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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

5 June 2026

MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. ECLV-26-021

TO : Deans, Directors, Heads of Units,
UP Diliman Faculty, REPS, Staff, and Students

SUBJECT : Announcement of the Reliance Agreement between UP Diliman and UP Manila
on the Ethical Review of Research Protocols Requiring PHREB Level 2
Accreditation

The University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB), established under Administration Order No. ECLV-24-084 dated 27 June 2024, received Level 1 Accreditation from the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB), effective from 03 October 2025 to 02 October 2026. This accreditation authorizes the UPD REB to review all research protocols except those involving Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) or Indigenous Peoples (IPs), which require Level 2 accreditation, and those involving clinical trials intended for FDA registration, which require Level 3 accreditation.

Given that UP Diliman faculty members, REPS, staff, and students regularly conduct studies involving ICCs/IPs, the UPD REB entered into a Reliance Agreement with the University of the Philippines Manila Research Ethics Board (UPMREB). The Reliance Agreement, Administrative Order No. PAJ-26-38 dated 09 March 2026, is a provisional arrangement "effective for a period of one (1) year from the date of signing and may be renewed upon mutual agreement of the concerned Constituent Universities, subject to the re-evaluation of the Terms of Reference." Under this agreement, the "UPD REB and UPMREB shall work jointly to ensure appropriate ethical review coverage for the types of protocols submitted by UP Diliman stakeholders that fall under Level 2 requirements."

Notably, the Reliance Agreement enables the "UPD REB to rely on the expertise and Level 3 PHREB accreditation of UPMREB for the ethical review of research protocols submitted by UP Diliman stakeholders that involve ICCs/IPs." Although the UPM REB holds a Level 3 PHREB accreditation, the Reliance Agreement provides only a provisional arrangement for the interim review of research protocols involving ICCs/IPs until the UPD REB receives its own Level 2 accreditation from PHREB. As such, the UPD REB cannot conduct an ethical review of research protocols involving clinical trials and studies for a regulatory agency's marketing authorization of food.

For the perusal of all UP Diliman stakeholders, attached is a copy of Administrative Order No. PAJ-26-38, "Reliance Agreement between UP Diliman and UP Manila on the Ethical Review of Research Protocols requiring PHREB Level 2 Accreditation."


EDGARDO CARLO L. VISTAN, II
Chancellor



University of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. PAJ 26-38

TO : **JOEL JOSEPH S. MARCIANO, JR., Ph.D.**
Vice President for Research and Innovation

EDGARDO CARLO L. VISTAN II, LLM
Chancellor, University of the Philippines Diliman

MICHAEL L. TEE, M.D., MHPed, MBA
Chancellor, University of the Philippines Manila

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Vice Chancellor for Research, UP Manila

MARIA CORAZON A. DE UNGRIA, Ph.D.
Chair, UP Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB)

CECILIA A. JIMENO, M.D.
Overall Chair, UP Manila Research Ethics Board (UPMREB)

SUBJECT : **RELIANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN UP DILIMAN AND UP MANILA ON THE ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH PROTOCOLS REQUIRING PHREB LEVEL 2 ACCREDITATION**

DATE : **09 March 2026**

I. Background

The University of the Philippines Diliman is committed to ensuring that all research conducted within the University, or by its constituents, adheres to national and international ethical standards that protect the dignity, welfare, and rights of human participants while upholding scientific integrity.

This mandate, implemented through the establishment and operation of the UP Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB), is consistent with Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10532, or the Philippine National Health Research System (PNHRS) Act of 2013, which affirms adherence to “universal ethical principles that value the protection and promotion of the dignity of health

research participants.” It likewise conforms to R.A. No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, which provides that personal information processed for research may be exempt from certain requirements of the law, provided that such processing remains compliant with established ethical and legal standards. As clarified in Advisory Opinion No. 2018-054 of the National Privacy Commission, adherence to these standards may be demonstrated by securing approval from a duly recognized Research Ethics Committee (REC), Institutional Review Board (IRB), or Ethics Board (EB) for the research protocol, including any request for a waiver of the informed consent requirement for research purposes.

The UP System recognizes these national mandates through the following issuances:

1. Memorandum No. TJH 2019–07A issued on 13 February 2019, provides:
“Constituent Universities (CUs) that still do not have Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) accredited research ethics boards (REBs) or research ethics committees (RECs) are reminded to establish such bodies, provide the necessary support for the same and to have these bodies apply for Level 1 PHREB accreditation at the soonest possible time to enable researchers to process sensitive personal information (information relating to education, health, age/birth date, civil status, etc.) pursuant to the opinion of the NPC that sensitive personal information is not covered by the exemptions listed under 4d of the Act.”
2. Memorandum No. OVPA 2020-145, issued on 30 November 2020, reiterates that all research involving human participants must undergo an ethics review and receive the appropriate ethics clearance prior to their implementation. It emphasizes the constitution of a CU-wide Research Ethics Committee or Board duly accredited by the PHREB.

II. Establishment of the UPD Research Ethics Board

In 2023, the University of the Philippines Diliman constituted the UP Diliman Research Ethics Committee pursuant to the Project entitled “The Establishment of a University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Committee under the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Development.” In 2024, this initiative was continued and expanded through the “Project for the Operationalization of the University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB),” under which the Committee was formally redesignated as the UP Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB). UPD REB was officially established and commenced its mandate on 1 July 2024.

Since its inception, UPD REB has sought the support and mentorship of the UP Manila Research Ethics Board (UPMREB) in capacitating its technical and administrative personnel, specifically in: (1) the foundational principles of research and research ethics; (2) the operations and management of protocol submissions; (3) the formulation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); and (4) the preparation of accreditation documents required by the PHREB. UPMREB likewise provided assistance in identifying and selecting qualified panel reviewers from among the UP Diliman faculty, research and extension personnel (REPS), administrative staff, and non-institutional experts.

This collaborative arrangement remains in effect and continues to guide the operational strengthening of the UPD REB as it prepares to pursue PHREB Level 2 accreditation, following

the conferment of its PHREB Level 1 accreditation effective 03 October 2025 to 02 October 2026.

III. Reliance Agreement

Based on the PHREB Policies and Requirements for Accreditation of Research Ethics Committees issued on 1 July 2024, the sole distinction between Level 1 and Level 2 accreditation pertains to the review of research protocols involving Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs), which require Level 2 accreditation. Accordingly, with its Level 1 accreditation, the UPD REB is authorized to review all research protocols except those involving ICCs/IPs and clinical trials. Level 3 accreditation is required for the review of clinical trials, a category for which the UPD REB does not seek accreditation.

Considering that UP Diliman faculty, REPS, staff and students regularly conduct studies involving ICCs/IPs, and recognizing that the full PHREB accreditation process typically requires approximately one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of complete application documents, as provided under the 2020 PHREB Policies and Requirements for Accreditation of Research Ethics Committees, UPD REB and UPMREB agree to enter into a Reliance Agreement as a provisional arrangement until the UPD REB obtains its Level 2 accreditation from PHREB. Under this interim arrangement, the UPD REB and UPMREB shall work jointly to ensure appropriate ethical review coverage for the types of protocols submitted by UP Diliman stakeholders that fall under Level 2 requirements. Under this agreement:

1. UPD REB shall rely on the expertise and Level 3 PHREB accreditation of UPMREB for the ethical review of research protocols submitted by UP Diliman stakeholders that involve ICCs/IPs. All such protocols shall be classified for Full Board review due to the heightened need for scrutiny of procedures for securing free and prior informed consent (FPIC), exercising cultural sensitivity, and respecting traditional laws in accordance with Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, and Republic Act No. 11054, or the Bangsamoro Organic Law of 2019. For the duration of this interim arrangement, UPMREB shall provide oversight to the UPD REB in the conduct of ethical review of these protocols, ensuring full compliance with applicable national and institutional guidelines issued by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs (MIPA). MIPA serves ICCs/IPs within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), whereas NCIP covers all ICCs/IPs in the rest of the Philippines. This mechanism is essential to safeguard the rights and interests of ICCs/IPs, particularly in matters affecting their ancestral domains, cultural heritage, and knowledge systems.
2. All actions of UPD REB related to the ethical review, approval, and implementation of research protocols requiring Level 2 accreditation, will be finalized and approved by the UPMREB.
3. UPD REB and UPMREB shall serve as co-signatory REBs for all ethics clearances issued to UP Diliman Principal Investigators (PIs) for research protocols involving ICCs/IPs. This arrangement affirms the oversight function and approving authority of the UPMREB, whereby the Overall Chair and/or the Coordinator of UPMREB shall actively participate in the deliberations conducted by UP Diliman faculty, REPS, staff

and non-institutional panel reviewers who have been duly trained by providers recognized by the PHREB Committee on Information Dissemination, Training, and Advocacy (PHREB CIDTA).

4. The UPMREB shall be compensated for each review of research protocol in UP Diliman and each attendance in UPD REB meetings, including the Protocol Review Management Meetings, at the same rates provided in the Administrative Order No. ECLV-24-085, "Honoraria and Fees for the University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB) Personnel".

IV. Other Governing Provisions

The constituents of UP Diliman are in urgent need of research ethics review services in order to comply with applicable legal and administrative issuances, meet the requirements of funding agencies, satisfy the ethical prerequisites for publication in reputable academic journals, and uphold the fundamental responsibility of producing high-quality research that protects the rights, welfare, and dignity of human participants.

This Administrative Order is therefore issued with the endorsement of the Chancellors of both Constituent Universities. The terms of the Reliance Agreement are set forth in the Terms of Reference, attached hereto as Annex "A," and shall form an integral part of this Administrative Order.

Commensurate with the oversight services provided by UPMREB to UPD REB, UP Diliman commits to extending technological and infrastructural resources to the UPMREB, as may be necessary, to support enhanced efficiency in research ethics review workflows and processes. Likewise, UP Manila shall make available its developed resources and capacities to the UPD REB to support the continuous improvement of its review processes and related services, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness and efficiency of research ethics governance across both Constituent Universities.

The Agreement shall be effective for a period of one (1) year from the date of signing and may be renewed upon mutual agreement of the concerned Constituent Universities, subject to the re-evaluation of the Terms of Reference. The Agreement shall automatically terminate upon UPD REB receipt of PHREB Level 2 accreditation, or upon the expiration or revocation of UPMREB PHREB accreditation, whichever occurs first.

The UPD and UPM shall submit a progress report every three (3) months to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation of the University of the Philippines, commencing from the date of issuance of this Administrative Order until expiration or termination of this Agreement.

This Administrative Order supersedes, insofar as the provisions hereof are inconsistent therewith, all prior administrative orders, memoranda, issuances, rules, and regulations of the University on the same subject matter.


ANGELO A. JIMENEZ
President

**ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
UP DILIMAN and UP MANILA RELIANCE AGREEMENT**

PARTY 1	Name of Unit	University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB)
	Address of Unit	Room 238, Natural Sciences Research Institute (NSRI), Miranda Hall, Quirino Ave, cor. P. Velasquez St., Diliman, Quezon City, 1101
	Name of the authorized representative	MARIA CORAZON A. DE UNGRIA, Ph.D.
	Position/Title	Chair, UPD REB

PARTY 2	Name of Unit	University of the Philippines Manila Research Ethics Board (UPMREB)
	Address of Unit	Room 126, National Institutes of Health, UP Manila, 623 Pedro Gil Street, Ermita, Manila, 1000
	Name of the authorized representative	CECILIA A. JIMENO, M.D.
	Position/Title	Overall Chair, UPMREB

RESPONSIBILITIES OF UPD REB

1. UPD REB will facilitate and perform the ethical review of research proposals and protocols that require Level 1 and 2 PHREB Accreditation submitted by Faculty Members, Research, Extension, and Professional Staff (REPS), and administrative personnel of UP Diliman. All levels of student research that necessitate an ethical review of protocols before project implementation will also be accepted.
2. All matters concerning the ethical review and approval of research protocols involving ICCs/IPs, all of which require Level 2 accreditation will be jointly performed with UPMREB, specifically on the execution and issuance of the following:
 - Deliberation and decision, e.g., approved with modifications, disapproved, or deferred, with UPD REB Regular members
 - Review, finalization, and approval of the minutes of Full Board meetings involving protocols that require a Level 2 accreditation

- Review, finalization, and approval of the Notice of Panel Action for Level 2 protocols prior to its transmittal to Principal Investigators
 - Review and approve Level 2 post-approval submissions: resubmissions, protocol amendments, protocol deviations, continuing review applications, study terminations, final reports, and reported negative events.
3. UPD REB policies and procedures will be followed in declaring Reportable Negative Events (RNEs). Both UPD REB and UPMREB will address accountability for any negative and adverse event that arises from Level 2 protocols.
 4. Handle and decide on all appeals related to Level 2 protocols conjunctly with UPMREB. Principal Investigators shall not be allowed to communicate directly with UPMREB for any inquiries, contentions, or petitions to reconsider the decision to disapprove and not accord ethics clearance.
 5. Ensure the proper documentation of, and compliance with, the confidentiality rule, conflict of interest measures, policy on informed consent, and other management plans related to these documents.
 6. Manage the processing of monetary compensation, e.g., release of honoraria and incentives, to UPMREB Review Members for each review of research protocols in UP Diliman and each attendance in UPD REB meetings, including the protocol review management meetings (PRMM), following the same rates provided in Administrative Order No. ECLV-24-085, "Honoraria and Fees for the University of the Philippines Diliman Research Ethics Board (UPD REB) Personnel".
 7. Provide administrative and technological assistance to UPMREB for system development and in processing their renewal application for Level 3 PHREB Accreditation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UPMREB

1. Provide oversight of the ethics review processes to UPD REB and ensure its compliance with the National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants (NEGRIHP 2022) and international ethical standards, procedures, and other applicable policies and laws, for research protocols that involve ICCs/IPs.
2. Review and approve the issuances of certification of approval or notice of UPD REB panel action and decision for Level 2 protocols before this is communicated to the Principal Investigator.
3. UPMREB will serve as a co-signatory to all ethical clearances released by the UPD REB to UP Diliman Principal Investigators with research needing Level 2 accreditation. This complies with the legal stipulation that only a duly accredited Level 2 REC/B can perform the ethical review of protocols and grant certification of ethics clearance for studies involving IPs/ICCs.

4. Attend the monthly Protocol Review Management Meeting (PRMM) and Full Board Meeting to guide the UPD REB's conduct of ethics review of research protocols needing Level 2 accreditation. UPMREB shall provide feedback to ensure that reviews are performed accordingly and in adherence to all guidelines and regulations in place.
5. All UPD REB actions and decisions related to the ethical review of research protocols, requiring Level 2 accreditation, will be finalized in close coordination with and approval of the UPMREB.

PARTY 1:

MARIA CORAZON A. DE UNGRIA, Ph.D.
Chair, UPD Research Ethics Board

Date:

Endorsed by:

CARL MICHAEL F. ODULIO, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Research and Development
UP Diliman

Date:

Approved by:

EDGARDO CARLO L. VISTAN II, LL.M.
Chancellor, UP Diliman

Date:

PARTY 2:

CECILIA A. JIMENO, M.D.
Overall Chair, UPM Research Ethics Board

Date:

LESLIE MICHELLE M. DALMACIO, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Research
UP Manila

Date:

MICHAEL L. TEE, M.D., MHPed, MBA
Chancellor, UP Manila

Date: 18 FEB 2026