




### NOTIFICATION

On the recommendations of Academic Council made in its 20<sup>th</sup> (1/2024) meeting held on 16.02.2024, the Syndicate in its 65<sup>th</sup> (1/2024) meeting held on 28.02.2024 has approved the "University Research Integrity Policy 2024" (Annex-'A').

  
(WAQAR AHMAD)  
Additional Registrar (General)

No. SU/Acad/24/174

Dated: 15.03.2024

Copy of the above is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor
- Deans of the Faculties
- Principals / Directors / Chairpersons / Incharges of Constituent Colleges / Institutes / School / Teaching Departments
- Controller of Examinations
- Director Implementation
- Director Academics
- Director QEC
- Director ORIC
- Director IT (with the request to upload on university website)
- Additional Treasurer-I
- Resident Auditor
- Resident Officer
- Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor
- PA to Registrar
- Notification file

## University Research Integrity Policy 2024

### 1. Introduction

The University of Sargodha, established through the University of Sargodha ACT, 2002, holds recognition from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and possesses the authority to confer degrees in accordance with the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002. Additionally, it is affiliated with esteemed bodies such as the Bar Council of Pakistan, Council of Architecture, National Council for Teacher Education, Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, and others. Currently, the university offers a diverse range of courses under the faculties of Engineering and Technology, Management, Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences, Law, Science, and Education.

Engaging in research and innovation entails a rigorous scientific endeavor aimed at uncovering truths and generating new knowledge that contributes to socioeconomic advancements for the global benefit. Unfortunately, there is a concerning rise in compromised publication ethics and a decline in academic integrity, affecting various research domains. It is imperative for students, researchers, faculty, and staff to uphold ethical and moral values in their academic pursuits. The expectation is that they produce and submit original and authentic work. In the current digital age, with a vast amount of information available online, plagiarism has emerged as a significant issue. The primary objective of the Policy on Academic and Research Integrity and Ethics established by the University of Sargodha is to enhance the quality of research within the institution and foster academic and research integrity, along with ethical practices.

### 2. Objectives

- 2.1. To facilitating the enhancement of research quality among faculty members and establishing a reliable research environment.
- 2.2. To promote academic and research integrity, along with promoting ethical publication practices.
- 2.3. To encouraging the publication of high-quality research in reputable journals to bolster global rankings and overall advancements in research and education quality.
- 2.4. Formulating an approach and methodology for identifying journals of high quality.
- 2.5. To establishing an ethical framework to guide the ethical review process university-wide.
- 2.6. Advocating for exemplary ethical standards in research and scholarly activities.
- 2.7. Preventing the dissemination of research in questionable or sub-standard journals that could negatively impact the reputation of academic work, resulting in long-term academic damage.

### 3. Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)

There shall be an Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), where are revised descriptions for the Ethical Research Board (ERB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the context of human and animal research, as well as internal research project evaluation and suggested improvement of research:

#### 3.1 Ethical Research Board (ERB) for Human and Animal Research:

The Ethical Research Board (ERB) at the University of Sargodha serves as a dedicated body overseeing ethical considerations in both human and animal research endeavours. Committed to upholding the highest ethical standards, the ERB ensures that research projects involving human

participants or animals adhere to established ethical guidelines and principles. This board plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights, well-being, and dignity of individuals involved in research, as well as promoting the humane treatment of animals by ethical standards. It operates under the auspices of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) to foster responsible and ethical research practices across the academic community.

### **3.2 Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Internal Research Project Evaluation:**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a key component of ORIC for the internal evaluation process for research projects. Dedicated to ensuring the integrity and ethical soundness of research conducted within the university, the IRB oversees the evaluation of internal research initiatives. By conducting thorough reviews, the IRB ensures that research projects align with ethical principles and comply with established guidelines. This board, operating within the framework of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), plays a critical role in promoting a culture of responsible and ethical research within the university community. Through its evaluations, the IRB contributes to the enhancement of research quality and the protection of the welfare of all participants involved in internal research endeavors.

### **3.3 Role and Responsibilities of Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)**

- 3.3.1. The ORIC will uphold research quality by permitting publications only in journals recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).
- 3.3.2. Tasked with identifying reputable journals, the ORIC will ensure the inclusion of high-quality publications.
- 3.3.3. The ORIC will establish and maintain a "Reference List of Quality Journals" for various academic evaluations, recommended to the HEC.
- 3.3.4. Ensuring academic honesty, the ORIC will take measures to maintain integrity, foster intellectual capital growth, cultivate a culture of excellence, and encourage social responsibility in research.
- 3.3.5. The ORIC will raise awareness regarding animal care and human subject protection issues in research.
- 3.3.6. The ORIC will adhere to the principles of natural justice when evaluating allegations of plagiarism against students, faculty, researchers, and staff.
- 3.3.7. Empowered with the authority, the ORIC will assess the extent of plagiarism and propose suitable penalties accordingly.

## **4. Quality Research**

Research stands as the foundational pillar and gauge of a university's credibility. The assurance of good quality research is intricately linked to the credibility of the journals in which research publications are disseminated. The significance of high-quality publications in reputable journals extends beyond individual achievements, contributing to elevated global rankings and an overall enhancement of educational quality, fostering the creation of new knowledge.

On the flip side, publications in questionable and sub-standard journals have a detrimental impact, leading to enduring academic harm and tarnishing the institution's image. The prevalence of such journals has emerged as a global concern, with the University of Sargodha in Pakistan reporting a noteworthy percentage of research articles published in subpar journals, adversely affecting its reputation.

To mitigate this issue, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) at the university will exclusively endorse research publications from faculty and staff members, research scholars, and students for academic credits, selection, promotion, performance appraisal, scholarships, or academic degrees from journals falling within the specified category.

- Research journals from all disciplines indexed in Scopus (Source list) or Web of Science (Arts and Humanities Citation Index Source Publication, Science Citation Index Expanded Source Publication, Social Science Citation Index Source Publication).
- Journals endorsed and recommended by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) are the preferred choice.

Additionally, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) strongly advises faculty members to refrain from publishing in predatory or dubious journals and to avoid any association with them in any capacity. Publications or presentations in journals or conferences with dubious, predatory, or deceptive practices will not be considered for academic benefits.

#### **5. Recommendation for the Addition of Journal Titles**

The ORIC will solicit suggestions for the inclusion of journal titles in the HEC-recommended list from faculty members and students across various departments of the university during each academic quarter. The proposed list should include the following information:

- Journal title
- Journal broad discipline and focus subject
- Name of publisher
- Country of origin and registered address
- Journal language/s
- Publishing frequency
- Editor name, editorial office address, phone, email and website
- Current status (date of last publication) (print/ online/ both)
- ISSN/ eISSN
- Other registrations/ memberships such as WoS / Scopus / HEC-Recognized.

The ORIC-approved list of journal titles will be forwarded for recommendation to the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of the university, and subsequently, the QEC cell will endorse the selected journal titles to the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Additionally, the ORIC will actively seek information about undeserving journals included in the HEC's suggested list of journals, and such discrepancies will be reported to the HEC through the Quality Enhancement Cell department.

#### **6. Promotion of Research**

The University of Sargodha has established a well-defined Research Promotion Policy that systematically fosters basic and applied research activities to address local, regional, and national needs while advancing knowledge creation. This effort may manifest in patents, research publications, copyrights, and other forms.

Under the Research Promotion Policy, the university provides incentives and awards to encourage high-quality research, including:

- Recognition for faculty members who secure research project funding from government or other agencies.
- Acknowledgment for faculty members publishing books or book chapters with highly reputable publishing houses.
- Acknowledgment for publications of high-quality research papers/articles in SCI/Scopus/ high-indexed journals.
- (iv) Recognition for faculty members securing patent publications.
- (v) Acknowledgment for faculty members receiving research awards, fellowships, or scholarships.

- 7. The university has a well-established policy regarding seed money to fund research projects and collaborations with industry, academia, and other stakeholders.**

**7.1. Integrity and Ethics:**

The university establishes the following research ethics to guide all faculty members, researchers, and students involved in research activities. These principles encompass the entire research process, including the collection, processing, and dissemination of research information and data, spanning surveys, interviews, and the reporting of research findings. The ethical principles addressed in this document are as follows:

**7.2. Academic Honesty:**

Promoting honesty through transparent and unbiased development, execution, review, reporting, and communication of research. Researchers must be truthful in all scientific communications, honestly reporting data, results, methods, procedures, and publication status. Fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data is strictly prohibited.

**7.3. Integrity:**

Integrity in research entails upholding ethics, rigor, relevance, transparency, respect, impartiality, independence, and accountability in every aspect. Researchers are expected to keep promises and agreements, act with sincerity, and strive for consistency in thoughts and actions.

**7.4. Quality Education:**

Departments ensure the promotion of quality education by leveraging modern learning technologies and delivery models while adhering to the quality mandate parameters set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

**7.5. Holistic Approach:**

A holistic education approach aligned with social, cultural, economic, and environmental realities.

**7.6. Global Competencies:**

Faculty members are responsible for preparing students to attain core competencies to successfully address global challenges.

**7.7. Technology Applications:**

Faculty members must effectively use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digital learning resources optimally to achieve excellence.

**7.8. Industry Integration:**

Efforts to bridge gaps between theory and practice with a focus on skill development and industry integration.

**7.9. Intellectual Capital Growth:**

Contributing to the human resource development and capacity building of individuals to meet the needs of the economy, society, and country, ultimately leading to the nation's development.

**7.10. Culture of Excellence:**

Promoting a culture of excellence among students and faculty in the teaching-learning process, research, and extension services to develop centers of excellence.

**7.11. Carefulness:**

Avoiding careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examining one's work and the work of peers. Maintaining thorough records of research activities, including data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.

**7.12. Respect for Intellectual Property:**

Honoring patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Not using unpublished data, methods, or results without permission and giving proper credit for all contributions to research.

**7.13. Confidentiality:**

Protecting confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.

**7.14. Social Responsibility:**

Striving to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.

**7.15. Legality:**

Adhering to governmental policies, relevant laws, and institutional rules and regulations.

**7.16. Animal Care:**

Showing proper respect and care for animals when using them in research, avoiding unnecessary or poorly designed animal experiments.

**7.17. Human Subjects Protection:**

When conducting research on human subjects, minimizing harms and risks while maximizing benefits, respecting human dignity, privacy, and autonomy, taking special precautions with vulnerable populations, and striving to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly.

**8. Plagiarism Definition:**

'Plagiarism' is the unacknowledged use of another person's work as one's own. It involves copying phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or longer extracts from published or unpublished work, including from the internet, without acknowledgment of the source.

**8.1. Methods of Plagiarism:**

8.1.1. Directly quoting another person's language, data, illustrations, tables, etc., without proper acknowledgment of the source.

8.1.2. Copying a section of a book, article, report, monograph, dissertation, or thesis without appropriate citation.

- 8.1.3. Obtaining assignments, experiments, or results through buying, stealing, or borrowing.
- 8.1.4. Presenting the work of others without proper acknowledgment through paraphrasing.
- 8.1.5. Using ideas from someone else without crediting the originator.
- 8.1.6. Copying, cutting, and pasting from the internet or online sources and submitting it as one's own work without providing proper reference/citation.
- 8.1.7. Any other means not explicitly listed here.

## **8.2. Self-Plagiarism:**

Copying or reproducing, in part or in whole, one's own previously published work without providing proper reference to that work.

## **8.3. Golden Rule to Avoid Plagiarism:**

- (a) Always credit the original author(s) and provide proper citation and reference.
- (b) Use inverted commas to indicate verbatim text when quoting.

The research conducted by students, faculty, researchers, and staff should be grounded in original ideas, encompassing abstracts, summaries, hypotheses, observations, results, conclusions, and recommendations without any similarities. It should exclude common knowledge or coincidental terms, up to fourteen.

## **9. Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism checks, in accordance with HEC policy, are conducted on any research work carried out by faculty members, students, and researchers.