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‘Guidelines and Code of Ethics for Responsible Conduct of Research’





NICHE - Guidelines and Code of Ethics for Responsible Conduct of Research

Preamble:

Ethics and honesty are the two important moral values of the academic activities (Teaching and Research) which are the major duties of academicians. Teaching and Research are noble professional activities whose foundation lies on extremely high moral values based works. While carrying out these activities there cannot be any room for claiming credit for the work she/he has not made. Many times it is observed that some of the academicians knowingly or unknowingly publish or present other's work as their own. Such acts will affect healthy academic atmosphere in the Institute which will also harm the reputation of the Institute as well as the individual. It is therefore important for an academic Institute like NICHE to have in place a policy on plagiarism to avoid such type of acts.

Introduction

Starting with the notion of academic freedom as the leading principle of our research, at all levels, the NICHE is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of integrity and accountability in the conduct of academic research and is keen to embed and endorse a culture of honesty and transparency in all its institutional activities. In undertaking this commitment, NICHE emphasizes that academic freedom is a core value to be safeguarded and sustained. NICHE is dedicated to provide for a free academic environment to conduct research, to teach, to disseminate and to publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth, knowledge, scholarship and/or understanding may lead.

NICHE requires that its members (teaching staff, fellows, research scholars, PG and UG students as well as administrative and support staff) abide by the highest standards of integrity in their conduct of research and/or support to research activities.

Definition of Research Misconduct

Misconduct in academic research implies (and is not limited to) fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research and deliberate dangerous proposals and solutions or negligent deviations from accepted practice while carrying out research. It includes failure to follow an agreed protocol if and when this failure results in unreasonable risk or harms the persons, the environment, and when it facilitates misconduct in research by collusion in or concealment of, such actions by others. Misconduct also includes any plan or attempt to do any of these acts. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretation or judgment in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to research processes.

Plagiarism



Plagiarism is a cognizable offence. The core work carried out by the students, research scholar, faculty members and staff members shall be based on original ideas and shall be covered by Zero Tolerance Policy on Plagiarism. The core works are reported through the presentation of documents that include abstract, summary, hypothesis, observations, results, conclusions and recommendations. Every research submission will be accompanied by an undertaking by the researcher indicating that the document is his/ her original work and free of any plagiarism and contain a bibliographic reference of the referred part.

1. DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as presenting another person's work as one's own work. Presentation includes copying or reproducing it without the acknowledgement of the source. Plagiarism involves copying of phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or longer extracts from published or unpublished work (including from the Internet) that exceeds the boundaries of the legitimate cooperation without acknowledgement of the source. Plagiarism could be intentional (dishonest plagiarism) or non-intentional (negligent plagiarism).

2. OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of promulgating guidelines and code of ethics for effect of responsible conduct of research at NICHE.

- a. To create academic awareness about responsible conduct of research, study, project, assignment, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity-and prevention of misconduct including plagiarism in academic writing among students, researchers, faculty members and other members of academic staff as well as any employee of NICHE.
- b. To establish institutional mechanism through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research and promote academic integrity while carrying out studies , execution of project work, assignments and to ensure deterrence from plagiarism while writing thesis and dissertation.
- c. To develop systems to detect plagiarism and to set up mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and penalize the student, faculty member or staff member committing the act of plagiarism.

3. DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

It is the prime responsibility of an Institute or individual to distinguish original content from plagiarized work. The detection of plagiarism is a judgment to be made by a person who understands the subject and who is also aware of the definition of plagiarism. Such person should also be aware of the tools available to detect the plagiarism. In NICHE, best tools / software packages are used to detect plagiarism. It is important for an academic Institute to educate its students and teaching community about what constitutes plagiarism, how it is detected and of course the action that is going to follow if plagiarism is proved.



4. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ALLEGED PLAGIARISM

A transparent, error proof and bias free procedure is followed at NICHE for handling cases involving alleged plagiarism. The precautions and care taken at NICHE while implementing this procedure are mentioned under the following three sub sections.

a. Procedural Fairness

NICHE is committed to deal with alleged plagiarism in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, including the right to:

- Be informed of the allegations against the individual in sufficient detail to enable the individual to understand the precise nature of the allegations and to properly consider and respond.
- Have a reasonable period of time within which to respond to the allegations against the individual.
- Have the matter resolved in a timely manner.
- Impartiality in any investigation process.
- The absence of bias in any decision making.

b. Identification and Assessment of Alleged Plagiarism

When an examiner appointed from within or outside NICHE detects or is informed of alleged plagiarism by any individual, the examiner must report the alleged plagiarism to an empowered body for confirming first if there is a plagiarism or not; if it is, then whether it is negligent or dishonest type and assess the degree of such plagiarism. This empowered body will then submit its report along with its recommendation to statutory bodies which are empowered to take disciplinary actions. The severity of plagiarism will be quantified and categorized under the following levels in ascending order of severity.

Similarities up to 20% - (not considered for reporting and taking actions and excluded from further considerations)

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c. Counseling

As the detection of plagiarism and steps to prevent it are important, students and scholars are educated at NICHE about the dangers of plagiarism. At NICHE, steps are taken to strengthen the moral of students/scholars so that they do not take support of the unfair-means.

5. GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

NICHE will form a committee of about five experts who will establish whether there is a plagiarism or not, if it is then this committee will assess the level of such plagiarism. This committee will have a Head of the Department/Dean or the Director as an ex-officio member. This committee will submit its report to the Academic Council/BRDC for making a final



decision in this regard. The committee of experts will use the best possible software packages provided by UGC or National Knowledge Commission for detecting the plagiarism. Depending on the severity of the committed plagiarism which will be measured in terms of the levels mentioned in the previous section, the punishment that will be awarded to the individual who committed such plagiarism could be:

- Fine or Warning
- Permanent rustication for a limited period.
- Withdrawal of degree

The action taken on the act of plagiarism will be ratified in the meetings of the Academic Council and the Board of Management.