



**University of Belize Research Policy
UB-PO-AD-003/0**

1. Background and Purpose

This policy establishes a structured and supportive research environment at the University of Belize. It fosters, guides, and governs high-quality, ethically responsible, and impactful research that advances knowledge and addresses critical local and global challenges. Recognizing research as a pillar of academic excellence, the policy ensures that research conducted at the University of Belize enhances student learning, supports the professional growth of faculty and staff, and positively impacts society and the environment. This policy aligns research activities with Belize’s national development goals and international priorities to support sustainable development, drive societal advancement, and promote knowledge sharing within Belize and beyond

2. Scope/Users

This policy applies to all faculty, research staff, students, and visiting scholars engaged in research activities at the University of Belize, irrespective of location. It includes both funded and unfunded research, collaborative projects, and partnerships with other universities, industry, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

3. Definitions/Terms/Acronyms

Data Management	The organization, storage, preservation, and sharing of data collected and used in research.
Intellectual Property (IP)	Creations of the mind, including inventions, literary and artistic works, symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce, resulting from University-led research.
Principal Investigator (PI)	A Principal Investigator (PI) is the lead researcher responsible for the design, execution, and management of a research project. At the University of Belize, the PI may be a faculty member, staff member, or student, depending on the scope and

nature of the research. The PI ensures that the research aligns with ethical standards, institutional policies, and funding requirements.

Research

Systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge, including activities that test hypotheses, develop theories, and apply methods to solve societal and environmental problems.

Research Ethics

A set of guidelines that protects the rights, dignity, and well-being of research participants and communities involved in research.

Research Misconduct

Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that deviate from ethical standards and accepted academic norms.

4. Policy Statement

The University of Belize is dedicated to establishing a robust research culture that adheres to international standards of quality, ethics, and accountability. This policy commits to high-quality research and aims to ensure the pursuit of rigorous and methodologically sound research that contributes to academic excellence and societal well-being and fosters a multidisciplinary research environment that promotes collaboration across departments and with external entities.

4.1 Ethical Research Conduct

- 4.1.1 **Ethics Approval:** Researchers must obtain approval from the University of Belize Institutional Research Board before conducting any research involving human participants, animals, or sensitive data.
- 4.1.2 **Informed Consent:** Researchers must secure informed consent from participants by clearly explaining the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits.
- 4.1.3 **Data Privacy and Confidentiality:** Researchers must handle personal data responsibly, protect confidentiality, and comply with the Data Protection and Privacy Law of Belize.
- 4.1.4 **Research Misconduct:** Researchers must not engage in misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism, as these violations compromise academic integrity and research credibility. If a violation is confirmed, appropriate disciplinary **actions** will be taken, which may include reprimands, suspension, dismissal, or legal proceedings, depending on the severity of the misconduct. Researchers have the right to appeal disciplinary decisions by submitting a written appeal to the Institutional Review Board within 30 days of receiving the decision. The appeal must include **supporting evidence** and will be reviewed in accordance with institutional policies and due process procedures.

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- 4.1.5 **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Researchers must uphold responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in data collection, analysis, and publication. When utilizing AI tools, researchers must ensure transparency, accuracy, and integrity by properly attributing AI-generated content, verifying outputs for factual correctness, and avoiding bias or manipulation of results. AI should complement, rather than replace, critical thinking and scholarly analysis. Additionally, researchers must comply with institutional policies, data privacy regulations, and disciplinary standards when integrating AI into their work. Misuse of AI, such as generating falsified data, plagiarism, or failing to disclose AI involvement, will be considered a breach of research ethics and subject to investigation and disciplinary action.

4.2 Intellectual Property and Ownership

- 4.2.1 **Intellectual Property Rights:** The University of Belize owns the intellectual property generated by its employees in connection with their duties, with provisions for revenue-sharing based on commercial success.
- 4.2.2 **Protection and Commercialization:** The University will support researchers in protecting and commercializing intellectual property resulting from their work, with an emphasis on benefiting both the university and the public.

4.3 Collaborative Research and Partnerships

- 4.3.1 **National and International Partnerships:** The University encourages partnerships with national and international universities, research institutions, industry, and governmental bodies to enhance research capabilities.
- 4.3.2 **Collaborative Agreements:** Researchers must formalize all collaborative projects through agreements that clearly outline roles, intellectual property rights, and data-sharing protocols.
- 4.3.2 **Community Engagement:** The University prioritizes research that engages and benefits local communities, aligning with regional development needs and respecting local cultural and environmental contexts.

4.4 Research Support and Infrastructure

- 4.4.1 **Funding and Resources:** The University provides competitive research grants, access to state-of-the-art facilities, and other resources to support faculty and student research endeavours.
- 4.4.2 **Research Centers and Labs:** The University establishes hubs of excellence to address Belize's unique needs through the creation of specialized research centers and labs in fields such as microplastics, biotechnology, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy.
- 4.4.3 **Capacity Building:** The University commits to capacity building by providing training, mentorship, and professional development programs in research methods, ethics, and dissemination practices for faculty, staff, and students.

4.5 Data Management and Open Access

- 4.5.1 **Data Management Plans (DMPs):** All funded research projects must submit a Data Management Plan that addresses data storage, security, sharing, organizing, and transforming.
- 4.5.2 **Open Access:** Researchers disseminate their findings through various channels, including open-access journals, public forums, and other platforms that promote accessibility and global knowledge sharing, ensuring widespread benefit for Belizean communities and beyond.

4.6 Research Dissemination and Impact

- 4.6.1 **Knowledge Sharing:** The University promotes the dissemination of research through publications, conferences, and workshops to maximize knowledge sharing and practical applications.
- 4.6.2 **Community Impact:** Research projects shall demonstrate potential benefits to Belize's communities, addressing areas such as public health, economic development, and environmental sustainability.
- 4.6.3 **Research Evaluation:** The University implements systems for assessing research quality, impact, and alignment with institutional and national goals, fostering continuous improvement.

4.7 Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)

- 4.7.1 The University adopts the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation, promoting transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness in the research process.
- 4.7.2 **Public Engagement:** Researchers involve stakeholders and the public in the research process, ensuring research is responsive to societal needs and values.

5. Relevant Legislation

Belize Institute for Agricultural Research and Development Act, Chapter 46 Revised Edition, 2003 <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/blz49503.pdf>

Data Protection Act, 2021 <https://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Act-No-45-of-2021-Data-Protection-Act.pdf>

Environmental Protection Act, Chapter 328 of the Substantial Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2011 <https://doe.gov.bz/download/environmental-protection-act-chapter-328-of-the-laws-of-belize-revised-edition-2011/>

National Institute of Culture and History Act Chapter 331, 2011 <https://nichbelize.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Cap-331-National-Institute-of-Culture-and-History-Act.pdf>

6. Key Related Documents

Guidelines for ISCR-Permit-Research-2024 <https://nichbelize.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Guide-for-ISCR-Permit-Research-2024.pdf>

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1967 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis <https://www.unicef.org/media/54796/file>

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines <https://publicationethics.org/files/u7141/1999pdf13.pdf>

Belmont Report on Ethical Principles in Research <https://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/guidance/ethical-principles/belmont/>

Academic Workload Model

7. Policy Approval and Review

This policy will be approved by the University of Belize Board of Trustees and will undergo a comprehensive review every five years to ensure continued relevance and alignment with best practices. Interim amendments may be recommended by the President, Vice President of Academics, or the University Academic Council and are subject to Board approval.

8. Amendment History

Revision #	Description of changes	Reason(s) for the change	Date of revisions
0	Initial Release	Not Applicable	Same as Initial Release