



**SHAHEED ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO UNIVERSITY OF LAW**  
(Established by Govt. of Sindh under Sindh Act XIII of 2013)  
Chaudhry Khaleeq-uz-Zaman Road, Near Lilly Bridge,  
Clifton, Karachi, Pakistan. URL: [www.szabul.edu.pk](http://www.szabul.edu.pk)  
Tel: +92-21-99206452, 99206453 Fax: +92-21-99206425

## Research Ethics Policy

### 1. Preamble

The Research Ethics Policy (REP) is developed to ensure integrity, quality and originality in research. The policy provides detailed guidelines to research scholars, students, staff, employees, supervisors and evaluators related to ethics in research. The policy also discusses circumstance, situations and points that needs to be avoided in order to ensure research integrity and quality. Conflict of interest that may arise between institution, researcher, supervisor and evaluators are covered under the ambit of this policy and relevant guidelines are also provided. Lastly the policy also discusses the formation and role of SZABUL Internal Ethical Review Board.

### 2. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to scholars, faculty members, supervisors and other staff desirous in performing research work at SZABUL related to ethical procedures, guidelines and process that are to be complied in order to ensure dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of all research participants, university, research community and the society. The policy will provide a framework which will help in identification and rectification of ethical issues which will enhance quality of research work. All research activities including research publications that is conducted by employees, faculty and staff of all departments in SZABUL and students/research scholars enrolled in all programs involved in research and research publication will be governed by the rules and guidelines provided in this policy. This policy applies to all university employees engaged in research, students of the university, and other individuals who are undertaking research using university premises or facilities and/or in the university's name. The ethical policy is designed to act as a deterrent rather than a punishment for avoiding unethical practices by the research fraternity

### 3. Ethical Guidelines for Researcher

All research work including research proposals, synopsis, thesis and dissertations must adhere to the following ethical guidelines. Researchers who are employees, faculty, staff and students of SZABUL are to ensure that their research work including publications are in line with the guidelines provided as under:

- 3.1. Research work / publication being carried out by researcher must adhere to the international standards of scientific research to ensure highest quality in research work.
- 3.2. In general researcher should aim to maximize the benefits for individuals and society at large and should attempt to minimize the risk and harm to individuals and society.
- 3.3. **Plagiarism:** All research activities carried out by researchers must be free from plagiarism. Plagiarism of other's ideas, materials, findings and any other matter is unacceptable and is considered as a serious violation of ethical standards.
  - 3.3.1. Pure duplication or replication of other work will be considered as a serious offense and will be dealt accordingly.



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- 3.3.2. Researchers translating others' work that was presented in foreign language and using it either completely or paraphrasing and then using it as their own will be considered as a severe violation of the ethical standards.
- 3.3.3. It is the responsibility of the researcher to properly cite the contents, quotations and ideas of another researcher. Any researcher found citing others content as their own will fall under the ambit of plagiarism.
- 3.3.4. Plagiarism will also include using other researchers' content in establishing findings, ideas, hypotheses, concepts, theories, interpretations and designs as your own.
- 3.3.5. Researchers citing others' ideas, content and material early in their own work and then subsequently extensively using the same idea, content and other material in their own research without further referencing will also classify as plagiarism.
- 3.3.6. Plagiarism in all its form is an unethical practice therefore it is completely unacceptable and should be avoided by the researcher.
- 3.4. It is the author / researcher responsibility that their research work should be honest and true. The research work carried out should be original and should give credit to other researchers by virtue of proper citation.
- 3.5. **Research Integrity:** It is the responsibility of all faculty, staff, and students engaged in research to adhere to the highest standards of research integrity and to conduct their research following the international and national ethical requirements. The research integrity will be considered compromised under the following conditions:
  - 3.5.1. Fabrication in research data either by false creation or alteration or in other aspects of research work.
  - 3.5.2. Misrepresentation of data and other relevant information knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence either through suppression of relevant findings, criticism, research data, test results, limitations, delimitations or through flawed representation of findings, criticism, research data, test results and others.
  - 3.5.3. Falsification of research through inappropriate manipulation or selection of other researcher's work.
  - 3.5.4. Ignoring and/or improper dealings with arguments, criticism related to research theories, constructs or any other aspect of research
  - 3.5.5. Integrity of research would also be compromised by way of Distortion. It implies misleading usage of scientific research methods, biased interpretation of sources and other research work, skewed selection of data and misleading use of statistical techniques.
  - 3.5.6. Researcher using unpublished work of others without consent and/or proper citation/acknowledgment that they may have come across by way of peer review, discussion, evaluation or by any means whatsoever will be considered a breach of ethical guidelines.
  - 3.5.7. Concealment by researcher would imply withholding relevant information, withholding significant critiques, withholding warranted research participants and withholding any or all information, process, procedures, results and others that may have an adverse effect on the researcher's own work.



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- 3.6. **Conflict of Interest:** Research work / publication should be independent and clear from any conflict of interest that may affect the research or its publication completely or partially. The conflict of interest may arise under following conditions:
- 3.6.1. Under all circumstances in which the researcher's obligation to the university and/or to the research fund granting organization is compromised or may appear to be compromised.
  - 3.6.2. Circumstance in which gain or favor either financially or in any other form has been obtained through research either personally, or a gain to a family member or to any other person having close relations with the researcher.
  - 3.6.3. It is the responsibility of the researcher to report all instances where favors have been obtained or granted to any person related or otherwise. Moreover, researchers are also responsible to report all matters that may be perceived by others as a potential incident of conflict of interest.
- 3.7. **Furnishing / publication guidelines:** All printed materials of research work i.e., research report, thesis, dissertation, research article publication will be subject to following conditions:
- 3.7.1. Researcher will be responsible to honestly and accurately represent the authorship which means that the research scholar/author will place only those authors as coauthors who have actually contributed in the publication. For dissertation, others that have helped in research work must be properly acknowledged.
  - 3.7.2. Simultaneous submission of one manuscript to more than one journal is not permitted; researchers are responsible to ensure that if they are submitting one manuscript to more than one journal than it has to be withdrawn from previous submission before applying it to another journal.
  - 3.7.3. It is also the responsibility of the author/researcher to report to the concerned authority and board immediately after becoming aware of any errors and/or inaccuracies in the dissertation/thesis/research report/research article which has already been submitted, processed for award of degree or in case of research article, that has been published.
  - 3.7.4. Conducting scientific research requires commitment and time. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that proper and ample time has been spent on conducting and finalization of research. Research work integrity will become questionable and will be subject to ethical review if the researcher has not spent adequate time on completing the research work and/or finalizing the research publication.
  - 3.7.5. Research article integrity and quality will be considered compromised if the author has published more than two articles in a single issue of a journal. Publishing more than two articles in single issue of a journal is ethically not permissible. Researcher will be considered as violating research ethics and appropriate action will be taken.
  - 3.7.6. Back issue publications, publishing research papers in journal's issues that have already been published is not only a violation of ethical codes by the journal but also by the researcher.



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- 3.7.7. Researcher by virtue of his position i.e., being owner, editor, reviewer or by way of any right have the ability to influence the publication in any journal, publishes their article in the said journal will be considered violating the ethical standards.
- 3.8. In circumstances where researcher is found using any authority, power or any form to take advantage in any form from supervisor or evaluator will constitute as a serious violation of ethical code of conduct in research.

#### **4. Ethical Guidelines for Dissertation / Thesis / Research Article Preparation**

- 4.1. The finalization, preparation, furnishing of all research work in any form whatsoever i.e., thesis, dissertation, research report, article publication and others must adhere to following ethical conditions:
  - 4.1.1. It is the responsibility of the researcher to accurately present all materials related in their research including but not limited to research arguments, objectives, constructs, variables, models, methodology, findings, significance of findings, recommendation, limitation, delimitation and conclusion.
  - 4.1.2. It is the responsibility of the researcher to present their methodology and data with complete detail and accuracy so that research validity and reliability can be determined by way of repetition of research work by other researchers.
  - 4.1.3. Sample selected for research must be informed of their participation in research and their inclusion should be with consent except for circumstances where obtaining consent is not possible or may jeopardize the findings of research. In such cases where informing sample about the research objectives or purpose can potentially result in biasness or manipulation of data by the respondent then the respondents should be informed about the objectives of research after data has been collected.
  - 4.1.4. In selection of the sample the researcher needs to be honest and true, meaning that the selection of the sample should be free from researcher biasness.
  - 4.1.5. Individuals and/or group participants in research either as sample or in any other manner or form should be kept anonymous and their confidentiality should be respected. If researcher need to use personal information of individual or group in the research then it is binding on the researcher to obtain consent of the participants preferably in express form.
  - 4.1.6. Data furnished and presented in report needs to be original and should be free from inappropriate selection, manipulation, enhancement or fabrication of any kind whatsoever that may influence the research outcome. Situations like exclusion of data points by researcher to enhance significance of findings and conclusions; fabricating data either through insertion of new data or through altering existing data in order to improve or achieve desired outcomes; selecting particular data set that will ultimately support a particular finding or conclusion while ignoring contradictory data set that could potentially have an adverse effect on the conclusion or findings; deliberately selecting statistical analysis techniques in order to support or achieve a desired outcome by the researcher.



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- 4.1.7. Image and graph files used in research must be in its original form and should not be manipulated by the researcher in any way that could potentially result in misinterpretation of information by the reader or that could substantially deviate from the information provided in the original file. An image or a graph will be considered manipulated or adjusted by the researcher by means of introducing, enhancing, moving or removing features in the image or graph that was not present in the original image. Grouping of two or more images or graphs in order to portray a different meaning than the meaning portrayed by them separately will also render the said image and graph manipulated. Lastly editing and manipulating contrast, brightness, hue, color balance or other aspects of image in order to obscure, eliminate or enhance some information will also make the said image or graph manipulated.
- 4.1.8. Recommendations and conclusions in the research should only be confined to that which is justified and supported through data analysis and findings. Deception and/or exaggeration in recommendation and conclusion will raise ethical concerns about the research.
- 4.1.9. Researcher is responsible to clearly mention the flaws that are found in research design or in the research itself and also mention the effect of these flaws on research findings and results. Any researcher found in concealing these flaws will be in breach of their ethical obligation.
- 4.1.10. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the research work is free from defect, misconduct and that the presented results and findings are accurate.

### **5. Ethical guidelines for Supervisors/Evaluators**

- 5.1 There is a relationship between Supervisors and students/scholars/researcher/PhD candidates that ultimately results in the betterment of the research. The role of supervisors, reviewers and evaluators will be subject to the below mentioned ethical guidelines:
  - 5.1.1 Supervisors/Evaluators and researchers/students/scholars must respect each other. They should treat each other with utmost respect. Supervisors and evaluators should not misuse their position and take advantage from researcher either financially or through any form whatsoever.
  - 5.1.2 It is the responsibility of the supervisors and evaluators to be vigilant towards development of any asymmetrical relationship between them and the researcher which may result in any issue especially creating any conflict of interest. If the relationship between research scholar and supervisor becomes too close then the supervisory relationship must cease. The university will ensure that research scholars/students do not suffer any damage due to ceasing of supervisory relationship.
  - 5.1.3 Supervisors can use the material prepared by researcher in their own work, however they need to ensure that the researcher/candidate rights to their own material have been secured. Supervisors are not permitted to use researchers' work as material in their own research work that in any way or form jeopardizes the researcher/students' capability to complete their task.
  - 5.1.4 Supervisor must ensure that research along with all its processes are timely completed and students' time is not wasted because of supervisor negligence. Supervisors found causing unjustified delays in research to gain or to provide any advantage to either oneself or to others in any form whatsoever will be considered in breach of ethical code of conduct. The



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supervisor found in violation may be replaced by the ASRB through recommendation provided by the internal ethical review board.

### **6. Internal Ethical Review Board**

#### **6.1. The Internal Ethical Review Board formation will be based on following:**

6.1.1. The internal ethical review board will be Chaired by a senior Professor of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law and will be appointed by the Vice Chancellor from the pool of senior professors of the university.

6.1.2. At least one Professors or associate professor will be selected from each department of the university and the total members of the review board should not be less than five. The composition of the board should always be in odd numbers.

6.1.3. Director ORIC and QEC will be the member of the internal ethical review board.

6.2. The internal ethical review board will be responsible to ensure that all theses, dissertation, research work, projects, publications and any other such materials are in line with the international standards and ethical policy of SZABUL. Research proposals and all such materials that are furnished and presented to the industries, research granting institutions, regulatory bodies or any other external organization must first need to be cleared by the internal ethical review board before submission.

6.3. The internal ethical review board has the right to review any and all research work, project, dissertation, publication, proposal and other related materials. If the board after review finds any material in breach of the ethical guidelines and principles that are presented in this policy and/or are internationally followed has the right to revise and reject the research work/publication and others. In cases of severe violations, the board can also disqualify the researcher, scholar, student, staff, employees, supervisors and evaluators and can even report the matter to higher authorities and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for further action.