CODE OF ETHICS

BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE, PILANI

BITS Pilani is committed to generating, disseminating, and preserving knowledge and working with others to utilize this knowledge for the betterment of humanity by responding to the world's significant challenges. The vision of BITS Pilani is to develop in each member of the BITS community the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind. The BITS Pilani Code of Ethics outlines the principles and guidelines governing the ethical conduct of all members within the BITS Pilani community. This policy aims to foster a culture of integrity, respect, and responsibility, ensuring that all actions and decisions align with the core values and mission of BITS Pilani. The Code of Ethics guides all members of BITS Pilani including faculty, staff and students through the ethical dilemmas they may encounter.

BITS Pilani expects all members to adhere to the code of conduct. Non-compliance may lead to appropriate consequences in line with institutional policies.

General Guidelines

1. Research and Academic Integrity

1.1 Academic Integrity
a. Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism, cheating, and any form of academic dishonesty.
b. Promote a culture of academic honesty and fairness among faculty, staff, and students.

1.2 Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression
a. Respect and uphold the principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression.
b. Encourage an open exchange of ideas, diverse perspectives, and constructive criticism to foster academic and intellectual growth.

1.3 Responsible Research
a. Adhere to ethical and professional standards in all research activities, ensuring accuracy and honesty in reporting the findings.

1.4 Responsible Conduct in Peer Review and Academic Publishing
a. Engage in ethical peer review processes, providing fair and constructive feedback to enhance the quality of academic publications.
b. Emphasize ethical considerations in academic publishing to promote transparency and accuracy of research findings.

1.5 Protection of Human and Animal Rights in Research
a. We uphold the rights and welfare of human subjects and animals involved in research, ensuring that proper consent and ethical considerations are followed in all research studies.

2. Administration and Governance

2.1 Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest occurs when the personal interest of a person is in conflict with his /her professional interest. This can be prevented by:

a. Avoiding situations where personal, financial, or professional interests may conflict with the best interests of the Institute.
b. Promptly disclosing all conflicts of interest to the appropriate authorities.

2.2 Compliance with Laws and Regulations
a. Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and institutional policies. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse for non-compliance.

2.3 Protection of Institute Assets
a. Take responsibility for protecting Institute assets, including equipment, technology, facilities, and intellectual property.
b. Strictly prohibit unauthorized use, misappropriation, or theft of institute assets.

2.4 Privacy and Confidentiality
a. Respect the confidentiality and privacy of sensitive information, upholding data protection policies.
b. Ensure confidential information is not disclosed to unauthorized parties, both during and after association with the Institute.

2.5 Respect for Religious and Cultural Diversity
a. We respect the religious and cultural beliefs of individuals within the Institute community and promote an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity.
b. Discrimination or prejudice based on religious or cultural backgrounds is strictly prohibited.

2.6 Responsible Financial Management
a. We are committed to responsible and ethical financial management, ensuring the proper use and allocation of financial resources in accordance with institutional policies and guidelines.
b. Transparency and accuracy in financial reporting and budgeting are essential for maintaining public trust.

2.7 Ethical Use of Institute Endowment and Investment Funds
a. Institute endowment and investment funds are managed responsibly, adhering to ethical investment practices.
b. Investments should align with the Institute's values and objectives.

3. Ethical Conduct in Partnerships and Collaborations

3.1 Ethical Considerations in Technology Transfer
a. Conduct technology transfer and commercialization activities ethically, ensuring benefits are appropriately shared with stakeholders.
b. Utilize technology transfer for the greater societal good.

3.2 Respect for Intellectual Property
a. Respect the intellectual property rights of others, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners.
b. Properly attribute and acknowledge sources when using others' work in research,

publications, or any academic or creative endeavors.

3.3 Ethical Use of Copyrighted Materials
a. Respect copyright laws when using copyrighted materials for educational or research purposes.
b. Obtain proper licensing and permissions when using copyrighted materials beyond fair use.

3.4 Ethical Considerations in Partnerships with Industry
a. Collaborations and partnerships with industry are conducted with ethical considerations, ensuring alignment with the Institute's values and objectives.
b. We promote mutually beneficial partnerships that uphold academic integrity and do not compromise research independence.

4. Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

4.1 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
a. Treat every individual with dignity and respect, fostering an environment where inclusivity is prioritized, and everyone feels valued.
b. Strictly prohibit discrimination, harassment, or exclusion based on race, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic.
c. Ensure that all community members have equitable access to opportunities, resources, and support, irrespective of their background, identity, or beliefs.
d. Actively support and include LGBTQ+ individuals, respecting their rights and identities, and ensuring they have equal access to opportunities and resources.
e. Cultivate a culture that values and celebrates diversity in every aspect of life within the institute.
f. Make decisions regarding hiring, promotions, admissions, instruction, and assessment based on merit and qualifications, without any type of discrimination and favour.
g. Proactively promote policies and practices that reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion across the Institute

4.2 Responsible Social Media Use
a. Adhere to the Institute's social media policy, maintaining professionalism and respect for others.
b. Ensure social media interactions do not compromise the Institute's reputation or individuals' privacy.

4.3 Responsible Marketing and Communications
a. Ensure that all marketing and communications materials accurately and factually represent the Institute and its offerings.
b. Marketing efforts are conducted ethically and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

5. Whistleblower Protection and Reporting Violations

5.1 Reporting Violations
a. Encourage all members of the Institute community to report suspected violations of this Code of Ethics Policy to the management.
b. Use the designated channel for confidential reporting to protect against retaliation.

5.2 Whistleblower Protection
a. We protect whistleblowers who report suspected violations in good faith.
b. Treat whistleblower reports confidentially and take appropriate measures to address reported concerns.
c. Leadership (including Directors, Dean, Associate Dean, and Head of the Departments) should refrain from retaliating by misusing their power and position.

6. Teachers and their Responsibilities

6.1 Teachers Should:
a. Adhere to their professional responsibilities that uphold the dignity of their teaching profession.
b. Have a calm, patient, and communicative temperament and a friendly disposition while dealing with students, colleagues, and non-teaching staff.
c. Strive for professional growth through study and research.
d. Perform their duties with dedication and assist in the educational responsibilities of the institute.
e. Inculcate scientific outlook among students.
f. Refrain from inciting students/colleagues against other students/colleagues.
g. Refrain from considering caste/religion/region/gender in their professional endeavor.
h. Refrain from gossiping about their colleagues' personal lives.
i. Use professional time responsibly.
j. Treat non-teaching staff as colleagues.

7. Students/Scholars and their Responsibilities

7.1 Students Should:
a. Comply with institute regulations and policies.
b. Respect their fellow mates, teachers, and non-teaching staff members.
c. Keep their surroundings, hostel premises, labs, and classrooms clean.
d. Use professional space responsibly.
e. Refrain from feeding animals in professional and public spaces within the institute premises.
f. Refrain from using abusive statements against any instructor. Avoid reference to any religion/caste/region/gender that are professionally irrelevant in the course feedback. Students can formally raise their concerns with the authorities, if any.
g. Show respect for the community outside the institution and honour the local culture.
h. Refrain from recording videos of fellow students/ instructors without permission during or outside the class.

8. Supervisor (or Notional Supervisor) and Supervisee Relationship

('Supervisors' refers to teachers who supervise research scholars/ students, and 'supervisee' refers to those enrolled for research/project with the supervisors' mentorship.)

a. The supervisor and supervisee should show mutual respect.
b. The supervisor and supervisee should avoid relations that compromise their professionalism.
c. The supervisor should not place the supervisee in a vulnerable position or take advantage of such circumstances.

    d. The supervisor and supervisee should avoid making statements regarding each other's personal life.
    e. The supervisor should avoid using supervisees for their personal work.
    f. The supervisor should avoid interfering in their supervisees' personal matters.

9. For Non-Teaching Staff

    a. Treat your colleagues and students with respect.
    b. Perform your duties with dedication and honesty.
    c. Refrain from making comments about colleagues' personal life.
    d. Refrain from discussing confidential matters with colleagues.

10. For Residents

    a. A BITS Campus resident should not indulge in any activity that causes nuisance to other residents. All residents must adhere to activities that promote harmony.
    b. Refrain from making statements about other residents' personal life.
    c. Refrain from commenting on social media/WhatsApp groups that undermine secularism and promote disharmony as a BITS campus resident.

By upholding the Code of Ethics, each member of BITS Pilani community plays a crucial role in preserving the integrity and reputation of the institute. This policy reinforces our commitment to ethical conduct, fostering an environment of trust, mutual respect, and responsible decision-making. Together, we contribute to the growth and success of BITS Pilani as a premier institution of learning and research.