



# Qatar-Specific Research & Data Protection Regulations

## ORYX UNIVERSITY

*In Partnership with Liverpool John Moores University*

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### Version History

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## What This Document Is

This document is a **practical guide** that brings together all the key Qatari laws, regulations, and cultural considerations that affect how we conduct research at Oryx University. It translates complex legal requirements into clear, actionable steps for researchers.

## Why We Use It

### 1. To Stay Legal

Qatar has its own data protection laws (Law No. 13 of 2016) and research regulations that differ from other countries. This document helps you:

- Understand what personal data you can collect
- Know how to store and protect participant information
- Follow correct procedures for sensitive data (health, genetic, religious)

### 2. To Get Research Approved

Before any research starts, ethics committees (IRB) and regulators (like MoPH) need to see that you've followed Qatari rules. This document guides you through:

- Obtaining proper informed consent (bilingual English/Arabic)
- Completing required assessments (like Data Protection Impact Assessments)
- Getting approvals from the right bodies

### 3. To Protect Participants and Researchers

Research involves real people with rights. This document helps you:

- Respect participant privacy and data rights
- Respond to requests (access, correction, deletion) within required timeframes
- Handle cultural considerations that build trust with participants

### 4. To Enable International Collaboration

When sharing data with partners outside Qatar, you must follow specific transfer rules. This document explains:

- When you need approval to send data abroad
- What safeguards must be in place
- How to document transfers properly

## 5. To Maintain Our University's Reputation

Following these regulations demonstrates our commitment to ethical, high-quality research. It protects the university from legal risks and ensures our research meets national standards.

### When to Use This Document

- **Planning a new research project** - Check requirements before you start
- **Handling sensitive data** - Follow the enhanced protection guidelines
- **Working with international partners** - Review cross-border transfer rules
- **Engaging with Qatari participants** - Apply cultural considerations checklist

**Remember:** If you're unsure about any requirement, contact the Research Office for guidance. This document is your first step toward compliant, ethical, and culturally respectful research at Oryx University.

**Overview:** Qatar's Data Protection & Research Governance Landscape

#### Primary Legislation

Area	Legislation	Description
Data Protection (National)	Law No. 13 of 2016 on Personal Data Privacy Protection	Qatar's main data protection law; applies to all personal data of individuals within Qatar.
Data Protection (QFC)	QFC Data Protection Regulations (2011, amended 2021)	Applies only to Qatar Financial Centre regulated entities.
Research Ethics	Qatar National Research Strategy; Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Research Regulations	Governs ethical research, especially involving human subjects, health data, and biospecimens.
Biobanking	Qatar Biobank Ethics & Governance Framework	Regulates biospecimen collection, consent, storage, and use.

## Key Features of Qatar's Data Protection Framework

### Legal Principles

Qatar's Data Privacy Law (Law 13 of 2016) requires:

Principle	Requirement
Lawfulness & Transparency	Processing must be lawful and explained clearly to participants.
Purpose Limitation	Data collected only for specified, legitimate research purposes.
Data Minimization	Only the necessary data should be collected.

<b>Accuracy</b>	Personal data must be accurate and updated.
<b>Storage Limitation</b>	Data retained only for as long as necessary for research.
<b>Security Measures</b>	Appropriate technical and organizational safeguards required.

## Legal Bases for Processing (Qatar)

For research in Qatar, the valid legal bases generally include:

### 1. Consent (most common and strongly preferred)

- Must be **freely given, specific, informed, unambiguous**
- Must explain:
  - Purpose of research
  - Types of data collected
  - Data sharing, storage, retention
  - International data transfers
- Withdrawal must be possible at any time

### 2. Public Interest in Scientific Research

Used mainly in:

- Health research
- National developmental research
- MoPH-supervised studies

### 3. Legitimate Interests (rare for research)

May apply only if:

- Impact on data subjects is minimal
- Detailed legitimate interest assessment is documented

### 4. Special Category (Sensitive) Data in Qatar

Qatar law requires **enhanced protection** and **explicit consent** for:

- Health data
- Genetic and biometric data
- Religious beliefs

- Nationality and ethnicity
- Criminal information
- Children's data

For such data:

- **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** required for high-risk research
- **MoPH or Institutional IRB approval** required
- Additional safeguards must be documented

## 5. Data Subject Rights in Qatar

Researchers must be able to respond to:

Right	Description	Implication for Research
<b>Access</b>	Participants may request their data	Systems needed to retrieve records
<b>Rectification</b>	Correct inaccurate data	Must enable updates
<b>Erasure</b>	Request deletion	May be limited if research needs the data
<b>Restriction</b>	Limit use of data	Must technically enforce restrictions
<b>Objection</b>	Object to processing	Must assess and respond
<b>Withdrawal of Consent</b>	Stop use of their data	Must be easy and respected promptly

**Response time required:** *usually within 30 days*

## 6. Cross-Border Transfers (Qatar Rules)

Sending research data outside Qatar requires:

- **Adequate protection measures** (contracts, safeguards)
- **Regulatory approval** if required by MoPH or institutional policy
- **Participant notification and consent**
- Documentation showing transfer safeguards

If data includes:

- Genetic data
- Health records
- Biobank samples

Then Qatar Biobank / MoPH rules may require **explicit approval before export**.

## 7. Research Ethics Regulations in Qatar

### Key Regulatory Bodies

Body	Role
MoPH – Department of Clinical Research	Regulates biomedical and health-related research
Institutional IRBs (e.g., QU-IRB)	Approve non-clinical and social science research
Qatar Biobank Ethics Committee	Oversees biospecimen research
Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS)	Provides national priorities and research ethics guidelines

## 8. Research Requirements

- All human-subject research must obtain **IRB approval**
- Health-related studies require **MoPH approval**
- Biospecimen research follows **Qatar Biobank regulations**
- Informed consent must be **bilingual (English/Arabic)**
- Data protection compliance evaluated during ethics approval

## 9. Cultural Considerations — Qatar Research Checklist

### Cultural Sensitivity Checklist for Research Conducted in Qatar

Consideration	Guidance	✓
Gender Sensitivity	Same-gender researchers for interviews may be required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Involvement	Family may join consent discussions; respect collective decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious Practices	Avoid scheduling during prayer times; adjust timings during Ramadan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language	Provide materials in both <b>Arabic and English</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privacy Expectations	Very strong cultural expectations of privacy; ensure strict confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospitality Norms	Emphasize voluntariness; reduce perceived obligation to participate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hierarchical Relationships	Be cautious when researching employees or students	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Engagement	When appropriate, involve community leaders or local authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitive Topics	Extra caution for religion, politics, gender, family, health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual Materials	Ensure images and graphics are culturally appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>