Regulations

On Proper Conduct in Research

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

1. Preamble:

Tel Aviv University aspires to excellence in research. Excellence is not gauged solely according to research results. It depends to a large extent on observance of proper conduct in research. Proper conduct in research is based on a commitment to the principles of truth, freedom, responsibility, integrity and cooperation and requires adherence to the professional and ethical standards accepted in the international community, legislation, the University’s rules and the rules of the funding entities.

Spreading and integrating standards of proper conduct in research within members of the scientific community must be carried out by senior academic staff members and researchers who serve as a personal example in their teaching, instruction and management of research programs on all levels. However, Tel Aviv University has adopted these Regulations in order to give explicit expression to the common core of standards that are binding for all the University’s research employees.

Tel Aviv University requires that all its research employees conduct themselves in accordance with the principles and rules set forth in these Regulations in every aspect of their research, including research planning and the submission of research proposals to the funding entities, the issue, documentation, analysis and storage of data, the referencing, publication, inclusion of others in and commercialization of the research results.

Research employees are the employees, pensioners, guests and graduate and post-graduate students of Tel Aviv University engaged in the planning of research, the submission of research proposals for funding, the management or reporting of the research or in decisions with respect to the commercialization thereof, as well as any person exploiting the University’s resources and/or involved in research with any of the persons stipulated above.

Reference in these Regulations to the masculine form includes the feminine form by implication, and reference to the singular includes the plural by implication, and vice versa.

2. Principles:

2.1 Truth:

Research employees shall be obligated to search for the truth and will strive to expand human knowledge and understanding.

2.2 Freedom:
Research employees will conduct their research with no irrelevant influences, but subject to ethical, professional, legal, social, environmental and financial norms or constraints.

2.3 **Responsibility:**

Research employees are responsible for all aspects of their research. Specifically, they are responsible for the health, safety, privacy, dignity and autonomy of all those who may be impacted by their research (whether or not directly involved in the research), they will restrict the use of animals in their research, minimize their suffering, and protect the environment.

2.4 **Professionalism:**

Research employees will conduct themselves in accordance with the highest accepted professional standards in their field of research.

2.5 **Integrity:**

Research employees will evaluate the data and materials (their own and those of others) objectively. They will present their research and its results in a fair, transparent, complete and precise manner that will enable review and discussion, while acknowledging the contribution of all those who took part in the research.

2.6 **Cooperation:**

Research will be conducted out of a common search for knowledge. Senior research employees will encourage the development of professional skills and standards and will serve as an example in creating an atmosphere of openness, trust and willingness to help among their colleagues, research assistants and students (whether or not they are involved in joint research). They will respect the contribution of others and their intellectual property, and they are entitled to proper recognition for their contribution to the scientific discoveries, concepts and their development, as well as proper protection of this contribution.

3. **Rules:**

3.1 **Research funding:**

Research employees submitting research proposals by an application for funding thereof will take all reasonable cautionary measures to verify that the information included in their proposal is accurate and complete, that the proposal is scientifically based and is properly budgeted.

Research employees who receive funding for their research must take all reasonable measures to verify that the funding is used for its designated
purpose, and to ensure that all reporting obligations are truthfully and fully met.

Funded research will meet all the requirements of the funding entity and all the rules of Tel Aviv University pertaining to internal and external funding of research.

In a situation of joint or group research, the principal investigator will bear responsibility for compliance with all the rules stipulated in this section.

3.2 **Conflict of interest:**

Research employees will conduct their research impartially. They must use their professional judgment in an independent manner and without irrelevant considerations that may influence any aspect of the conduct of their research.

Research employees will disclose to the Conflict of Interest Committee any matter in which there is, or may appear to be, a bias to skew the research or inappropriately influence the decisions regarding the conduct of the research.

Research employees will act in accordance with the Regulations on Conflict of Interest in Research and in accordance with the decisions of the Conflict of Interest Committee established by virtue thereof.

3.3 **Ethical constraints:**

Research employees will respect the dignity, autonomy, privacy, safety and best interests of anyone who may be affected by their research, whether or not they are directly involved in the research.

Research involving humans, whether or not it is a clinical study, will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the law, in accordance with accepted principles in the international community and the University’s rules on ethics in scientific studies conducted on humans, and in accordance with the decisions of the ethics committee established under these rules.

Research employees who may consider the use of animals in their research, shall work in accordance with the provisions of internationally accepted principles that require the search for alternatives to the use of animals, reducing the number of animals that are used in the experiments to the minimum necessary, using experimental animals that are lowest on the phylogenetic scale, and minimizing the suffering of the animals involved in the research.

Research in which animals are involved will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the law, the University’s rules pertaining to the
conduct of animal studies, in accordance with the decisions of the ethics committee established by virtue thereof and in accordance with the University’s rules pertaining to the proper treatment of animals involved in research.

3.4 **Documentation of research results and storage of data:**

Research employees will document the course of the research and its results, including interim results in a clear, precise and complete manner. This documentation will be stored for 10 years from the date of completion of the research, unless a longer period is required under law or by the conditions of the financing entity or by the nature of the research.

Research employees will allow access to this documentation based on a reasonable request of academic judges, colleagues and University authorities, subject to the legal, ethical and professional rules on protection of confidentiality and privacy.

3.5 **Publication and results:**

Research employees will assume full responsibility for the study published under their name and take all reasonable steps to ensure:

3.5.1 The study was conducted as described, that the reported results were attained as reported, and that the publication does not pose any type of misrepresentation or deception whatsoever.

3.5.2 The idea for the study and its planning, the collection of the data, their analysis and interpretation, the reported results and the text published belong exclusively to the authors signed on the publication, they were not copied from any source without authorization or without explicitly mentioning the source in the publication, and that the publication is not the product of plagiarism or theft of ideas.
Explanations, Notes and Lessons

Concerning Conflict of Interest in Research

1. The information which a researcher passes on to the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee will be kept privileged.

2. The information which will be accessible to the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee will include details of business agreements discussed and/or signed by Ramot.

3. A common criterion among US federal funding sources is what they define as a “financial conflict of interest”.

   According to this criterion, a researcher is in a “financial conflict of interest” if he and/or a member of his family (spouse and minor children) has a “significant” financial interest in a financial entity where the research (its planning, performance and the reports about it) is likely to affect him.

   The term “significant” is defined at over $10,000 or ownership in excess of 5% of the value of the company.

   This is also a criterion for conflict of interest at Tel Aviv University, in addition to other relevant criteria.

   Each study requires at least one declaration on behalf of one of the principal investigators with respect to proper research conduct in relation to a conflict of interest. This declaration will be kept in the research file at the Research Authority.

   The declarations of other participants in the study, of whatever rank, will be kept by the aforesaid principal investigator for at least two years after conclusion of the research.

4. A principal investigator in a study where one of those acting in collaboration with him and/or on his behalf in his study deposited with him a declaration including a notice on conflict of interest in research, will verify that the declarant gave notice thereof to the Vice President for Research and Development, in his position as Chairman of the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee.
Tel Aviv University

Research Authority

Declaration concerning:

Proper Conduct in Research and Conflict of Interest

[Version updated to - ________]

Every research study requires at least one such declaration on behalf of one of the principal investigators. It will be delivered to the Research Authority at one of the following relevant stages: submission of the research proposal, creation or amendment of a budget sheet.

Name: _________________ telephone: _________________ email: _________________

Name of research to which declaration refers ________________________________

Funding source: __________________________ budget no. (if already determined): __________________________

My function in this research: _______ principal investigator (*)

_______ other, specify: ______________________

I hereby declare by my signature as follows: [please mark in _____ the sections to which your declaration refers].

_____ I have read the “Regulations on Proper Conduct in Research” and the “Regulations on Conflict of Interest in Research” and have understood the obligations applying to me on account thereof.

_____ (This section is relevant only to the principal investigator in the study) I have and will verify that each of those operating in collaboration with me and/or on my behalf in this study signed and/or will sign (upon the commencement of his involvement in this study) himself on such a declaration and I will keep their declarations with me for reference and control, for at least two years after completion of the study.

_____ I was not, I am not and do not anticipate I will be in any conflict of interest in the context of this study.

_____ I was and/or I am and/or I anticipate that I will be in a conflict of interest in the context of this study. Therefore, as required in the Regulations, ____ I have notified the Vice President for Research and Development in his position as Chairman of the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee, of such situation.
The masculine form in this document includes both the masculine and feminine forms.

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Regulations
On Conflict of Interest in Research

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

1. General:

Research employees will conduct their research in an impartial manner. They must exercise their professional judgment in an independent manner and without irrelevant considerations affecting any aspect whatsoever of their research. Research employees will disclose to the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee any matter that may or may have the appearance of biasing the research or improperly affecting any aspect whatsoever of decisions concerning the conduct of the research. Such disclosure enables the taking of measures to ensure that the research is conducted in an objective, independent and professional manner.

Tel Aviv University established a Conflict of Interest Committee to examine and resolve conflicts of interest, as they occur, and to consult in situations where conflicts of interest in research may develop.

Breach of the rules set forth in sections 3 and 4 of these Regulations, as well as non-compliance with a decision of the Conflict of Interest Committee will be deemed a disciplinary offense.

Reference in these Regulations to the masculine form includes the feminine form by implication, and reference to the singular includes the plural by implication, and vice versa.

2. What is considered a conflict of interests?

Research employees are tainted by an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest when there is actual, perceived, or potential concern that an irrelevant consideration will bias the independent and professional judgment required in academic research.

Research employees are employees, pensioners, guests and graduate and postgraduate students of Tel Aviv University involved in the planning of research, the submission of research proposals for funding, the management or reporting of the research or in decisions with respect to the commercialization thereof, as well as any person exploiting the University’s resources and/or involved in research with any of the persons stipulated above.

Actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest:

An actual conflict of interest is a situation in which there is an actual likelihood that the independent and professional judgment required for academic research will be biased by an irrelevant consideration. Perceived conflict of interest is a situation where it seems to a reasonable person that there is a reasonable
likelihood that the researcher’s independent and professional judgment will be biased. A potential conflict of interest is a situation in which an actual or perceived conflict of interest is likely to develop.

An irrelevant consideration can be of any kind – personal, professional, financial, commercial or other. It may be of the researcher himself, of members of his close family, of close friends, of the funding entities or of any other person or entity.

Characteristic, although not exhaustive, situations in which conflicts of interest arise:

2.1 When the researcher (or his close relatives, his close friends, his students or any other person or entity to which he is affiliated) is linked to the entity funding the research, in such a way that will enable him to benefit from a direct or indirect monetary profit from the research, there is an actual conflict of interest, requiring disclosure and management. Also when there is no actual likelihood of monetary profit, there is likely to be a perceived conflict of interest, requiring disclosure and management. When one of the persons mentioned above considers making contact with the funding entity, there is a potential conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management.

Specifically, when during the research a research employee acts to register a patent on the results of his research by Ramot, by a person or entity with whom he is affiliated or independently, there is an actual conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management.

2.2 When the entity funding the research has a financial interest or other non-academic interest in the results of the research, such as the commercialization thereof, there is not always an actual conflict of interest. However, in such a situation, there may be a perceived conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management, and it may even be a potential conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management.

2.3 When the funding entity or the research employee (or his close relatives, his close friends, or his students) or any other person or entity to which the research employee is affiliated or in which the research employee has an interest, are interested in or are likely to benefit from the postponement of the publication, from the partial or misleading publication or from non-publication of the research results, there is an actual conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management.

2.4 Where personal profit or personal or significant professional benefit (exceeding regular professional promotion) are dependent on the results of the research, there is an actual conflict of interest requiring disclosure and management.

3. **General obligations:**
3.1 The independent, professional and impartial judgment required from an academic researcher will not be biased by irrelevant considerations.

3.2 Research employees will fulfill the obligations of disclosure set forth in these Regulations and will comply with the decisions of the Conflict of Interest Committee.

4. Duties of disclosure:

4.1 Disclosure in the research funding application:

A conflict of interest declaration will be attached to each research funding application relating to all research employees involved in the research. Any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest to occur during the research will be reported immediately to the Conflict of Interest Committee.

4.2 Disclosure by research student:

A conflict of interest declaration from a student will be attached to each research proposal submitted to the Student Research Division with respect to the proposed research attesting to the fact that the research associate explained all the rules on conflict of interest in research and the student understood them before signing the declaration. The research associate’s declaration will be attached to this declaration according to which he explained to the student the rules on conflict of interest in research before the student signed his declaration, and that the research associate believed that the student understood them.

The Student Research Division will send a copy of the declaration to the Research Authority.

4.3 Ad hoc declarations:

Research employees will disclose to the Conflict of Interest Committee, at their initiative, any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest occurring in the course of their research not disclosed in the research funding application, or which has changed since it was disclosed. The conflict of interest will be reported immediately upon its occurrence.

5. Consultation:

Research employees may consult with the Conflict of Interest Committee to examine whether their situation constitutes an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest and how to avoid or manage such a situation.

6. Filing:

The declarations referred to in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 above in the applications to consult with the Committee and documentation regarding the work of the
Conflict of Interest Committee will be filed with the Research Association and any authority competent to handle matters relating to conflict of interest and breaches of the University’s rules will be authorized to review such documents.

7. **The Conflict of Interest Committee:**

7.1 The Committee is composed of 12 members: 10 members at the rank of full professor, who represent the various fields of research at the University, a representative of Ramot and the Director of the Research Authority. The Director of the Research Authority will be the Chairman of the Committee. Ramot’s representative will not have a voting right.

7.2 The members of the Committee will be appointed by the Rector. The appointment will be for three years.

7.3 As a general rule, no more than 30% of the members of the Committee will be replaced at one time, to ensure the continuity of the Committee’s work.

8. **The activity of the Conflict of Interest Committee:**

8.1 In any case brought to the attention of the Conflict of Interest Committee, either by the Research Authority (further to applications for funding or declarations of research students), either through the disclosure of a research employee or upon consultation by a research employee, the Chairman of the Committee will appoint two members from among those members of the Committee having a voting right, at least one of which shall be in a related field to that of the researcher whose case is being discussed. The Chairman and these two members (hereinafter, the “Examining Committee”) will decide how to manage the situation. The Committee member representing Ramot may be joined to the panel, without a voting right.

8.2 The Examining Committee may decide that:

   (1) The situation does not require any handling whatsoever.

   (2) The research employee must disclose the conflict of interest to designated persons or entities.

   (3) The research program must be changed in a manner that will prevent a conflict of interest or that will enable its management.

   (4) To appoint a person to independently supervise the research planning, management or reporting.

   (5) The research employee must to divest himself of the financial interest in the entity funding the research or in the entity having a non-academic interest in the results of the research.
(6) The research employee must sever ties with a person or entity with respect to which the conflict of interest arose.

(7) The research employee must be disqualified from participation in all or part of the research.

(8) Any other measure must be taken which is deemed appropriate in order to avoid or manage the conflict of interest.

8.3 Before it decides whether there is an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest requiring management, and the desirable measures to manage it, the Examining Committee must hear the position of the research employees involved as to the situation in question and suitable measures to manage the research, if they so desire. In special cases the research employees will be authorized to present before the Examining Committee the position of others, in writing or verbally.

8.4 When deciding whether there is an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest requiring management, and the desirable measures to manage it, and if these rules do not provide other explicit arrangements, the Examining Committee will be guided by accepted standards on such matter at academic institutions in Israel and abroad.

8.5 All deliberations of the Examining Committee, including those in which the research employee took part, and excluding clarifications and preliminary exchanges of opinions, will be made face-to-face, and not in writing or by email. However, a research employee may present his position also in writing if he so desires. A record of the content of the deliberations will be kept.

8.6 All decisions of the Committee will be given in writing. The decisions and documentation of the meetings and of the decision process will be made available to the members of the Committee at their request. The decisions of the Committee will be made available to the members of the University’s academic staff in such manner that the identity of the research employees whose research was discussed or other details that are not necessary for an understanding of the present conflict of interest, will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

8.7 When deciding whether there is an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest requiring management and what measures are desirable for its management, the Examining Committee may adopt interim decisions as it deems fit, such as the suspension of a research employee from involvement in the research, disclosure of the situation to the funding entity, freezing the research funds, and such like, until a final decision is reached. This authority will not be exercised without the research employee having being given an opportunity to be heard, and no measure will be taken that will harm progress in the study or the relationship between the researcher and the funding entity more than is necessary.
8.8 An appeal on the decisions of the Examining Committee will be heard before the whole Committee. The minimum number of members required for a quorum of the Committee is 7 members with a voting right.

8.9 The decisions of the Conflict of Interest Committee bind the research employees.

9. **Additional rules:**

9.1 The information passed on by a research employee to the Conflict of Interest in Research Committee will be kept privileged.

9.2 The existence of University rules dealing with other problems deriving from the commercialization of the research, such as rules dealing with the relationship between an academic employee and a business entity and rules dealing with exploitation of inventions and patents does not exempt a research employee from his obligations under these Regulations.

9.3 Research employees will comply with the requirements of the entities funding their research with respect to conflict of interest and the disclosure thereof.

9.4 The rules set forth in these Regulations do not deal with the issue of conflict of obligations, which is dealt with in other University rules, such as those dealing with employment outside the University, the employment, promotion or appointment of family members, the prohibition on receipt of gifts, and such like.

10. **Breach of rules:**

A breach of the rules set forth in sections 3 and 4, in addition to non-compliance with a decision of the Conflict of Interest Committee will be deemed a disciplinary offense.