

Essay Competition 2024

Title: What should be the role of ethics in guiding Malaysian policy makers and researchers in relation to research into health and climate change?

This essay competition is held in conjunction with the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research 2024 (GFBR 2024) which will take place in Kuala Lumpur in November this year. Universiti Malaya is collaborating with the GFBR to organise the event.

The GFBR 2024 topic focuses specifically on the ethics of research into health and climate change with a particular emphasis on low-and middle-income countries (LMICs). Research in this area usually involves the use of scientific methods to generate data with the aim of better understanding the impacts of climate change on health. This might include the impact on the health of humans as well as non-human aspects (such as animals, plants and the environment) of the planet. Researchers might also be interested in identifying better ways to protect and promote human and non-human health in the face of climate change.

The interdependency of human and non-human health means that research into health and climate change is not restricted to what we would understand as traditional medical, health or life sciences research. Research findings from areas not traditionally associated with health care, such as environmental science, entomology, the veterinary sciences and climatology may be relevant.

Therefore, in relation to this topic, GFBR takes a very broad approach to concepts of health. This essay competition adopts the same broad approach. Although the literature on research ethics is well-developed, particularly in relation to health research involving human participants, the literature specifically on the ethics of research into health and climate change is far less so. Significantly, given the importance of Indigenous perspectives and voices in climate change, the perspectives and forms of knowledge that stand outside western scientific traditions are also considered valuable.

The purpose of this essay competition is to encourage students to think critically about ethical issues associated with research into health and climate change. More specifically, the competition aims to provide a platform for students to pen down their thoughts on the role of ethics in guiding Malaysian policy makers and researchers in this area.

For more information please visit: <https://seabioethics.com/>



Rules

1. The Essay Competition is open to all full-time and part-time university students who are currently registered with any university in Malaysia.

2. There are two categories of essay submissions:

- a. Undergraduate students
- b. Postgraduate students.

3. The word limit for each category is as follows:

- a. Undergraduate category –2,500 words
- b. Postgraduate category –3,500 words

All footnotes in the essay are to be included as part of the word count. The word count must be stated at the end of the essay.

4. Essays must be written in English by a sole author.

5. Essays should be the author's original unpublished work. The use of generative AI tools (eg. ChatGPT) is not permitted.

6. Essays are to be submitted as a single file in pdf format and emailed to the Project Manager at seabion@um.edu.my with the subject line "Essay Competition 2024". The typeface is Times New Roman, 12 font size with 1.5 line spacing. Please present all references as footnotes. The formatting specification for footnotes is Times New Roman, 10 font size with single line spacing.

7. Submissions must include a cover page containing the following information:

- a. Name:
- b. University:
- c. Faculty:
- d. Level of study: *Undergraduate or postgraduate (please state)*
- e. Matric number:
- f. Email address: *Student's email address provided by the university*
- g. Contact number:

8. The deadline for submission is **5th August 2024**.

Results

There will be two winners for each category. The winners will be announced on the SEA Bioethics Network website in late September 2024 and notified through their university email address.

Prizes

1. The two winners for each category will receive complimentary registration for entry into GFBR 2024.

2. The first prize essay for each category will be published on the GFBR website.

3. The first prize winner for each category will receive RM500. The second prize winner will receive RM300.

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Suggested Preliminary Reading

1. Sheather J. Ethical issues arising in research into health and climate change. Background paper commissioned by Global Forum on Bioethics in Research. 2024.
2. Sheather J, Littler K, Singh JA, Wright K. Ethics, climate change and health - a landscape review. Wellcome Open Res. 2023 Aug 14;8:343. doi: 10.12688/wellcomeopenres.19490.1. PMID: 37692130; PMCID: PMC10483174.
3. Samuel G, Richie C, Reimagining research ethics to include environmental sustainability: a principled approach, including a case study of data-driven health research. Journal of Medical Ethics 2023;49:428-433.
4. Romanello M (et al). The 2023 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: the imperative for a health-centred response in a world facing irreversible harms. The Lancet 2023; 402:2346-2394.

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