Adventist University of Africa
Research Ethics Guidelines

The Adventist University of Africa (AUA) is a community of scholars whose scholarly and research mission is guided by the wholistic education heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church which acknowledges God as the source of all truth. AUA encourages its students and staff to seek truth by engaging in research and publications in ways that contribute to their disciplines, the university, community of scholars, and other stakeholders. The University also values responsible/ accountable academic freedom. It seeks to foster a culture of research ethics among students, staff, and collaborators that is demonstrable in its respect for human subjects.

Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee

The Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) serves as the regulatory body for research at AUA and ensures the ethical conduct of any research carried out under the name of AUA.

The purpose of the AUA-ISERC is to provide an independent check to ensure ethical standards and scientific merit of research involving human subjects. The Committee is duly accredited by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), Kenya. Inherent in the AUA-ISERC role of ethics review and approval is the need to consider the dignity, safety, rights, autonomy, beneficence, justice, health, and well-being of participants and researchers.

Research integrity is the core of high-quality research. All AUA students writing their research projects (projects/ theses /dissertations) are subject to ISERC oversight. This means that students must submit their research proposals to the AUA-ISERC to determine if they are exempted from the ISERC review or need to be reviewed and approved by the ISERC. Neither the investigator nor the adviser can declare that a research work does not need ISERC review or approval. Only the ISERC can determine that a research study is Exempt from a review.

The ISERC functions as an independent entity without prejudice or favour. Four basic ethical principles shall govern the conduct of the AUA-ISERC:

1. Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons: Potential participants should be given sufficient information to decide whether they want to participate in the research and have the right to withdraw without penalty.

2. Beneficence: The ISERC and AUA researchers recognise their obligation to use research— planning, design, methods, interventions, and reporting—to do good for individuals, communities and society.

3. Non-maleficence: The ethical principle of 'do no harm' will govern ISERC's review and decision-making practices.

4. Justice: As ISERC reviews research proposals, the fair distribution of research benefits and burdens among populations, groups, classes and ethnicities will be considered.

Application Guidelines and Requirements

1. AUA Principal Investigators (students and staff) with human research participants must complete a course in ethics training (within the last two years) before submitting a research proposal to the ISERC.

2. The required training course, which must have evidence of completion, is *Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation (TRREE) modules 1, 2.1, and 3.1. A.* Access the online course by clicking **TRREE.**

The TRREE course is free but requires registration at the online site. A certificate is issued after the Principal Investigator correctly answers 70% of the module questions on the first attempt.

3. Students must ensure that their proposals conform to the Research Protocol/Handbook of their respective schools.

4. Before collecting data, students in the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPS) must obtain ethical clearance for research projects (projects/ theses /dissertations) from AUA-ISERC.

    a. Those writing a thesis/dissertation proposal are to submit their revised proposal after the proposal defense, along with the Turnitin report for ethical clearance.

    b. Those writing a project are to submit their proposal after receiving final approval from the Primary Adviser and the Program Coordinator, along with the Turnitin report for ethical clearance.

5. Theological Seminary students must obtain ethical clearance for research projects (projects/ theses /dissertations) from AUA-ISERC.

    a. Before collecting data, students in applied theology and ministerial research (MAPT, MAMiss, MChap, MDiv, DMin) are to submit their revised proposal (chapters 1-3), along with the Turnitin report for ethical clearance after receiving final approval from the Primary Adviser and the Program Coordinator.

    b. MABTS and Ph.D. students are to submit their revised research proposals and the Turnitin report after receiving final approval from the Primary Adviser and the Program Coordinator to determine if it is exempted from ISERC review or needs to be reviewed and approved by the ISERC.

6. All completed research projects, theses, and dissertations will be reviewed for adherence to AUA-ISERC requirements before the final oral defense and/or Dean's approval signature.

7. No fee shall be charged for ISERC review of AUA student and staff research proposals.

Procedures for Submitting a Research Proposal for Students

1. Prepare your research proposal for institutional scientific and ethics review.

2. The primary adviser and program coordinator must approve research proposals before submission to the AUA-ISERC.

3. Access the prescribed AUA-ISERC Application Request Form from the university website: https://www.aua.ac.ke/ethics-and-review-board/ or from your Programme Coordinator.

4. Complete the AUA-ISERC Application Request Form and send it with other relevant attachments to AUA-ISERC <ethics@aua.ac.ke>. Relevant documents include AUA-ISERC checklist, evidence of ethics training, a research proposal, informed consent, and instruments.

5. An incomplete application will not be accepted or processed. Such applications will be returned to the student for resubmission and fall into the queue of new requests.

6. Once the Secretary verifies the required documentation in consultation with the Chair, a written confirmation will be sent to the Principal Investigator (student) along with a unique ID (reference number).

Schedule for Submissions and Reviews

1. The AUA-ISERC Secretariat receives applications for review throughout the year, except in December.

2. Requests for ethical review are accepted and reviewed in the order they are received.

3. AUA-ISERC reviews occur at the monthly meeting held on the third Tuesday of the month (holidays excluded, with a rescheduled date).

4. All communications to AUA-ISERC concerning research proposals and reviews should be directed to the Secretariat <ethics@aua.ac.ke>.

Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee Decision

A research proposal review will result in one of the following actions:
1. Approved.
2. Conditionally Approved.
3. Not approved
4. Does not require review by the Committee:
5. No Decision made

Contact and Support:
Adventist University of Africa Institutional Ethics Review Committee
Physical Location: Advent Hill, Magadi Road, Ongata Rongai
Email Address: ethics@aua.ac.ke
Phone: +254 740481581
Website: https://www.aua.ac.ke/ethics-and-review-board/