

Leading the healthcare revolution ethically

By [Dr Nivisha Parag](#), issued by [Regent Business School](#)

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As healthcare becomes more complex and technology advances, it is crucial that leaders in the industry lead ethically to ensure the best possible outcomes for both patients and providers. This means approaching decisions with a focus on transparency, honesty, and fairness. It also involves considering the impact of decisions on all stakeholders involved, from patients to staff to shareholders. Leaders must uphold strong ethical values and hold themselves accountable for their actions and the actions of their teams.

Ethical leaders distinguish themselves from others through their unwavering dedication to upholding robust moral principles and fostering ethical behaviour in every facet of their leadership. The distinguishing behaviours that set these leaders apart encompass:



Dr Nivisha Parag, head of Healthcare Management Studies at Regent Business School

1. **Integrity:** They act ethically, transparently, and truthfully, which earns them trust and credibility from their followers, and aligns their actions with their values.
2. **Accountability:** Ethical leaders take responsibility for their actions and decisions; they do not shy away from admitting mistakes and strive to improve and learn from them.
3. **Fairness and justice:** They make decisions based on objective criteria and uphold principles of justice, thus creating an inclusive environment that respects diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
4. **Empathy and compassion:** Ethical leaders understand and empathise with the needs and concerns of their followers. They actively listen, show genuine care, and consider the well-being of individuals and the broader community. They foster a supportive and inclusive work culture.
5. **Ethical decision-making:** They consider the impact of their choices on various stakeholders, including employees, customers, the community, and the environment; frequently weighing ethical implications, seeking multiple perspectives, and making choices that align with their values.
6. **Ethical role modelling:** They consistently model ethical behaviour and encourage others to follow suit. Mentorship opportunities create platforms for others to see these traits in application in turn resulting in a desire to emulate them.
7. **Long-term orientation:** They consider the broader consequences of their actions and decisions, including their impact on future generations, the environment, and society as a whole.
8. **Ethical organisational culture:** Ethical leaders create and nurture an ethical organisational culture by establishing clear ethical standards, providing ethical guidance, and encouraging open communication surrounding ethical issues. This promotes a culture of ethical conduct and empowers employees to make ethically sound decisions.

An integral component of postgraduate studies is the undertaking of research in a desired field or sector pursuing scientific advancement. As leaders are obliged to demonstrate ethical behaviours, so too is research ethics of paramount importance in the field of scientific inquiry and academic research. It provides a set of guidelines and principles that ensure the protection of participants, maintaining the integrity of research findings, and upholding the trustworthiness and credibility of

the research process.

In May 2023, Prof Penelope Engel-Hills was invited to deliver a research ethics masterclass series to enrich and enlighten students and the wider [Regent Business School](#) community about the importance of research ethics and integrity. The webinar series spanned four weeks, during which she discussed numerous pertinent ethical principles, including the protection of human subjects to prioritise their well-being, rights, and dignity, through principles of informed consent, protection of personal information and rights to refuse participation.

The discussions further included integrity and validity of research, professionalism, trust and collaboration, by exploring the research philosophies and codes of conduct and practice that inform ethics in academic research, including the legal and regulatory compliance around research.

The social and cultural sensitivity of research cannot be understated. Ethical research requires consideration of the social, cultural, and contextual factors that may impact participants and the broader community. Examples presented during the masterclasses highlighted the importance of these considerations. Respecting diversity, cultural norms, and local practices are essential to conduct research in a responsible and ethical manner helping prevent exploitation, marginalisation, and biases in research.

With the lightning speed of digital, industrial and societal revolution, ethical research contributes to the development of innovative solutions, advancements in various fields, and the overall betterment of society.

At Regent Business School, we are committed to sound ethical practices in research and overall leadership study, and by upholding ethical standards, our students and future researchers can contribute to the advancement of knowledge while respecting the rights and well-being of all involved.

In the healthcare management realm especially, ethical leaders must strive to make a positive difference in the lives of others while upholding ethical principles. They inspire trust, foster a sense of purpose, and create environments where individuals can thrive and contribute to the greater good. The purpose-built nature of the Regent Business School MBA in Healthcare Management strives to instill these very principles in our present and future leaders, so that we can shape a future where ethical leadership and sound research ethics are at the forefront of practice, making a lasting impact on society.

By leading ethically in healthcare, leaders can build trust with their communities, improve patient satisfaction, and create a healthier and more productive work environment for providers. Ultimately, ethical leadership is essential to driving innovation while ensuring that patient care remains at the forefront of every decision made in the healthcare system.

For more information about Regent Business School's MBA in Healthcare Management please go to <https://regent.ac.za/programme/master-of-business-administration-in-healthcare-management>.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Nivisha Parag is head of Healthcare Management Studies at Regent Business School.

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