

MAHER – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Doc No: MAHER/AIP/SOP/01

Version no.: 01

Date of Issue: 21/10/2020

Academic Integrity Panel

Preamble

The word “INTEGRITY” takes its origin from the Latin word “integer” which means “whole, undamaged or complete to the last detail”. Cornelius in 100 BC quantitatively defined integrity to mean “honest and incorruptible”. Historically publishing involved only works of literature, and literature always lauded works of creativity and a high content of fiction. However, the last five hundred years has seen a tremendous increase in the documentation of research in the form of scientific literature. And science, contrary to literature condemns fictitious reports or publishing. The focus of the international community shifted to integrity and honesty in research with the debacle that hit the US administration in the mid and late 1980s. This forced the US government to the Office of Scientific Integrity in 1989 which was subsequently renamed as the National Office of Research Integrity in 1992.

The University Grants Commission, India, has also now accepted “Research Integrity” as a core value to produce quality research and education in all Higher Education institutions (HEI) and has issued its notification and recommendation in 2018, which is to be followed by all its affiliated institutions. With these directives in consideration, this proposal has been drafted to establish Academic Integrity Panel for Meenakshiacademy of Higher education and Research (MAHER) and its constituent colleges.

Structure of Academic Integrity Panel MAHER

The proposal aims to establish the AIP at two levels

1. The **Institutional AIP (IAIP)**, which will be the first level of scrutiny and redressal but will also have the final rights to provide approval for ALL RESEARCH PRODUCE coming out of the respected constituent colleges and faculties.

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2. The **MAHER Academic Integrity Panel (MAHER AIP)** acts as first level of scrutiny and redressal for faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Physiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Yoga sciences and Therapy and Humanities and sciences.
3. Further it shall also hear the escalated conflicts and complaints by the IAIP and the constituent colleges.

Institutional AIP

- a. Chairman – Principal/Dean of the constituent college/faculty
- b. Member Secretary- Nominated by the head of the institution
- c. One senior member from all the departments
- d. One member from the Institutional Ethical Committee
- e. One external member (not affiliated to any of the constituent colleges/faculties of MAHER)
- f. A nominee from MAHER
- g. Legal expert

The tenure of the members in respect of points 'b,c,d,e,f and g' shall be two years. The quorum for the meetings shall be 2/3rds (including Chairman).

MAHER AIP

The MAHER AIP will be constituted on similar lines with a Chairman and members

- a. Chairman – (Pro-Chancellor/Vice-Chancellor/Pro-Vice Chancellor)
- b. Member Secretary – Registrar
- c. Principal/Dean/Head of the constituent colleges/faculties
- d. One member from the MAHER Ethical Committee
- e. One senior (External) member, not affiliated to MAHER
- f. One legal expert

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The tenure of the members in respect of points ‘c,d, e and f’ shall be two years. The quorum for the meetings shall be 2/3rds (including Chairman).

Objectives of the AIP

1. Awareness

- a. To create awareness about “Research Integrity” amongst the faculty, students and Research scholars of MAHER and its constituent colleges/faculties.
- b. To train faculty and students in identifying violations of research integrity and remedial steps to be followed in the event of such violations.
- c. To instruct the faculty and students in identifying and understanding plagiarism, levels of plagiarism and the impact of plagiarism in the research productivity of an institution.
- d. To provide instructions and guidance for faculty and students in understanding and performing similarity checks/text matching and scoring for research and publications
- e. To help define authorship guidelines and authorship responsibilities to faculty and students involved in research, publication and presentation.

2. Detection and Reporting

- a. To scrutinize the research produce of MAHER and its constituent colleges – dissertations and publications as a single channel gateway and provide official approval which will be declared in all research material.
- b. To identify and provide solutions for authorship conflicts.
- c. To identify potential as well as established conflicts of interest and guide in providing solutions.
- d. To maintain records of identified breaches in research integrity through complaints and representations of faculty/students of MAHER and its constituent colleges.

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- e. To maintain records of identified breaches in research integrity through the panels own scrutiny process.
- f. To help escalate the process if the IAIP is unable to provide an amicable resolution for the process or complaint.

3. Handling disputes and enforcing penalties

- a. All disputes regarding conflict of interest and authorships, will be initially handled by the IAIP, which may subsequently be escalated to the MAHER-AIP when necessary.
- b. All breaches of research integrity will be heard by the IAIP and necessary actions will be instituted in the form of recommendations as well as penalties in cases of severe misconduct

4. Approval of dissertations, theses and research papers for publication

- a. All dissertation topics along with the synopsis and research proposal has to be presented in front of the IAIP. Subsequently submitted to the MAHER-AIP with the approval of the IAIP for FINAL APPROVAL
- b. All planned research publications along with the synopsis and research proposal has to be presented in front of the IAIP. Subsequently send to the MAHER-AIP with the approval of the IAIP for FINAL APPROVAL
- c. The panel reserves the right to offer modifications and suggestions to dissertation topics and potential publications, when indicated
- d. The panel reserves the right to reject dissertation topics and research publications from obtaining approval if found to be inappropriate.
- e. Approval for is provided for the dissertations/theses to be placed in the INLFIBNET repository and publications to be submitted to journals.

Work-flow of the AIP

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Dissertation / Research publication – student/faculty

Institutional AI panel (IAIP)

Checks for potential conflicts, authorships, similarity indices and plagiarism

FINAL APPROVAL of proposals and synopsis for Dissertations / Publications

Maintaining open access principle where applicable - Uploading of our dissertation and publications in PUBLIC DOMAIN

Only unsettled conflicts, escalations and appeals from the IAIP will be heard and scrutinized by the MAHER-AIP.

Formulation of a thesis/dissertation policy

It is the belief of MAHER that there is a need for producing original work in cases of thesis/dissertations. For this the following workflow has been suggested

1. The student/scholar needs to identify an area of research and submit it to the guide.
2. The guide needs to assess originality of the research topic by referencing it against the existing repositories of INFLIBNET and world wide web for dissertation and thesis and identify potential conflicts and breach of integrity
3. Once the guide is satisfied with the scrutiny, it has to be presented to the IAIP with a signed certificate from the student/scholar and guide accepting responsibility for the originality of work
4. The IAIP needs to approve the study and provide final approval
5. The IAIP needs to provide the final approval and follows up on the successful completion of the research with the post completion upload of the work on to the INFLIBNET repository for open access

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Formulation of a publication policy (Publication guidelines of MAHER)

A policy similar to the above has been formulated for enhancing the quality of research publications from MAHER. The suggested workflow is as follows

1. The student/faculty needs to identify an area of research
2. The guide/faculty needs to assess originality of the research topic by referencing it against the existing search engine databases like Scopus, web of science or medline/pubmed and identify potential repetitions, conflicts and breach of integrity
3. Once the guide/faculty is satisfied with the scrutiny, it has to be presented to the IAIP with a signed certificate from the student/faculty and guide accepting responsibility for the originality of work
4. The student/faculty needs to identify a suitable journal which has been approved by the UGC CARE guidelines under different groups
5. The IAIP needs to approve the study and the journal and provide final approval
6. The IAIP needs to provide the final approval and follows up on the successful completion of the research with the post completion publication and referencing from the respective database/search engines.

Penalties for breach of Academic Integrity (AI)-MAHER guidelines

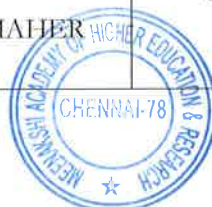
The management and administration of MAHER wishes to put on record that academic offences and breaches of AI would be viewed very seriously and the MAHER its constituent colleges/faculties hold all rights to pronounce penalties and enforce them in situations warranting action.

The penalties are described and tabulated below taking into consideration differences between dissertation/thesis and research publications/research projects as per the UGC guidelines.

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Levels	Similarity score	Penalty	Repeat penalty
0	<10%	Warning with suggested corrections	
1	10 - 40%	REVISION within 6 months	Handled at level +1
2	40 – 60%	DEBARRMENT from project for 1 year	
3	>60%	Student – CANCELLATION of registration	

Levels	Similarity score/Additional breaches of AI	Penalty	Repeat penalty
0	• <10%	Warning with memo documentation	
1	10 - 40%	WITHDRAWL of manuscript/Project Proposal	Handled at level +1
2	40 – 60% Undisclosed personal conflicts of interest	WITHDRAWL of manuscript DENIAL of one annual increment DENIAL of Masters/PhD students for 2 years	Handled at level +1
3	>60% • Undisclosed financial conflicts of interests • Established Gift/Predatory authorships • Established Gift/Predatory investigatorships	WITHDRAWL of manuscript DENIAL of 2 annual increment/Demotion of designation DENIAL of Masters/PhD students for 3 years	SUSPENSION / TERMINATION

UGC guidelines on identification and penalties for plagiarism

(UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PREVENTION OF PLAGIARISM IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS) REGULATIONS, 2018)

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12.1 Penalties in case of plagiarism in submission of thesis and dissertations

Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP) shall impose penalty considering the severity of the Plagiarism.

- i. Level 0: Similarities upto 10% - Minor Similarities, no penalty.
- ii. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40% - Such student shall be asked to submit a revised script within a stipulated time period not exceeding 6 months.
- iii. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60% - Such student shall be debarred from submitting a revised script for a period of one year.
- iv. Level 3: Similarities above 60% -Such student registration for that programme shall be cancelled.

Note 1: Penalty on repeated plagiarism- Such student shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the previous level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the degree/credit has already been obtained - If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of award of degree or credit as the case may be then his/her degree or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period recommended by the IAIP and approved by the Head of the Institution.

12.2 Penalties in case of plagiarism in academic and research publications

- I. Level 0: Similarities up to 10% - Minor similarities, no penalty.
- II. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%
 - i) Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
- III. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%
 - i) Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
 - ii) Shall be denied a right to one annual increment.
 - iii) Shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. Student/scholar for a period of two years.
- IV. Level 3: Similarities above 60%
 - i) Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
 - ii) Shall be denied a right to two successive annual increments.
 - iii) Shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. Student/scholar for a period of three years.

Note 1: Penalty on repeated plagiarism - Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript and shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the lower level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative. In case level 3 offence is repeated then the disciplinary action including suspension/termination as per service rules shall be taken by the HEI.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the benefit or credit has already been obtained - If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of benefit or credit obtained as the case may be then his/her benefit or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period recommended by IAIP and approved by the Head of the Institution.

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