political rallies, demonstrations, public meetings or similar activities does not require UPREC review.

**Submission Process**

Researchers must fill in the following forms to be submitted to the UPEACE Research Ethics Committee. If research is being carried out by students, their research supervisor must read, approve and sign their application. The student's supervisor must thereafter submit the following forms via email to the UPEACE Research Ethics Committee at ethicscommittee@upeace.org.

**Annex VIII-A: Research Ethics Application Form**

**Annex VIII-B: Informed Consent Form**
## SECTION A: ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Project Title:**

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<th>1. Principal Researcher:</th>
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For Student Submissions:

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Your supervisor has read and approved of your research ethics application

Yes □ No □

Co-researcher(s)

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1.2 Principal researcher attesting that:

- All co-researchers have reviewed the ethics submission and agree with it.
- When applicable, the research supervisor has read and approved of the application.
- The study has been adequately designed to protect all human participants.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________________

Planned Start Date: ________________ Planned End Date: ________________

SECTION B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY [200 words max]

1.1. Please provide a concise statement of the research problem and proposed methodology.

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

2.2 Why there is a need to undertake the study?

2.3 What new knowledge is anticipated as an outcome of the study?

2.4 Is this is intended to be a pilot study, or a fully developed project?
3. INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS:

3.2 Describe how the researcher(s) will carry out the informed consent process (attach a copy of all consent forms).

3.3 If oral consent is desired, describe why it is necessary and how it will be done (attach a copy of the script).

3.4 Where will informed consent be obtained: in person ☐ on-line ☐?

3.5 Who will ask participants for informed consent?

3.6 If a waiver of informed consent is sought, explain why and describe how the four criteria needed for this are met.

3.7 Where participants are not legally competent to give consent, how and from whom will consent be obtained?

3.8 If community consent is needed, describe how it will be obtained.

3.9 Where participants are vulnerable, what steps will be taken to minimize risks of coercion or undue influence?

3.10 How will researcher(s) overcome language barriers (if any)?

4. DECEPTION / INCOMPLETE DISCLOSURE (if applicable)

4.2 Explain why deception or incomplete disclosure (if any) is justified?

4.3 What information will not be disclosed to participants? Discuss its justification.

4.4 How participants will be debriefed and given the opportunity to
5. **RISK ANALYSIS:**

5.2 What are the possible risks or harm (physical, psychological, legal, social, political) to the participants?

5.3 The estimated probability of these risks (e.g., low, medium, high or more precisely if possible).

5.4 What steps will be taken to minimize the risks?

5.5 If a participant experience injury, harm or considerable distress, what plans will be made to alleviate the injury, harm or distress?

5.6 What risks might exist for communities that are involved in the study?

5.7 What risks might exist for the researcher(s)? How have you planned to minimize those risks?

6. **BENEFITS:**

6.2 Describe the direct benefits (if any) for participants of your study (other than compensation).

6.3 Describe the indirect benefits of the study (i.e., contribution to new knowledge).
7. **CONFIDENTIALITY and ANONYMITY:**

7.2 Whether the data to be collected is of a personal or sensitive nature (justify).

7.3 How the data will be collected, stored and handled in a confidential manner (confidential is not the same as keeping participants anonymous, it means keeping data safe from unauthorized access)?

7.4 If the research involves on-line data collection, will potential identifying information (e.g., IP addresses) be collected?

7.5 Data should be kept for five years after the completion of the research. What the plans are for its destruction?

7.6 What stored data be used for further purposes, and how will participants’ permission be gained for such further use?

7.7 If it is possible for participants to remain anonymous, how it will be achieved?

7.8 How a ‘duty to disclose’ abuse or neglect of a child, or adult in need of protection, will be handled?

7.9 If a waiver of confidentiality is to be sought from participants, and why?

8. **USE OF QUOTATIONS** – In this section describe

8.2 Whether participants will be quoted in the final report.

8.3 Describe how permission will be obtained for this; describe whether the quotes will be attributed, how permission for this will be obtained and how participants will be given the chance to see how the quotes are used.
9. **PROVISION OF RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS:**

9.2 Plans to provide results of the study to participants.

9.3 Whether individual results will be provided to study participants, and how?

9.4 How participants will be informed of results that may indicate they may be at risk?
Annex VIII-A

University For Peace Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: 

Name of Participant: 

Name of Researcher: 

Research Objectives: This research seeks the following (insert information about the study, what is requested from the participant, the study risks and benefits, the process of anonymity/confidentiality, and how the research results will be used).

After receiving sufficient information and background on the proposed project/study/research:

1. I consent to participate in this project;
2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher;
3. I understand that my participation will involve (insert research method(s), duration, number of times);
4. I confirm that:
   a. The possible effects of participating in this project/study/research, including any possible risks or discomforts, have been explained to my satisfaction;
   b. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   c. The project is for the purpose of research;
d. The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;

e. With my consent, the data I am providing will be stored at the University for Peace in a safe facility and will be destroyed after five years;

f. My name, if I choose, will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research but I have the right to use my name in this research;

g. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to me or identify me will be kept confidential if I so choose;

h. A copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this;

i. By signing, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

j. I will receive [insert if any] as payment or compensation for participating in the project.

I consent to using my name in this research
☐ yes ☐ no

I consent to this interview being audio-taped (please tick)
☐ yes ☐ no

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings
☐ yes ☐ no

Participant’s signature: __________________________

Date: __________________________

NB: If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact Professor _____ at UPEACE, Telephone number: _____ or e-mail: _____.

If you have questions about the study itself, please contact (RESEARCHER) at telephone number: _____ or e-mail: _____.

+506 2205 9000         info@upeace.org         www.upeace.org