



# MAR GREGORIOS COLLEGE OF LAW

MAR IVANIOS VIDYANAGAR, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Affiliated to the University of Kerala & Approved by the Bar Council of India

## ETHICS POLICY OF MAR GREGORIOS COLLEGE OF LAW

### **Introduction**

Mar Gregorios College of Law as an institution of higher learning has always been at the forefront of imparting an ethical, holistic, inclusive and secular education and educational services to all its stakeholders through its well-defined mission and vision. It has always been committed to excellence and integrity and has been enjoying great social accreditation in the society. All students and staff of this College is expected to discharge their responsibilities with diligence, discretion, dignity and professionalism. All are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity and truthfulness. All are bound to safeguard the secrecy of confidential information and comply with the rules and regulations of the College. The representatives of the College should not place their personal interest above the best interests of the College. This policy document includes the prescribed set of rules and regulations of acceptable behaviours by students and staff and expected compliance of the rules or standard set in the discharge of their duties.

### **Need and Relevance of Ethics Policy**

A professional Ethics Policy offers a set of guidelines to teams or organizations which can be used to make appropriate and just decisions at workplace. Setting a professional Ethics Policy provide a road map to approach and deal with problems in a morally and socially acceptable manner thereby imbibing honesty and integrity in the institutional ethos and work culture leading to a healthier working environment. Such policy helps to outline the mission and values of an organization and provides the groundwork for a pre-emptive warning in case of deviance/non-compliance. Teachers as professionals engaged in the teaching learning process are required to show impartiality, integrity and ethical behaviour in the classroom and in their conduct with parents and colleagues.

### **Institutional Ethics**

Every organization must maintain a moral profile to gain credibility in the eyes of the stakeholders and to build a good institutional repute. Ethical conduct is to be practiced in all facets of the institutional operations and activities, policy decision making, implementation, and follow up. It is not only necessary to frame ethical standards but also to ensure that the standards and benchmarks set are followed in letter and spirit. In an educational institution, Ethical behaviours and conduct are to be followed by all the participants in the teaching – learning- evaluation process. Ethical dimensions of an Educational Institution cannot be ignored and it has a significant impact on society at large.

### **Applicability of Ethics Policy**

The Ethics Policy is mandatory and binds on all students and staff of the College. This policy document does not in any way replace the policies adopted earlier, it only supplements and is supplemented by other policies. The competent authority may revise rules as deemed

necessary. On revision, the old rules will stand cancelled and the new rules framed will be applicable from the date of implementation with prospective effect. When one joins the College, it is presumed that the student or staff has read and understood the code of conduct and undertake to abide by it failing which disciplinary action against him/her for misconduct or noncompliance may be taken by the competent authority as deemed fit. Ignorance of this code of conduct cannot be considered as a sufficient ground to condone misconduct/non-compliance.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **i. Responsibilities of the Students in General**

It shall be the responsibility of the students and scholars to:

- ❖ read, understand and be aware of this Ethics Policy and subsequent amendments brought to this Ethics Policy.
- ❖ maintain the dignity of classrooms/lab/library.
- ❖ respect the laws of the country, rights of individuals and to conduct in a responsible and dignified manner at all times. One must show due respect to people while interacting for academic purposes by way of data collection, and surveys for research and projects.
- ❖ ensure that, the rights of an individual will be respected and their property and life will not be put under threat at any circumstances. Academic work must not pose a risk or danger to people or the environment.
- ❖ behave and conduct themselves in the College Campus, hostels and premises in a dignified and courteous manner and show due respect to the authorities, employees, elders and fellow beings.
- ❖ improve the balance of under-represented sections and provide supportive environment by avoiding bias, favouritism and discrimination of any kind. Academic communities are enriched by the presence of people of different ethnicities, genders, religions, castes, tribes, socio-economic strata, affiliations, backgrounds and sexual orientations. There must not be direct or indirect bias or discrimination against any individual based on the above categories.
- ❖ respect fellow beings in every endeavour. Bullying in the institution is a form of harassment that usually targets the most vulnerable members. This can include abusive language, use of insults, threatening, sabotage of others' works etc. Such actions are highly unethical and are not acceptable.
- ❖ refrain from any sexual misconduct and/or gender-based harassment or discrimination. It is everyone's responsibility to support a gender neutral and supportive environment to ensure equal participation of all in academic activities.

### **ii. Responsibilities of Staff in General**

It shall be the responsibility of the members of staff to:

- ❖ read, understand and be aware of this Ethics Policy and subsequent amendments brought to this Ethics Policy.
- ❖ maintain the dignity of the classroom/lab/ library. Adherence to code of conduct and general discipline is highly essential. Students must be able to see role models and examples to follow in their teachers. Unbiased approach without discrimination of any

kind to all students is essential in all academic activities which shall be inspiring and motivating any student to attain academic excellence and defined outcomes.

- ❖ respect the rights of individuals and to conduct in a responsible, unbiased and dignified manner at all times. One must show due respect to people while interacting for academic purposes by way of data collection, and surveys for project and research.
- ❖ ensure that, the rights of an individual will be respected and their property and life will not be put under threat under any circumstances. Academic work must not pose a risk or danger to people or the environment.
- ❖ behave and conduct themselves in the College Campus, hostels and premises in a dignified manner.
- ❖ respect fellow beings in every endeavour. Bullying in the workplace is a form of harassment that usually targets the most vulnerable members. This can include abusive language, use of Insults, threatening letters, sabotage of others' work, exploiting juniors for carrying out personal errands etc. Such actions are highly unethical and are not acceptable.
- ❖ refrain from any sexual misconduct and/or gender-based harassment or discrimination. It is everyone's responsibility to support a gender neutral and supportive environment to ensure equal participation of all in academic and administrative activities.
- ❖ discharge all entrusted duties with utmost sincerity, dedication and ethical principles in executing responsibilities such as examination invigilation, timely completion of paper valuations, extra-curricular activities, charity works, consultancy projects, matters of public accountability etc. to name a few. It is extremely important to ensure participation of all members of staff in exam related duties with utmost vigilance and unbiased approach to prevent any attempts of malpractices during examination.

### **iii. Code of Ethics in Writing Research Papers/Assignments/ Dissertation**

Ethics in research govern the standards of conduct for undertaking research by faculty, researchers and students. The importance of adhering to ethical principles in research is laid down by the UGC ([https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7771545\\_academic-integrity-Regulation2018.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7771545_academic-integrity-Regulation2018.pdf)) for responsible conduct of research promoting academic integrity, dignity as well as rights and welfare of the researcher and free from plagiarism and malpractices. The College values academic integrity and is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic Integrity encompasses honesty and responsibility and awareness relating to ethical standards for the conduct of research and scholarship.

This Policy on academic integrity applies to all students, researchers and teachers in the College and are required to adhere to the said policy.

The purpose of the Policy is two-fold:

1. To clarify the principles of academic integrity, and
2. To guard against dishonest conduct and violations of academic integrity.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the College and the value of the degrees awarded to its scholars. Every member of the College community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

The principles of academic integrity are required for a researcher, whether it is a student or teacher:

- Properly acknowledges and cites use of the ideas, results, material or words of others.
- Properly acknowledges all contributors to a given piece of work.
- Makes sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
- Obtains all data or results by ethical means and reports them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- Treats all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitates academic dishonesty by others nor obstructs their academic progress.

Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

**(i) Plagiarism** means the use of material, ideas, figures, code or data as one's own, without appropriately acknowledging the original source. This may involve submission of material, verbatim or paraphrased, that is authored by another person or published earlier by oneself. Be cautious to avoid so-called 'predatory journals' which publish papers with minimal or no review. It is unethical to publish in such journals of this nature.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Reproducing, in whole or part, text/sentences from a report, book, thesis, publication or the internet.
- Reproducing one's own previously published data, illustrations, figures, images, or someone else's data, etc.
- Taking material from class-notes or incorporating material from the internet graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other nontextual material from other sources into one's class reports, presentations, manuscripts, research papers or thesis without proper attribution.
- Self-plagiarism which constitutes copying verbatim from one's own earlier published work in a journal or conference proceedings without appropriate citations.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Paraphrasing or changing an author's words or style without citation.

## **(ii) Cheating**

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying during examinations, and copying of homework assignments, term papers, thesis or manuscripts.
- Allowing or facilitating copying, or writing a report or taking examination for someone else.
- Using unauthorized material, copying, collaborating when not authorized, and purchasing or borrowing papers or material from various sources.
- Fabricating (making up) or falsifying (manipulating) data and reporting them in thesis and publications.
- Creating sources, or citations that do not exist

- Signing another student's name on an assignment, report, research paper, thesis or attendance sheet.
- Using data fraud and all unacceptable forms of data manipulation, editing images to produce a false result, creating images artificially and presenting them as data or using the same figure or table to describe different works.

Individual and Collective Responsibility: The responsibility varies with the role one plays.

a) **Student roles:** Before submitting a research paper/ assignment, the student is responsible for plagiarism checking using software that is available in the college library. A web check does not necessarily rule out plagiarism. If a student observes or becomes aware of any violations of the academic integrity policy, he/she is strongly encouraged to report the misconduct in a timely manner to the Ethics Committee.

b) **Faculty roles:** Faculty members should ensure that proper methods are followed in the research paper. In addition, they should review research paper carefully. Faculty members are also responsible for ensuring personal compliance with the above broad issues relating to academic integrity. Faculty members are expected to inform students of the College academic integrity policy within their specific courses, to ensure academic honesty, and to respond and report appropriately and timely to violations of academic integrity to the Ethics Committee

c) **Institution roles:** A breach of academic integrity is a serious offence with long lasting consequences for both the individual and the College, and this can lead to various sanctions. In the case of a student the first violation of academic breach will lead to a warning. A repeat offence, if deemed sufficiently serious, could lead to expulsion. It is recommended that faculty should bring all academic violations to the notice of the Ethics Committee. Upon receipt of reports of scientific misconduct, on the recommendation of the Ethics Committee, the Principal may appoint a committee to investigate the matter and suggest appropriate measures on a case-by-case basis.

### PROCEDURES FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

This Policy is envisaged to employ procedures for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, as well as any other kind of misconduct as described in this document, against its staffs and students.

(i) **Corrective action:**

- If a publication or report/thesis is found to contain plagiarism or manipulated data, a correction or retraction is published in the same place as the original paper.
- If a decision is found to have been made based on a bias or conflict of interest, then it should be overturned and the process must be repeated from first step, if necessary.
- In general, every effort must be made to ensure that an unethical action does not succeed in propagating false knowledge or incorrect decisions.

(ii) **Punitive action:**

This covers not just misconduct involving data and publication, but also harassment, discrimination and other issues covered in this document. Such cases will be dealt by the Ethics Committee. Punitive action communicates not just to the violator, but also to society at large, that unethical behaviour is unacceptable. The degree of punishment should be carefully

calibrated in proportion to the offence. First-time offenders, particularly, if the offence is minor or unintentional and the offender is inexperienced, may be let off with a warning. Serious, multiple or repeated offences must be treated with utmost seriousness. Large-scale ethical violations should be met with severe disciplinary action and, if appropriate, the Principal can take or recommend disciplinary action from higher authorities. All such punishments shall be ratified by the College Council.

