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In the framework of the project to assess corruption risks in scientific research, undertaken by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Commission of Integrity of the Kurdistan Region - Iraq, and pursuant to the recommendations of the committee established by Ministerial Order No. (19782) dated (7 October 2024), and under the powers vested in us, it has been decided to issue the following Guidelines:

Guidelines for Academic Conduct at Universities in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq

Article (1): Wherever the following terms appear in these Guidelines, they shall have the meanings assigned to them below:

Ministry: The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq.

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Department: The Department of Research and Development at the Ministry.

Universities: All public and private universities, university colleges and institutes in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq.

Academic institutions: The Kurdistan Higher Council of Medical Specialties, the Kurdistan Board for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research, and all institutions affiliated with the Ministry in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq.

Faculty: Members of the teaching staff who hold academic titles and qualifications at universities and academic institutions, research centres, scientific journals and all Ministry-affiliated institutions in which faculty appointment requirements are applied under the laws and instructions in force.

Higher Committee: The Higher Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct at universities and academic institutions.

Central committees: The following committees:

- **Central Humanities Committee:** The central committee monitoring implementation of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct in colleges/faculties/departments and humanities and social science specialisations at universities and academic institutions.
- **Central Sciences Committee:** The central committee monitoring implementation of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct in colleges/faculties/departments and scientific and applied specialisations at universities and academic institutions.
- **Central Medical Committee:** The central committee monitoring implementation of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct in colleges/faculties/departments and medical specialisations at universities and academic institutions.

Student/learner: All undergraduate students (bachelor's degree) and postgraduate students (higher diploma, master's degree, medical board qualification and doctorate).



Academic assignment: Tasks assigned to a student/learner, including assignments, reports and scientific research relating to academic subjects, or laboratory work, whether written, oral or practical.

Conflict of interest: Any conduct or behaviour by a faculty member intended to secure a personal material or non-material benefit for themselves or others, in a manner inconsistent with professional conduct, the principles of these Guidelines, or the aims and interests of the Ministry and its institutions.

Scientific research: A systematic scientific endeavour to establish scientific truth for the benefit of humanity. It examines human conduct to test the validity of knowledge or a hypothesis, uncover a phenomenon, understand its causes, identify mechanisms for addressing it, or find an effective solution to a problem significant to individuals, society and the nation. Scientific research cannot be credible unless researchers adhere to ethical values and standards.

Ethics: A set of fundamental principles on which laws and rules are based, including the regulations developed by specialist bodies to guide conduct and distinguish actions, relationships and policies that are correct from those that are incorrect. Ethical judgement draws on two sources: the prevailing customs and cultural traditions of society.

Chapter One

General Academic Values, Principles and Standards of Conduct

Article (2): Academic conduct means that a faculty member performs the responsibilities of their profession honestly, with integrity and commitment, and works continuously to achieve the aims of the academic institution in which they serve. Academic or administrative conduct must remain within the limits of the powers conferred upon them. Duties must be performed in good faith, free from malicious intent, negligence or misconduct, and without harming the public interest to secure a private advantage for themselves or others.

Article (3): Faculty members shall adhere to the following values:

First: General Values and Principles

(1) Trustworthiness (Integrity): Conscientiously and responsibly performing every duty entrusted to a faculty member, whether in teaching, student assessment, academic activities, or dealings with supervisors, colleagues and students/learners. This also entails respecting colleagues' scholarly contributions, intellectual integrity in reading and reviewing criticism, and conducting scientific dialogue in all its forms.

(2) Fairness: Faculty members must deal fairly with colleagues, students/learners and others, uphold their rights and refrain from neglecting them. They must also act justly towards those whose rights have, for any reason, been disregarded or who have been treated unfairly.



(3) Equal opportunity: Respecting equality of opportunity in dealings with faculty members of faculties/colleges/institutes and with others, regardless of differences in educational, economic or social background, political affiliation or ideology. No discrimination may occur in transactions or relationships. Appropriate and balanced procedures must be adopted without distinctions based on ideology, language, nationality, religion, gender or similar grounds.

(4) Tolerance: Demonstrating flexibility and understanding towards the thoughts and feelings of colleagues, students/learners and staff; respecting differences; and maintaining constructive relationships that serve the public interest and the higher objectives of universities and academic institutions. Procedures should be implemented appropriately, with full awareness of personal circumstances and experiences relevant to disputes or conflicts that arise.

(5) Professionalism and mutual respect: Establishing effective, constructive relationships within the university, taking account of others' rights, feelings, wishes and customs; respecting diverse religious, national and cultural affiliations; and showing appreciation for others in all conduct and dealings. This includes respecting the university profession and observing the laws and policies of the Kurdistan Region - Iraq.

(6) Scientific collaboration: Working within a robust scientific and academic framework to contribute to scholarship and improve experience and knowledge through mutual trust between faculty members and researchers.

(7) Impartiality: Faculty members must remain free from attachment to personal beliefs, ideologies, partisanship and other influences that may harm a research project, study or learning process.

(8) Objectivity: University faculty members and researchers must present the findings or scientific facts obtained through scientific methods without distorting them or manipulating their implications, regardless of whether they support or contradict the researcher's original hypothesis, understanding or perspective.

(9) Accuracy: Ensuring that research or inquiry data and findings correspond to reality, through rigorous and innovative scientific methods for establishing results and evaluating research, reports, scientific and technical questions, and similar matters.

(10) Critical inquiry: Examining and analysing, with scientific scepticism, findings that are treated as established facts by recognised documents and scientific sources.

Second: General Standards of Academic Conduct

(1) Academic integrity: A faculty member's academic integrity is expressed in two dimensions, both of which must be observed:

a. Integrity as a personal quality: Conscientiousness, self-reliance and ethical honesty inside and outside the classroom, and in the administrative, scientific and intellectual tasks performed by faculty members. This requires reliability, accuracy and the transparent and comprehensive sharing of expertise and experience; disclosure of conflicts of interest involving faculty members or others; and rejection of every form of administrative and academic corruption.



b. Integrity as a professional quality: Academic integrity is foundational to scientific research and the educational process. It entails the dedication of faculty members to their research subjects, teaching and students, and to everything that strengthens society's trust in academic institutions. It is secured through honest thought and conduct and adherence to applicable laws and instructions. Universities, professional organisations, publishing bodies, research administrators and all other bodies concerned with integrity in research and learning must support the preservation of academic integrity.

(2) Attention to scientific specialisation and its consolidation: Faculty members must attend to both their general and specific scientific specialisations and undertake the following:

a. A general specialisation is determined by the undergraduate (bachelor's) degree, while a specific specialisation is determined in light of the title and subject of the master's dissertation and doctoral thesis. Both must be closely and directly related to the scientific department from which the undergraduate degree was obtained. Faculty members must commit to developing their scientific expertise and using it in research, university teaching, the selection of dissertation and doctoral thesis topics, and scientific supervision and assessment.

b. The specific specialisation is determined by the independent variable in the title and subject of the faculty member's master's dissertation or doctoral thesis. The relevant departmental scientific committee shall provide guidance, academic advice and appropriate assistance to the faculty member (researcher) in selecting a research or study topic capable of registration and approval in a reputable journal within their specific specialisation and meeting academic quality requirements. Research submitted for academic promotion must correspond to its independent variable in the faculty member's specific specialisation. General and specific expertise may be developed through interdisciplinary research or projects where scientific justification and the work plan are supported by the scientific committee. Research must also be published in an authentic academic journal bearing the ISSN identification number, in accordance with the Ministry's academic promotion instructions.

(3) Confidentiality: Maintaining the confidentiality of scientific assessment results and of research data and findings. This also includes protecting the confidentiality of the decisions, outcomes and documents of scientific and investigative committees and preventing their disclosure or manipulation at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

(4) Academic responsibility: Developing a sense of individual and collective responsibility for the importance of the educational system, safeguarding it and achieving its objectives, and protecting the reputation of universities and academic institutions and their aims. The university president must be informed of any breach of applicable laws or instructions, or of these Guidelines, and of any attempt to damage all or part of the educational system for personal advantage or the benefit of others.



(5) Continuing academic development: Faculty members are responsible for following and applying these Guidelines and implementing scientific values and standards in their conduct and academic activities. Professors and assistant professors are also responsible for sharing their personal expertise and experience and promoting sound academic conduct among other faculty members and students/learners whenever opportunities arise in academic teaching and scientific guidance. Faculty members shall also help advance the learning process and the continuing academic development of undergraduate and postgraduate students/learners.

(6) Academic independence: A university is an autonomous, distinctive institution whose educational activities and research are independently based on the advancement and exchange of expertise, freedom of thought and freedom of scientific research. It is not subject to partisan direction, political programmes or ideological affiliations; it is safeguarded from them, and such influences shall exercise no authority within it.

(7) Academic confidence: Recognising and acknowledging the academic competence of faculty members, students/learners and staff in the university, thereby creating opportunities to develop their expertise and abilities and to disseminate and exchange innovative ideas. The university environment must enable critical thinking and appraisal, freedom of expression, and the free exchange of ideas and scientific products without fear of theft, misuse or harm to their creators.

Article (4): The Ethical Framework for Scientific Research comprises the following:

First: Fundamental Principles of Research Ethics

Research ethics requires respect for the rights, beliefs and dignity of others, including research collaborators, participants and those who are the subjects of research. Two general principles are recognised: "doing good" and "avoiding harm". These must underpin ethics and integrity. Ethical conduct must be observed throughout research, including honesty, competence, safety, trust, consent, the sharing and recording of information, feedback, consideration of the possibility of error, regard for others' feelings, respect for circumstances, and protection of confidentiality and personal information.

Second: Ethical Principles Relating to Research Practice

(1) Ethical commitment at every stage of the research process:

a. Selection of the research topic: The purpose must be to create a better world; research must not be used to harm people or the environment.

b. Research fields must be related to the national needs of the Kurdistan Region - Iraq.

c. Research design: No research project or plan shall begin until all important ethical aspects have been analysed and discussed by the relevant scientific and other competent committees, and the ethics of the research have been approved at college and university department level.

d. Research implementation: Monitoring implementation must ensure that ethical requirements are respected within each research plan.



(2) With regard to the research team, the researcher must:

- a. Possess the competence, advanced knowledge and scientific expertise required to conduct the research.
- b. Have comprehensive knowledge of the scientific subjects addressed by the research.
- c. Adhere to scientific principles and standards at all stages of the research.
- d. Ensure that the research is conducted responsibly throughout its stages.
- e. Have a comprehensive assessment of the risks and burdens that an individual or group may face and compare them with the benefits expected from the research.

Third: Ethical Standards in Scientific Research

As a scientific researcher, a faculty member must possess the following qualities:

1. A desire and enthusiasm to pursue science as a powerful motivation for establishing facts.
2. Clarity of thought that strengthens observation, careful examination and inspection.
3. Diligence and persistence in confronting all obstacles and difficulties, even when they recur.
4. Inner honesty in ensuring that actions and findings are correct.
5. Imagination and creative thinking as sources of ideas and reflection.
6. Intelligent reading, as an essential aid to learning that enables the researcher to acquire information promptly.
7. Familiarity with scientific laws, which form a fundamental basis for the researcher's intellectual judgement and assessment.
8. Language proficiency to support expression and understanding throughout the research process.
9. A sense of constructive criticism in the pursuit of truth and the exchange of views among researchers, directing attention to other aspects of a subject and offering useful suggestions.
10. A commitment to directing research towards subjects that benefit knowledge, society and public welfare, as a prominent ethical duty.
11. Accuracy and honesty in collecting data and in drawing and recording conclusions, free from personal bias.
12. Full recording of all data, findings and decisions; retention and archiving of copies of the conclusions and decisions for any subsequent review conducted within at least five years of the research.
13. Where faculty members undertake a joint scientific project, all participants must document their methods, scientific roles and activities so that these can be reviewed whenever necessary.
14. Faculty members must publish outstanding research and share it continuously within academic settings for the benefit of others.
15. Faculty members must ensure that their research has its own distinctive character, reflecting their thought, philosophy and perspectives within their scientific specialisation.



Fourth: Academic Integrity in Scientific Research

1. Academic integrity in conducting and publishing research requires the researcher to attribute a proposal to themselves only where it represents their own ideas and work. Where the work draws on others, this must be explicitly identified, and scientific sources must be acknowledged to avoid unethical practices.
2. When scientific material is cited, its sources must be clearly identified. The researcher must examine and verify the quoted text to ensure that it contains no ambiguity.
3. Data must be collected, analysed and interpreted carefully and attentively, without bias on the researcher's part.
4. Data must be presented clearly, and the research and its details must be fully documented so that other researchers can replicate the experiments and verify the findings. If any result is unsubstantiated, the researcher must explain this to the assessment committee, and it must be investigated to establish the scientific standard of the research.

Fifth: Faculty Ethics in the Scientific Supervision of Students/Learners

1. Faculty members must adhere to scientific standards of conduct, as they serve as a continuing example to students/learners.
2. They must train students/learners to apply scientific methods in reaching conclusions and in carrying out scientific and academic work.
3. A teacher must not use work completed by students/learners for their own research or academic promotion without acknowledging their roles and contributions.
4. They must observe the time allocated to scientific supervision in the interests of students/learners.
5. They must guide students/learners on sources of information and learning, and on recording all research findings and decisions promptly and retaining them for the required period.
6. They must monitor students'/learners' completion of assignments.
7. They must develop students'/learners' logical reasoning and their capacity to draw independent conclusions on that basis.
8. They must respect students'/learners' capacity for independent thought and their beliefs within clear principles, uphold freedom of opinion and encourage them to express their own scholarly identity in research.
9. They must encourage discussion, criticism and different opinions in accordance with constructive dialogue and academic ethics, within a designated scientific framework in the university, to teach the principles and steps of scientific research.
10. They must encourage students/learners to undertake collaborative research, with each contributing to a part of it, thereby fostering a culture of cooperation in scientific research.



Sixth: Practices to Be Avoided

1. Avoid conflicts of interest in research in order to ensure objectivity, fairness and transparency.
2. The research team must use the financial resources and capacities at its disposal solely to implement approved budget items and spend the allocated funds.
3. Persons connected with donor, supporting or funding institutions must be excluded from the research project in order to safeguard the integrity of collaboration and of the research subject.
4. Research evaluators must inform the relevant body of any researcher whose relationships or interests are connected with a financial source.

Seventh: Obligations and Conditions of Research Administration

1. Financial support must not be conditional in a manner contrary to scientific research obligations.
2. Research must be conducted properly and in accordance with scientific methods and standards. Supporting bodies must exert no influence over the results or the manner in which the research is conducted.
3. The source of funds must not be subject to suspicion of illegality.
4. Research steps and stages must not be influenced or manipulated by funders, supporters or providers of financial assistance.
5. The academic institution must not come under pressure from the funding source.

Eighth: Risks Associated with the Research Administration Environment

Numerous risks arise in the research administration environment in relation to resolving scientific problems. These include:

1. Predetermined conclusions:

A researcher who is convinced in advance of what they expect to find may fail to test all hypotheses and thus fail to obtain decisive evidence.

2. Disregarding contradictory evidence:

The aim of scientific inquiry is not to win an argument but to discover the truth. Contradictory evidence must therefore be given the same weight as supporting evidence, even if it conflicts with the initial hypothesis.

3. Habitual thinking within fixed limits:

The researcher must make every effort to move beyond rigid models of thought and cultivate originality in thinking.



4. Inability to obtain all facts relevant to the problem:

To reach a correct conclusion, the researcher must base their findings on complete evidence.

5. Inaccurate observation:

To verify all recorded findings, the researcher must repeat the experiments performed and must not overlook any influencing factor.

Chapter Two

General Objectives and Scope of the Guidelines

Section One: General Objectives

Article (5): These Guidelines seek to establish the general objectives and recognised standards of conduct that faculty members must follow in teaching, research, academic publishing and scientific activities. They also define the duties and responsibilities of the Higher and central committees in monitoring scientific behaviour and standards of conduct within universities. These objectives are expressed in the following:

(1) Consolidating professional standards for sound academic conduct and the exemplary principles and values of faculty members; strengthening awareness of and adherence to them; reinforcing principles of good conduct and governance; and increasing faculty awareness and knowledge so as to guide them towards proper standards of professional behaviour and accountability. This shall advance a working culture within universities that accords with applicable laws through clarification of duties and responsibilities.

(2) Developing the higher education and scientific research system in the Kurdistan Region in light of the decisions of specialised international scientific conferences. The aim is to advance and safeguard teaching and research, observe continuing professional commitments and prevent harm to, or diversion of, the system's efforts for an individual or group's benefit or for any purpose contrary to the Ministry's higher objectives.

(3) Ensuring adherence to scientific behaviour and sound academic conduct, and their implementation throughout the university community, as the foundation of teaching and research within the institution.

(4) Maintaining general and specific scientific specialisation and ensuring its consolidation and exchange within the university community.

Section Two: Scope of the Guidelines

Article (6): These Guidelines cover the duties of faculty members, divided into the following levels:

First: General Duties of Faculty Members

(1) Devote official working hours to professional duties and activities, and refrain from any activity or behaviour inconsistent with the university's public interest or the Ministry's objectives.



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- (2) Continuously improve personal competence and professional capabilities, keep abreast of developments in general and specific scientific specialisations, and offer proposals for improving performance in the administrative unit or scientific department in which they work.
 - (3) Refrain from any act or undertaking that damages personal reputation, public morals or proper conduct, whether within or outside the university.
 - (4) Refrain from insulting the religious beliefs, cultural differences, political opinions or ideologies of faculty members or others, within or outside the university, and from encouraging such insults.
 - (5) Strengthen relationships between their university and other universities, institutes and scientific institutions at national and international levels.
 - (6) Use lawful procedures when lodging complaints concerning any injustice experienced.
 - (7) Maintain a high level of expertise and commitment in their scientific specialisation, while attending to the truth and accuracy of the content of study or research subjects and to innovation in scientific or administrative duties.
 - (8) Keep confidential information and documents that are legally confidential and are obtained in the course of work, whether written, oral or electronic, especially material whose confidentiality is protected by law or specific decisions.
 - (9) Refrain from comments, statements or interventions, whether written or oral, concerning matters still under study or review within the university or Ministry.
 - (10) Protect the interests of the Ministry and universities and preserve their property and assets. Keep all keys secure, and inform the immediate supervisor of any infringement involving public property or the public interests of the Ministry or university, and of any negligence or conduct that harms those interests.
 - (11) Do not use the funds or property of the university, Ministry or academic institutions for personal gain, commercial dealings in goods, or the benefit of others.

Second: Duties Specific to Scientific Research and Academic Publication

- (1) Anyone who makes a substantial contribution to the content of a scientific publication shall be included as an author, provided that the contribution can be verified. All authors share equal responsibility for their scientific publications unless explicitly stated otherwise. Author names shall be determined at the initial stage of the project and ordered in accordance with academic-title standards and established professional practice. It is not permissible to include the name of a researcher who has not participated, nor to name a first author without a genuine contribution.
- (2) Observe ethical procedures, scientific methods and scientific specialisation when preparing research, academic studies, scientific activities and research projects for obtaining an academic title or promotion in academic rank.



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- (3) Observe ethical procedures when preparing master's dissertations, doctoral theses, research, publications and scientific research projects throughout the prescribed academic entitlement to work in universities and academic institutions.
- (4) Observe ethical procedures when publishing scientific work in academic and non-academic journals and in all print, visual and audio media, within and outside the Kurdistan Region.
- (5) Refrain from manipulating scientific experiments or the publication of their results within research and scientific studies.
- (6) Adhere to the highest scientific and ethical quality standards at every stage of research, according to the relevant specialisation, from data collection and documentation through to the final publication of results and research. Any scientific or ethical error or problem subsequently identified in published findings must be corrected immediately.
- (7) Where a research or study project is collaborative, the roles and responsibilities of research-team members must remain clear throughout the project. They must be identified and documented, and the head of the scientific department must be informed of subsequent changes, particularly changes to duties or responsibilities within the project.
- (8) When planning a research or study project, faculty members must observe the following:
- a. The title, subject and project participants must be registered with the departmental scientific committee.
 - b. Where the research is intended for academic promotion, its subject must fall within the researcher's specific or general scientific specialisation.
 - c. A comprehensive review must be conducted of research previously undertaken and published that is directly related to the research or study topic. Earlier contributions, where they exist, must be acknowledged when registering the research or study title and in every academic publication.
- (9) Observe the rights and obligations referred to in applicable laws and instructions, including obtaining written consent and complying with conditions agreed with the publisher when translating or republishing a scientific work.
- (10) Faculty members, researchers and students/learners are encouraged to inform the university of research findings where they consider that these have dual-use potential (civilian and military) or implications for social policy and public health, whether during the research or after the findings have been obtained.
- (11) If any doubt arises concerning the genuine participation of a researcher or student/learner in collaborative scientific research with researchers from outside the university or the Kurdistan Region, the researcher or student/learner must submit written documentation establishing their actual contribution, approved by the relevant departmental scientific committee. Furthermore,



the submission of such research for academic promotion is prohibited if the participating research institutions are unrecognised by the scientific committee, and compliance is required with the provisions of paragraphs (7) and (8) above.

(12) Researchers and students/learners must document all information and data relating to research, scientific studies, master's dissertations and doctoral theses, including their results and the manner in which they were obtained, so that they can be reviewed, replicated and scientifically assessed by scientific committees, higher education bodies, or advanced electronic systems and platforms. Findings previously obtained within the same specialisation must be documented and explained where they do not support the research's original hypothesis.

(13) Faculty members, researchers and students/learners must document all analytical steps, the data and the method followed in research, studies, master's dissertations and doctoral theses, and clearly record how they were produced. This is intended to prevent manipulation, safeguard and archive them, and demonstrate the academic integrity and reliability of the researcher or student/learner.

(15) The findings of research and publications must be disclosed in reputable journals or academic publications to inform university scientific communities. Any reason preventing publication of the findings must rest on scientific considerations, rather than external pressure or considerations of partisan advantage.

(15) Confidentiality and impartiality must be maintained in scientific assessment and academic advice. Complete confidentiality is required throughout evaluation, including the selection of scientific assessors and all matters relating to the outcome and subject of scientific assessment.

(16) Genuine conflicts of interest must be disclosed by faculty members appointed to assess research, projects, master's dissertations and doctoral theses. Assessors must not use information made available or acquired during evaluation for personal purposes or share it with others. If it is conclusively established that a scientific assessor has breached confidentiality and impartiality, or has disregarded the general values and principles and academic conduct set out in these Guidelines, the assessor must be notified through administrative channels and completely barred from all work relating to scientific assessment of research, master's dissertations and doctoral theses, participation in examination committees, and all other such scientific activities.

(17) Researchers or students/learners who breach the foregoing principles shall be subject to legal accountability and appropriate penalties, including suspension from teaching or conducting scientific research, or termination of enrolment. The measure must correspond to the nature of the breach and comply with applicable laws.



Third: Duties in Dealings with Students/Learners

Faculty members must undertake the following:

- (1) Respect students'/learners' rights and treat them fairly, impartially and objectively, without discrimination based on gender, social origin, religious or political beliefs, social status, disability or any other ground.
- (2) Earn students'/learners' trust through academic integrity, constructive conduct and honesty in all duties.
- (3) Assess examination papers and all work submitted by students/learners promptly, with the necessary care and objectivity; answer their questions; and explain any delay in announcing results.
- (4) Avoid any action that adversely affects students'/learners' confidence in the educational process. This includes attempting to supervise master's dissertations or doctoral theses outside the supervisor's general or specific scientific specialisation; assigning subjects below the student's/learner's level of study or below a standard appropriate to higher education; or promising success or high marks to gain students'/learners' sympathy and favour in order to supervise them later.
- (5) Show no leniency in taking the necessary action when identifying cheating by students/learners or the disclosure of examination questions in any form.
- (6) Evaluate students/learners scientifically, objectively and fairly, in a manner that reflects scientific and academic principles.
- (7) Adhere to assessment mechanisms, allocated time and academic subject content specified in the coursebook, which students/learners must receive or be informed of at the beginning of the academic year.
- (8) Use the best teaching methods and appropriate educational activities to ensure that the learning objectives of the subject are achieved.
- (9) Actively foster scientific and creative thinking, initiative and collective work among students/learners.
- (10) Promote sound ethical values among students/learners, attend to the diversity of their cultural heritage, and respect their national and religious customs and traditions.
- (11) Maintain complete confidentiality of students'/learners' personal documents and information in accordance with applicable laws. No faculty member or university employee may exploit access to such information for personal purposes or for the benefit of others. It may be disclosed only with the consent of the student/learner or their guardian, or for judicial purposes.



Fourth: Faculty Members' Duties in Dealings with Supervisors

- (1) Comply with supervisors' written or oral orders and instructions in accordance with the administrative hierarchy and applicable laws.
- (2) Treat supervisors respectfully and refrain from seeking any advantage through unethical or improper means.
- (3) Do not use university documents to influence decisions taken or obstruct the institution's work.
- (4) Cooperate with supervisors and offer views, observations and beneficial experience honestly and objectively.
- (5) Inform the immediate supervisor of any violation of applicable laws or any problem encountered that hinders the continuity of work.
- (6) Cooperate with supervisors when committees are established at the level of the scientific department or university in which they work.
- (7) Disclose fully and accurately to supervisors all orders and information obtained through work that must be disclosed.
- (8) Refrain from any activity that may create an actual, apparent or potential conflict between personal interests, on the one hand, and professional responsibilities and duties, on the other.

Fifth: Duties in Dealings with Fellow Faculty Members

Faculty members must undertake the following:

- (1) Treat colleagues with respect, friendliness, tact and sincerity, and maintain healthy and amicable relationships without discrimination. Respect their privacy and refrain from exploiting or using information concerning their private lives to cause harm.
- (2) Cooperate with colleagues and share opinions to a high professional standard and objectively. Assist them wherever possible in resolving problems encountered at work, and promote constructive relations among colleagues to advance their work and scientific expertise and improve the working environment.
- (3) Do not permit students/learners to make unfounded criticism of another colleague's work, criticise their personality, damage their dignity or undermine their standing.
- (4) Refrain from encouraging students/learners to file complaints or adopt unlawful behaviour against another faculty member.
- (5) Refrain from encouraging students/learners to study a particular academic subject or leave a subject taught by another faculty member without regard to academic competence and experience, or from encouraging them to seek scientific supervision from or leave another



colleague's supervision where that colleague satisfies the requirements for scientific supervision and there is no legal or scientific impediment.

Sixth: Duties in Dealings with Staff

Faculty members holding administrative positions must undertake the following:

- (1) Develop staff capabilities, assist and encourage them to improve their working methods, and personally set a good example in the workplace and in compliance with applicable laws.
- (2) Transfer the knowledge, expertise and experience acquired to staff, and encourage collective work and greater exchange and sharing of information among them.
- (3) Supervise staff, hold them accountable for the proper conduct of their work, assess their performance objectively and impartially, and seek to provide training and development opportunities in accordance with applicable laws.
- (4) Respect staff rights, cooperate with staff to a high professional standard without bias or discrimination, and reject outside pressure that would lead to discriminatory or biased treatment of any staff member. If such pressure exists, the chair of the Higher Committee or one of the central committees must be informed.
- (5) Refrain from assigning staff duties that have not been formally entrusted to them or that fall outside their job descriptions and titles.
- (6) Respect students'/learners' rights and treat them objectively, professionally and respectfully, without bias or discrimination.

Chapter Three

Conduct Constituting Breaches of Academic Behaviour and Ethics

Section One: Breaches in Scientific Research, Publication and Assessment

Article (7): Conduct or behaviour through which a faculty member breaches standards of academic behaviour and ethics in research, publication and scientific assessment includes the following:

- (1) **Improper appropriation:** Passing off or stealing an idea, work, educational programme, data or any other original product belonging to another person, and presenting it wholly or partly as one's own or another person's work without acknowledgement in accordance with scientific methods and these Guidelines, or exceeding the prescribed authorised plagiarism percentage.
- (2) **Fabrication:** Deliberately using non-existent, incorrect or distorted data in research and scientific studies.
- (3) **Falsification of assessments and data:** Falsifying or manipulating the assessment of university research, master's dissertations or doctoral theses; inventing results or data that do not exist; altering or concealing experimental instruments, materials or procedures within



research or a study, or failing to use them while presenting them as having been used in practice; or distorting the results of research or a study to fit its objectives or serve personal interests or those of others.

(4) Duplicate publication: Republishing scientific publications and presenting them as independent works published for the first time, and using them for academic promotion, to obtain an academic qualification, to receive appreciation or recognition, or for any other purpose.

(5) Fragmented publication: Dividing research findings into several parts in a manner that undermines scientific honesty and integrity, publishing them as multiple articles in academic journals, and presenting those publications as independent works for academic promotion, an academic qualification or any other purpose.

(6) False contribution: This includes all persons who have not made a substantial and primary contribution to authorship but whose names are included among the actual authors of a scientific publication; omitting persons who made a substantial contribution; improperly ordering authors in a manner inconsistent with the hierarchy of academic titles; removing an author's name from a scientific publication in its initial or subsequent editions; or inserting one's own or another person's name in the author list without a genuine and primary contribution.

(7) Academic cheating: Manipulating a person to obtain examination marks or academic distinctions for oneself or others without the intellectual effort necessary to earn them. This may be done personally, through others, or by any means of answering examination questions. It also includes wholly or partly appropriating another person's scientific, literary or artistic work improperly for oneself or others.

(8) Improper collusion: Undertaking scientific work or assessment jointly where applicable laws and instructions do not permit such cooperation, or jointly assessing scientific work and awarding undeserved marks for academic promotion, an academic qualification or any other academic benefit.

(9) Abuse of academic authority: Improperly using legally conferred administrative authority to obtain a personal benefit or an advantage for others.

(10) Any other act not permitted by these Guidelines or applicable laws, or inconsistent with public ethics and conduct, including false or malicious reports concerning alleged breaches of these Guidelines.

Section Two: Other Breaches of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct

Article (8): Other forms of breach of the Guidelines for Academic Conduct include:

(1) A faculty member accepting or requesting money, gifts or personal benefits for themselves or others, or engaging in any discrimination between students/learners, directly or indirectly.



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- (2) A faculty member accepting or requesting preferential treatment, personal advantages or interests, or establishing close relationships with persons or institutions whose interests primarily depend on their decisions or those of the institution in which they work.
 - (3) Using master's dissertations or doctoral theses not submitted for defence, or unpublished scientific research or studies, as scientific sources without the owner's written permission.
 - (4) Failing to comply with ethical and moral principles in research conducted on humans or animals, or failing to respect patients' rights.
 - (5) Acting contrary to applicable laws governing biological research and other clinical research conducted on humans.
 - (6) Disclosing information contained in a project or scientific research entrusted for review or pre-publication assessment without the written permission of the project or research owner.
 - (7) Using resources, expertise, materials and equipment allocated for scientific research for purposes other than their intended scientific use.
 - (8) Publishing information from a questionnaire used in scientific research without participants' clear consent, or conducting a scientific experiment at a university or academic institution without prior permission.
 - (9) Harming animal welfare or the ecological balance in research and scientific experimentation.
 - (10) Conducting research or experiments contrary to applicable laws or international agreements to which Iraq and the Kurdistan Region are parties.
 - (11) Failing to observe requirements and inform the relevant body of conduct or harmful effects that may arise from research or a scientific experiment.
 - (12) Using data or information obtained from individuals or other institutions in research and scientific studies beyond the permitted scope or manner, or failing to respect its confidentiality and ensure its protection.
 - (13) Submitting false data, information or documents, or using them to secure appointment, academic promotion, an academic qualification, or eligibility to participate in a competitive examination.
 - (14) Improperly falsifying, altering or manipulating examination papers.
 - (15) Failing to comply with intellectual and literary property rights concerning electronic software and programmes, intellectual, literary and scientific works, and the conditions specified for authorised use.
 - (16) Submitting an unfounded, deliberately false or malicious publication or report, or doing so for retaliatory purposes, concerning a breach of the principles contained in these Guidelines.



Chapter Four

Establishment, Duties, Powers and Working Procedures of the Higher and Central Committees for Monitoring Implementation

Article (9): Committees responsible for monitoring and promoting sound scientific behaviour and academic conduct in universities shall be established as specified below at the beginning of the academic year:

(1) A Higher Committee shall be established at the presidency of each public and private university, comprising seven (7) members selected by the university president. For private institutes, it shall comprise five (5) members selected by the institute dean. Members must be faculty members holding doctorates and the academic title of professor or assistant professor, drawn from different fields and specialisations. The member with the highest academic title shall chair the committee. One member must be a lawyer representing the public interest. All members shall be replaced after three (3) years from the date of the first meeting. Where no teacher holds the required academic title, assistance may be sought from faculty members of public universities.

(2) Higher Committees at public and private universities and private institutes in the Kurdistan Region shall be approved by the Ministry. For this purpose, the Higher Committee must be referred to the Ministry/Department of Research and Development for scrutiny and approval procedures.

(3) The Higher Committee shall monitor and regulate scientific conduct in accordance with the Guidelines for Academic Behaviour and Ethics. It shall receive reports of breaches of the principles contained in these Guidelines and take appropriate decisions.

(4) Three central committees shall be established to monitor and promote sound scientific behaviour and academic conduct in the humanities, sciences and medical fields, and to receive reports and notifications concerning breaches of these Guidelines. Each shall consist of seven (7) members selected by the university president from candidates nominated by the Higher Committee; the names shall be renewed annually. The university president may replace committee members, provided that membership does not exceed three (3) years. Members must be faculty members holding doctorates and the title of professor or assistant professor in different fields and specialisations.

(5) Following consultation with the university president, the chair of the Higher Committee may establish additional temporary subcommittees in scientific disciplines to monitor and implement these Guidelines and ensure quality in scientific research and academic publications.

(6) No member of the Higher Committee, the three central committees or any other subcommittee may have a criminal conviction or a final administrative decision establishing that they have breached the substance of these Guidelines.



(7) Committee members must have experience in scientific committees, examinations and other committees, be known for academic independence and high-quality scientific work, and possess experience in publishing research and academic studies in domestic and foreign scientific and academic journals.

(8) Committee members must be independent of administrative and scientific authorities within the university, provide objective advice and guidance, contribute to resolving disputes, and receive complaints and reports confidentially.

(9) A member's duties shall terminate immediately if it is established that they have acted contrary to these Guidelines.

(10) Membership shall terminate immediately where a member, without the chair's permission or a valid reason, fails to attend three consecutive meetings, or is on leave for at least three months. A new member shall then be selected in accordance with these Guidelines, treating the position as vacant.

(11) The committee chair shall designate a member as committee secretary, whose term shall end with that of the committee.

Article (10): The duties and powers of the Higher and central committees are as follows:

(1) Conduct comprehensive investigations into notifications and complaints submitted directly to the relevant specialist central committee or referred to it by the Higher Committee concerning circumvention or breach of these Guidelines. Where necessary, obtain the opinion of an expert selected by the Higher Committee, communicate with relevant persons and institutions, and request information, evidence and other documents required for the investigation.

(2) In the event of a conflict of interest, the general public interest takes absolute precedence. The public interest of the academic institution must be distinguished from a faculty member's private material or non-material interests. Mechanisms must be established to identify such interests and their effect on improper conduct or published opinions that conflict with the public interest and the objectives of these Guidelines.

(3) The Higher Committee shall submit its final decision to the university president for approval within a period not exceeding one month. If the president does not approve it within that period, it shall be deemed approved.

(4) The central committees shall prepare recommendations for submission to the university president to prevent ethical and academic misconduct, organise scientific activities and raise awareness of these Guidelines in cooperation with relevant institutions.

(5) Provide legal protection against material and non-material harm to persons who report breaches of academic behaviour and conduct to the Higher or central committees. Those who submit false or fabricated information and reports to the committees shall be referred to the judicial authorities.



(6) Use advanced AI plagiarism-detection software and rely on effective electronic technology to identify acts that circumvent or breach these Guidelines. Provide the committees with all material resources necessary to perform their duties appropriately and effectively.

(7) Establish an advanced central electronic platform, in coordination with and under the supervision of the Department of Research and Development, to monitor scientific and academic publications at Kurdistan Region universities and ensure their consistency with these Guidelines.

(8) Only the Higher Committee and the three specialised central committees shall have authority to examine reports concerning these Guidelines.

(9) The Higher Committee may revisit cases involving faculty members against whom administrative decisions have been issued on the recommendation of university investigative committees, and may cancel recommendations and decisions in cases relating to the provisions and principles of these Guidelines.

(10) In consultation and coordination with the Department of Research and Development, the Higher Committee is responsible for offering advice and organising workshops and seminars concerning its work within the university.

Article (11): The procedures and principles governing Higher and central committee meetings are as follows:

(1) Committees must meet at least once a week. The chair may convene members for urgent meetings whenever necessary.

(2) Committee decisions shall be taken by a simple majority (half plus one) of the total membership.

(3) Committees shall exercise their powers independently and may seek advice from experts and specialists whose academic rank is not below assistant professor.

(4) A committee member may not attend a meeting or vote in any of the following circumstances:

a. The member supervised the master's dissertation or doctoral thesis of the person complained against or under investigation, or supervised that person during postgraduate study; or the member was one of the scientific assessors appointed by an academic promotion committee at the same or another university to assess the research that is the subject of the complaint.

b. The member is related up to the fourth degree to the person complained against or to any party connected with the case under investigation.

c. It is established that the member has a prior dispute, legal conflict or conflict of interest with the complainant or a person under investigation.



(5) If no committee member specialises in the scientific field of the complainant or person under investigation, a scientific expert may be invited from the university's faculty. Where there is more than one expert, each shall prepare a separate report clearly stating their opinion. The experts' views shall then be compared confidentially, and the decision shall be based on the majority expert opinion.

(6) The scientific expert shall prepare and submit a report using the form provided by the committee within a period not exceeding one month from receipt of the complaint or investigation file. This period may be extended once only, for no more than fifteen (15) days from the date of the request.

(7) Committee members may not participate in meetings where a case in which they themselves are accused of breaching these Guidelines is discussed.

(8) No two members of the same committee may be related up to the fourth degree.

Article (12): Working procedures of the Higher and central committees:

(1) The committees shall follow up on notifications and reports received in two stages:

a. Preliminary investigation and formulation of recommendations at central committee level, according to scientific specialisation and the college in which the complainant works or the person under investigation is based.

b. Final investigation and review of recommendations issued by the central committees, and decisions on them, shall fall within the authority of the Higher Committee, whether or not the complainant submits an objection concerning the alleged injustice.

(2) All relevant information, documents and evidence shall be submitted and attached to the reports and complaints concerning breaches addressed to these committees.

(3) Each committee shall prepare an individual file for each person.

(4) Where a complaint, report or notification received by these committees concerns a faculty member who has submitted an academic promotion application that is under assessment, or whose promotion has already been approved, the relevant academic promotion committee must suspend the application and await the Higher Committee's decision on whether the work complies with these Guidelines.

(5) A person complained against or under investigation shall submit a written defence with the required information and documents. If they fail to submit their response within fifteen (15) days of receiving written notification from the central committee, the committee may decide on the basis of the information and evidence obtained, provided that this condition is expressly stated in its notification letter.



(6) A person complained against or under investigation may request a copy of the complaint form or report, together with the attached documents, to prepare a written defence. In such cases, the complainant's identity must remain confidential and their name must be removed from the documents.

(7) Following deliberation in the Higher Committee, decisions shall be put to a vote, issued and signed by all members. A member who disagrees with the majority decision must state the reasons for dissent in writing.

(8) The final decisions issued by the Higher Committee on the basis of expert recommendations shall be formally recorded by the secretary and submitted to the university president for approval.

(9) Committee members and scientific experts must preserve the confidentiality of information, evidence and documents disclosed to them, obtained during the investigation or otherwise brought to their attention in it.

(10) Higher and central committee correspondence with other universities and institutions shall be confidential and conducted only through the university president.

Article (13): Necessary administrative sanctions and other administrative, legal and disciplinary measures shall be taken under applicable laws against persons found by the Higher Committee to have acted contrary to these Guidelines, following approval by the university president.

Article (14): Where an academic title or qualification was awarded on the basis of research subsequently proven to have been conducted in breach of ethical procedures, the Higher Committee may decide to withdraw the title or qualification from the person concerned. In such cases, the university or awarding institution must recover the financial benefits received by that person as a result of the title or qualification.

Article (15): Where an investigation establishes that a faculty member breached ethical guidelines relating to research and publication, the actual author's consent or that of the printer or publisher, or any harm to the rights and interests arising from the breach, shall not exempt that faculty member from responsibility.

Article (16): Where published scientific work, or work under publication, is found to contravene these Guidelines, the university president must inform the publisher that rights have been infringed and harm caused.

Chapter Five

Final Provisions

Article (17): The use of information relating to medical and therapeutic fields and new applied or established scientific knowledge, or of general legal principles and the provisions of laws in research, studies and scientific projects, shall not be considered a breach of these Guidelines.



Article (18): Conduct involving an intentional breach or causing serious harm under these Guidelines shall be regarded as scientific misconduct requiring punishment, correction or reparation for the harm caused.

Article (19): All universities and academic institutions must adhere to the Guidelines for Academic Conduct, circulate them among faculty members and ensure compliance through awareness of their content and objectives, so that faculty members responsibly fulfil their obligations in the course of their work.

Article (20): The Ministry and institutions shall be responsible for providing all material and non-material requirements necessary to advance scientific research and academic activities, resolve disputes under these Guidelines, ensure awareness of their content, and provide appropriate professional support to all faculty members.

Article (21): These Guidelines apply to all faculty members and staff of universities, academic institutions and the Ministry, as well as persons falling within the term "university service employee" under applicable laws.

Article (22): Faculty members enjoy a set of fundamental rights that the Ministry/university must ensure, including:

- (1) Clearly defining faculty members' duties and responsibilities and what they are expected to achieve.
- (2) Treating them on the basis of merit and eligibility, and providing fair and equal opportunities for advancement and encouragement of professional growth.
- (3) Ensuring a favourable scientific environment and guaranteeing freedom from discrimination in the workplace.
- (4) Providing appropriate and continuing training opportunities to improve professional capabilities in academic work in accordance with applicable laws.
- (5) Providing freedom of expression and opinion in accordance with the articles and provisions of these Guidelines.
- (6) Providing the right to object and complain about any decision concerning a faculty member that is illegal or improper.

Article (23): All faculty members, staff and students/learners must be able to consult these Guidelines, become familiar with their content and comply with it.

Article (24): Decision-making procedures and decisions of the Higher Committee, and recommendations of the central committees, shall remain confidential. No person may inspect or be informed of them except the Minister, university president, Director General of Research and Development, or another person legally authorised to inspect them.

Article (25): Complaints concerning persons whose cases have already been closed and decided by the Higher Committee may not be reconsidered. The complainant must be informed of this in the decision rejecting the complaint, and must also be informed of the right to appeal before the judicial authorities.

Article (26): Necessary procedures must be adopted to protect both persons reporting scientific misconduct and persons accused or complained against. Reports and complaints must be handled with complete confidentiality, and the accused shall be presumed innocent until guilt is established.



Article (27): Penalties arising from scientific misconduct or breach of these Guidelines include administrative penalties under applicable laws, suspension of academic promotion, withdrawal of an academic title, annulment of an academic qualification, removal from teaching, or exclusion from universities and academic institutions.

Article (28): Penalties for scientific misconduct or breach of these Guidelines also apply to faculty members, staff and researchers of academic institutions who undertake or participate in academic research and studies for others in return for money or a material or non-material benefit, or who commission others to undertake research or studies in order to obtain academic promotion, an academic title or an academic qualification.

Article (29): All universities and research institutions in the Kurdistan Region licensed by the Ministry must comply with these Guidelines. Where an institution fails to comply, wholly or partly, the Ministry shall withhold material and non-material support or suspend its operating licence until full compliance is achieved. These Guidelines are also binding on other governmental and non-governmental institutions in the administration of joint research and study projects with academic institutions, and projects submitted by faculty members.

Article (30): The Higher Committee shall not assess complaints or reports alleging breaches of these Guidelines by other persons; instead, it shall refer them to the Higher Committee of the university or institution in which the person complained against works, or directly to the judicial authorities for determination.

Article (31): The Minister, university president and Director General of Research and Development are responsible for applying and implementing these Guidelines.

Article (32): The Ministry/Department of Research and Development is responsible for implementing these Guidelines within the Ministry headquarters. A Higher Committee shall therefore be established, chaired by the Department's Director General and comprising seven (7) members selected by the Minister.

Article (33): In cases of the breaches specified in these Guidelines, a faculty member, student/learner or any other person must promptly submit a complaint to the Higher Committee or the three central committees for the necessary legal action.

Article (34): All public and private universities, boards, councils, university colleges, institutes and academic institutions in the Kurdistan Region must publish these Guidelines on their official websites.

Article (35): These Guidelines shall take effect from the date of issuance.

Article (36): Faculty members must sign the following undertaking, declaring their awareness of and commitment to these Guidelines. A copy shall be retained in the faculty member's professional file at the human resources department of the relevant university and at Ministry headquarters; otherwise, they shall have no right to teach.



Undertaking

I, the undersigned (full name:), a faculty member at (.....), declare that I have been informed of the provisions governing academic conduct at universities in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq and understand their content. I undertake to comply fully with the Guidelines and their provisions, and confirm that I have received a copy.

Full name:

Signature:

Date: / /

Reasons for Issuance

Work in higher education and scientific research is a profession of the highest standing and requires faculty members with sound academic conduct and advanced competence to improve teaching and learning and raise the standard and quality of education and research. In view of the absence of a comprehensive general policy encompassing all these procedures and mechanisms for academic integrity, and of the ethical principles and standards of conduct governing this field in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq, these Guidelines have been issued. Changes in scientific research and publishing brought about by the technological revolution and the use of artificial intelligence programmes by persons within and outside universities have led to departures from some of the principles addressed here. Printed and electronic publication has also developed unevenly, while forms of academic collaboration among researchers from different specialisations have diversified. For these reasons, these Guidelines establish a clear framework for appropriate scientific behaviour, academic conduct and impartiality across all universities and academic institutions in the Kurdistan Region.

Dr Aram Mohammed Qadir
Minister of Higher Education
and Scientific Research

Copy to:

- Office of His Excellency the Minister / For information, with respect.
- Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry / For information, with respect.
- All public universities in the Kurdistan Region / Office of the University President / For necessary action, with respect.
- Kurdistan Board for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research / Office of the Board President / For necessary action, with respect.
- Kurdistan Higher Council of Medical Specialties / Office of the Council President / For necessary action, with respect.
- All private university colleges, universities and institutes in the Kurdistan Region / Offices of the University President and College and Institute Deans / For necessary action, with respect.
- All departments at Ministry headquarters / Office of the Director General / For general information, with respect.
- Directorate of Postgraduate Studies / With its file.
- Issuance file.