

ILISIMATUSARFIK'S GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

General and Greenland-specific guidelines for good research practice – for Ilisimatusarfik's employees, affiliated researchers and visiting scholars



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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines determine what is considered ethical research practice at Ilisimatusarfik. It is expected that both Ilisimatusarfik's employees, affiliated researchers and visiting scholars comply with these guidelines and take in to consideration which points are relevant in their own research projects.

In addition, students at Ilisimatusarfik will be introduced to the principles of responsible research practice and integrity in research. This especially applies to the teaching of graduate students. In addition, it is mandatory for the PhD School to offer courses in research ethics for Ilisimatusarfik's PhD students. It is also mandatory for Ilisimatusarfik's PhD students to participate in these courses.

According to Naalakkersuisut's national research strategy (Forskning – vejen til udvikling - Grønlands nationale forskningsstrategi 2022-2030), national research ethics guidelines must be implemented as soon as possible. This has led, among other things, to the work carried out under the Illeqqussaasut project. The guidelines in this document have been developed independently of these future national guidelines. Ilisimatusarfik's guidelines for ethical research will be updated and adapted when the national guidelines and the guidelines developed through the Illeqqussaasut project have been implemented.

The guidelines are divided into two sections. The first section describes general research ethics and is based on international standards of good research practice:

- [The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(2014\)](#)
- [The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity \(2010\)](#)
- [The Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations \(2013\)](#)
- [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(2011\)](#)

The second section describes distinctive research ethics that apply to research in Greenland. These are based on standards for research, especially applicable to the Arctic and Greenland, as well as research in and around indigenous peoples:

- [Inuit Circumpolar Councils "Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for Equitable and Ethical Engagement" \(2022\)](#)
- [U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committees "Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic" \(2018\)](#)

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

This section describes general guidelines for ethical research practice. It is important that the researcher considers how and whether to relate to each point in their project. In addition, the researcher must consider how their research planning and chosen methods can minimize any ethical research risks.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND EXECUTION

The researcher must incorporate responsible research practice both in the planning of research projects and during the actual data collection.

- The researcher must familiarize themselves with any [requirements for research permits in Greenland](#).
- During data collection, especially applicable to interviews, informed consent must be obtained.
 - Ilisimatusarfik's templates for consent forms can be used.
- If data are collected by questionnaire, the following information shall be provided at the beginning of the questionnaire:
 - What the project is about



- What the collected data will be used for
- Whether and how anonymity is ensured.
- Be aware of further conditions if research is conducted with children and vulnerable persons.
 - For interview and data collection, in addition to the consent of the person himself, approval must be obtained from the parent or guardian.
 - If you create questionnaires that contain questions about vulnerable topics, approval should also be obtained from parents or guardians.
- If you as a teacher or guest lecturer wish to collect data among Ilisimatusarfik's employees or students, this must be approved by both the head of department and the head of institute. In addition, extra attention must be paid to obtaining informed consent.
 - Furthermore, as a lecturer/teacher or guest lecturer, it is important to exercise caution to avoid misusing authority over students concerning data collection or enlisting them as survey respondents. It is essential to request student participation in a context where it is evident that the lecturer is not asking in their capacity as lecturer, and the students have the liberty to decline without any repercussions.
 - For example, as a researcher or guest lecturer, you should never use the classroom or teaching or guidance situations for data collection or "recruitment" of respondents. Unless it is for a projects/study of a purely internal nature, i.e. for use in the development of student services, student guidance, study programs or the like.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Once empirical data has been collected, the researcher must ensure that it is both processed and stored securely and in accordance with the agreements that have been made.

- The researcher must familiarize himself with the requirements for data processing that exist in the Personal Data Act for Greenland.
- All collected empirical data may only be used for what has been consented to.
 - This also applies if new research is to be carried out with the empirical data in question or if the data is to be used for teaching.
- Primary material should be stored safely and for as long as may be needed.
 - It must be possible to provide access to non-confidential material.
 - For employees at Ilisimatusarfik it is the responsibility of the workplace to provide access to secure servers and lockers.
- When data is no longer to be stored, it must be disposed of in a safe manner.
- Employees must make agreements with their immediate manager about what will happen to research data when the researcher leaves the institution.

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

For the researcher, the actual publication of research results and the subsequent dissemination of these results must, just as much as the implementation of the research, follow good research ethical practice.

- The researcher has a duty to publish their research results.
- In their communication choices, the researcher must be aware of how research results can benefit society as much as possible.
- When publishing, the usual rules must be observed that correct references are used, and only reliable data is used.

- If you speak to the media as a researcher, it may only be done in areas that lie within your own professional field. In addition, it must always be made clear what is based on professional expertise and what are personal views.
- If a researcher's results are expected to have major consequences for specific institutions, the researcher may consider whether these institutions should be notified before publication or possibly statements to the media.

AUTHORSHIP

The researcher should be aware that everyone who has contributed to the research is credited and or added as an author.

- All persons who contributed significant portions of the publication should be recognized as the author or otherwise credited.
 - Including contributions to idea, design, analysis, interpretation, translation, special knowledge, and critical revision.
- An author must always be able to identify which parts of a publication he or she has been responsible for, as well as which parts co-authors are responsible for.
- (Co)authors always have the right to reject authorship if they disagree with methods or conclusions.
 - Here, however, significant contributions should still be reported, possibly during thanksgivings.
- Disagreements about authorship should, as far as possible, be assessed by an impartial party.
 - In the case of researchers at Ilisimatusarfik, disagreements can be settled in the Academic Council.
 - If it comes to disagreements between researchers at different universities, this should be raised with the researchers' closest, impartial leader at the two institutions.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION

When collaborating with international universities, the researcher must firstly be aware that Ilisimatusarfik benefits from the collaboration and secondly that the collaborator does not compromise what at Ilisimatusarfik is considered good research ethics.

- A research collaboration with an external party must be adequately described in a written agreement.
- An external party may contribute to the definition of research themes and questions, but scientific methods should be chosen solely based on scientific considerations and the researcher should be able to vouch for the scientific method.
- The researcher must have the freedom to present their research as the researcher wishes.
- For quality assurance purposes, Ilisimatusarfik's researchers must have full access to data provided or held by an external party, if the research is based on this.
- Funding and other resources from an external party must be provided to a unit at the university and not directly to the individual researcher.
- If researchers at Ilisimatusarfik collaborate with international partners, they must be extra aware that Ilisimatusarfik and/or Greenlandic society benefit from the collaboration.
 - This is due to the fact that Ilisimatusarfiks on the one hand has limited resources, but on the other hand, in certain contexts can be a very attractive partner. Thereby, there may be an increased risk that Ilisimatusarfik is used in cooperation agreements as a "token" partner without real influence.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

During all research-related work, as far as possible, there should be full disclosure of any conflicts of interest. This allows financial or other interests to be assessed on an informed basis.



- Conflicts of interest are situations where financial or other interests may compromise or influence the scientific assessment.
 - The decisive factor is not whether an influence actually occurs, but whether there may be grounds for suspicion, justified or unjustified, of such influence.
- All parties involved in a research project should disclose any possible conflict of interest.
- Evaluators of research and research applications who have a conflict of interest must withdraw from involvement in the process surrounding the case in question.
- In the event of disagreement regarding a conflict of interest, the parties may take the matter to the Academic Council
 - The Academic Council must seek the opinions of the parties involved and come to a decision.
 - During the process, it is the responsibility of the Academic Council to ensure confidentiality in relation to the parties and, if applicable, empirical data

PRACTICE IN THE EVENT OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT AND QUESTIONABLE RESEARCH PRACTICE

In cases involving suspicion of research misconduct or questionable research practice, Iisimatusarfik must have a process for handling such accusations. It must also be clear what possible sanctions in such cases may be.

- Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism committed intentionally or with gross negligence in planning, conducting or reporting research.
 - Fabrication: Undisclosed construction of data or substitution with fictitious data.
 - Falsification: The manipulation of research material, equipment or processes and the alteration or omission of data or results which makes research appear misleading.
 - Plagiarism: Appropriation of other people's ideas, processes, results, text, or particular concepts without rightful attribution.
- Questionable research practice is defined as breaches of generally accepted standards for responsible conduct of research, including Iisimatusarfik's guidelines for ethical research.
- In cases concerning suspicion of scientific misconduct or questionable research practice, Iisimatusarfik's Academic Council must conduct an investigation.
 - If the Council chooses to establish a panel to conduct the study, the members of this panel must be impartial and should possess professional competencies in the specific research areas as well as extensive knowledge of responsible conduct of research.
 - Where possible, one or more of these persons should have previous experience in cases of research misconduct and/or breaches of responsible research practice.
- The parties to the proceedings should be directly involved in the handling of the case by being given the opportunity to comment on the material of the investigation and by being regularly informed of the progress of the case.
- Parties to proceedings should, as far as possible, be protected by:
 - Whistle-blowers being protected from reprisals.
 - Complaints presented solely in bad faith (as harassment) should in themselves be considered a breach of responsible research practice.
 - The identities of the parties shall be kept confidential as far as possible.
 - Similar cases/cases should be treated equally.
 - The procedures for the investigation should be publicly available.
 - Cases should be closed effectively so that no person is party to an investigation for longer than strictly necessary.
- In such cases, research misconduct or questionable research practice is found, sanctions may, depending on the nature of the case, range from:

- Information to the immediate leader about the case, for the purpose of reprimand, warning or, in particularly serious cases, dismissal or expulsion (dismissal and expulsion can only be used as a sanction in cases of research misconduct and not in cases of questionable research practice).
- Recommendation for the withdrawal of scientific work
- Information to the grantor, in this case the research is based on external funds.
- Report to the police if it is a criminal offence (does not apply to cases involving only questionable research practice)

SPECIAL ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH IN GREENLAND

For research in Greenland, there are special ethical considerations that researchers should include in their project. This is due to the special conditions that apply, firstly around Greenland as a unique society with a very small population spread over a very large area, and secondly because research in Greenland will often involve an indigenous people with a unique culture and heritage.

ACCOUNTABILITY

As a researcher, you must be particularly aware of the responsibility you have when collecting empirical data in Greenlandic society and the not always obvious position you can have as a researcher.

- The researcher must pay special attention to recognizing collaborators who have contributed original or local knowledge. Such recognition must be done with consent.
- Greenland is a small and closely connected community. It may therefore be more difficult to ensure anonymity, which the researcher should pay special attention to.
 - Even with what in other cases would be a normal degree of anonymization, individuals can easily become recognizable, this is therefore a critical point that should be taken into consideration.
- As an international researcher in Greenland, you are part of a long and not always positive research history that is closely linked to colonial history. As an international researcher, you can therefore carry a colonial history that is not necessarily obvious to the researcher himself. Considerations about how the researcher is considered and how this may be accommodated must be taken into account when conducting research in Greenland.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication is always important in research, but especially for research in Greenland, the researcher should be extra careful to avoid "hit-and-run"/"fly-in-fly-out" research. As far as possible, all research projects must have an increased focus on how the new knowledge created can become accessible information and benefit either the local community or Greenlandic society in general.

- Researchers must pay special attention to communicating expectations, purposes, and potential outcomes throughout the duration of the project. This is especially true of communication with local communities and research objects to avoid the danger of hit-and-run research.
- Likewise, results should be shared, preferably with personal presence, with the communities being researched before being shared more widely.
 - This is especially important when the results risk being controversial.
 - In addition, research results should be made easily accessible to local communities that have been researched.
- The researcher should stay informed and coordinate their fieldwork so that it does not interfere with any hunting seasons or cultural events.
- The researcher must pay special attention to the role of language in their research, both in relation to effective communication and for data collection.
 - Language can have a special cultural status and should not be thought of simply as a communication tool. The use of either Greenlandic, Danish, English or a fourth language can have a major effect, both on empirical collection, but also on research results.

RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND PEOPLES



As a researcher, you should be open to the knowledge that can be gained by involving local people and indigenous and local knowledge as well as how to relate to this field in your own research.

- As a researcher, one should be open to new points of view and pay special attention to recognizing differences and biases when discussing analysis and interpretation of data and observations with local people.
- Arctic indigenous peoples have unique knowledge and understanding of their homelands and can be valuable collaborators with researchers.
- As a researcher in Greenland, you have a duty to familiarize yourself with, have knowledge about and relate to indigenous and local knowledge as a field of knowledge.

INVOLVE LOCAL PEOPLE AND BUILD AND MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

As a researcher, you should, as far as possible, involve the local community and/or local institutions throughout your research process. This is both to ensure ethical research practice, but also to ensure that one's research can take place on the best possible basis, and to help obtain reliable empirical data.

- As a researcher, you should consider whether and how to involve local people or local institutions in your research planning and data collection.
- Local people can be of help, both by contributing with relevant knowledge, but also with good advice for the best and least invasive forums for collecting data – be it language, surroundings or ways of meeting interviewees.
- As an international researcher, you should involve local researchers for input and advice.
- The researcher should spend time building and maintaining the relationships made with the local community.

FINALLY

Questions about Ilisimatusarfik's guidelines for ethical research can be directed to Ilisimatusarfik's research coordinator (clss@uni.gl).

Questions about research in Greenland in general can be directed to Arctic Hub (arctichub.gl)