

Guidelines on Research Focusing on Humans at Hiroshima University Graduate
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

March 24, 2022

Approved by the Dean

Chapter 1. General Provisions

1. Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to prescribe the code of conduct required of researchers who engage in research focusing on humans at the Hiroshima University Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (hereinafter, the "Graduate School") and thereby to promote research activities in good faith and in a responsible manner.

2. Research focusing on humans

For the purpose of these Guidelines, "research focusing on humans" means research concerning individuals or groups, which is carried out by the provision of information and data regarding their thoughts, psychophysical condition, behavior, environment, background, etc. or by collecting information and data related to the privacy of individuals, through such means as interviews, questionnaires, etc.; provided, however, that this excludes research that falls within the scope of application of the Hiroshima University Regulations on Life Science and Medical Research Focusing on Humans (Regulations No. 37 of June 23, 2021).

3. Basic principles

Research focusing on humans shall be implemented while giving consideration to the following matters:

- (1) Implementation of research that has social and academic significance
- (2) Ethical considerations required depending on the nature of the research field (e.g., compliance with the consensus, guidelines, etc. established in the relevant research field)
- (3) Respect for the individual and collective dignity of research subjects
- (4) Right of self-determination of research subjects (informed consent)
- (5) Protection of the privacy and personal information of research subjects
- (6) Appropriate management and utilization of information, data, etc.
 - ① Prevention of leakage, loss, damage, etc. to personal information for its protection
 - ② Securing of accuracy
 - ③ Prohibition of fabrication, alteration, and plagiarism
 - ④ Management and retention of information and data for verification and reuse purposes

- (7) Maintenance of objectivity and fairness through conflict of interest management and securing of transparency

Chapter 2. Informed Consent

1. Informed consent

When obtaining consent from research subjects concerning the provision and collection of information and data and the utilization thereof (hereinafter, the "provision, etc. of information and data"), researchers shall first provide the subjects with sufficient explanations on various matters related to the research, including, but not limited to, the purpose of the research, the research plan, the concrete method of collecting information concerning research subjects, etc., the method of utilization and management of the information and data, the handling of the information and data after the completion of the research (such as whether or not they will be deposited in the data archive), the method of publicizing research findings, and the subjects' right to withdraw their consent.

2. Withdrawal of consent

- (1) Researchers shall guarantee research subjects the right to withdraw their consent to the provision, etc. of information and data. However, with respect to the utilization of the information and data acquired, researchers may choose not to grant the right to withdraw consent, provided that (i) it is unlikely that the research subjects may incur disadvantages, and (ii) in light of the situation and condition of the research, it is difficult to cease the utilization for the reason of withdrawal of consent.
- (2) If the consent to the provision, etc. of information and data is withdrawn by a research subject, the researcher shall cease the provision, etc. of information and data based on the details of the withdrawal and discard the relevant information and data. However, this shall not apply if (i) the consent is withdrawn by a research subject after the publication of the research results and (ii) the relevant data needs to be retained in order to validate the academic significance and ethical appropriateness of the research.

3. Selection of research subjects and ensuring voluntariness

- (1) When obtaining consent from research subjects to take part in research, the researcher shall use utmost care to avoid directly or indirectly forcing them to do so.
- (2) In cases where any special interest is recognized between a researcher and research subjects (for example, the researcher is a teacher and uses as research subjects participants in a course for which credit recognition will be made by the researcher), that researcher shall pay special consideration in order to ensure the voluntariness of consent.

Chapter 3. Appropriate Management and Retention of Data

1. Appropriate management of data

Researchers shall manage personal information acquired in the course of implementing research in an appropriate manner so as to prevent the leakage, loss, damage, etc. of the acquired information.

2. Anonymization of data

When utilizing and retaining personal information acquired in the course of implementing research, researchers are recommended to perform anonymization of the acquired information by such means as deleting names and other information items so as to prevent the individuals from being identified easily.

3. Appropriate utilization of data

Researchers shall endeavor to ensure the accuracy of the information and data collected and the materials, records, etc. obtained by analyzing them.

Chapter 4. Research Integrity

1. Prohibition of scientific misconduct

Researchers shall not engage in the fabrication, alteration, plagiarism, etc. of information and data (for details, refer to "Scientific Misconduct" as described in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Regulations on Prevention of and Response to Scientific Misconduct at Hiroshima University (Regulations No. 98 of April 28, 2015)).

2. Retention and depositing of data

- (1) In order to enable the validation of the academic significance and ethical appropriateness of research, researchers shall retain the information and data collected for a predetermined period following the publication of results (refer to the Guidelines on Retention of Research Materials at Hiroshima University (Approved by the Director (Research) on June 17, 2015)).
- (2) In order to promote the safe preservation of information and data collected and the secondary analysis thereof, researchers are recommended to consider depositing information and data collected in the data archive after obtaining the informed consent from research subjects.

3. Conflict of interest management

- (1) Researchers shall not make a promise to any specific business, institution or individual to the effect that they will place restrictions on the publication of research results and research findings.
- (2) Researchers shall at all times respect their responsibilities as a researcher and endeavor to maintain the objectivity and integrity of the research. If there is any factor that may affect the objectivity and integrity of specific research (such as a special relationship (e.g., provision of funds, research collaboration, kinship) with a business, institution or individual with interest in the research content), the researcher shall disclose the details of such relationship during the research ethics review and at the time of publicizing the research findings so as to enable recipients of the information to judge the academic value of the research, including its objectivity and integrity.

Supplementary Provision

These Guidelines shall take effect from April 1, 2022.