Somaiya Institute for Research and Consultancy

Research Policy
Somaiya Vidyavihar University

1. Preamble

The fundamental mission of Somaiya Vidyavihar University lies in the collaboration between research and academics, serving as the cornerstone for the establishment of a knowledge society. Within this University, a culture that embraces multidisciplinary approaches fosters the flourishing of both fundamental and practical research derived from a profound understanding of core subjects. Somaiya Vidyavihar University is involved in research and innovation in multiple subject domains ranging from management, science, education, dharma studies, sports, design, engineering and technology, humanities, and interdisciplinary studies to tackle the urgent challenges faced by society. This research policy provides a set of guidelines for the implementation of research activities at the university, applicable to all faculty members and research students, regardless of their full-time or part-time status. The primary objective of the research policy is to promote contextual research in alignment with the priority areas at the state, national, and global levels. It is designed to offer a comprehensive framework and set established norms and standards governing the safe and ethical conduct of research. It outlines a vision within which research activities shall be conducted.

2. SCOPE

The research policy is relevant to all researchers associated with the constituent colleges, institutes, centers, schools, and campuses within Somaiya Vidyavihar University. It is in accordance with the goals of Atmanirbhar (Self-reliant) Bharat, Start-up India, Net Zero Emission, Renewable Energy and Fuel Mission, and complies with the stipulations outlined in the National Education Policy 2020, Scientific Social Responsibility Policy 2022, as well as the Science and Technology Policy.

This document provides:

i.   Guidelines for research conduct, publications ethics, research promotion & communication.
ii. Measures to promote research and innovation across SVU to enhance the quality of research conducted by various institutes.
iii. The roles, responsibilities, and ownership of researchers and institutions.

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3. Objectives

The Research Objectives of the Somaiya Vidyavihar University are-

- To encourage faculty members to pursue active research and strengthen the research profile of the university.

- To facilitate researchers to carry out multidisciplinary and collaborative research, within and outside the various departments/institutes of the University.

- To support faculty members to apply for intramural and extramural funding.

- To create state-of the-art research facilities to support the researchers.

- To align the research conducted at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels with the university's research objectives, in harmony with the national priority areas.

- To promote translational research aimed at transforming innovations, newly acquired knowledge, technologies, and tools into processes and products viable for both commercialization and societal advancement.

- To prioritize specific research domains and initiate the formation of research teams, consortia, or collaborations dedicated to addressing thrust areas that align with societal needs.

- To create an awareness for ethical conduct of research, maintain transparency and avoid conflict of interest.

- To inspire and promote the publication of research findings in well-regarded SCOPUS and/or WEB OF SCIENCE (ABDC), peer-reviewed academic journals.

- To facilitate and promote the dissemination of research outcomes through various academic events, including symposia, seminars, workshops, guest lectures etc. to enhance the recognition and impact of research activities of SVU.

4. Research Governance – Administration and Management

Somaiya Vidyavihar University aims to establish a comprehensive foundation for its academic and research endeavours. This foundation encompasses the development of human resources (faculty, staff, scholars, and students), logistical support (land, infrastructure, and facilities), knowledge resources (research literature, research equipment, project resources, and consumables), and the effective management of financial resources for research. Achieving this goal necessitates a well-structured and proficient governance framework, guided by established rules, norms, and policies, along with prudent financial management, including the management of the university budget, grants, and funds allocated for research. The Research and Development cell, known as Board of University

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Teaching and Research (BUTR), will play a pivotal role in Research Governance in the University.

4.1 <u>Board of University Teaching and Research</u> -The activities related to research within Somaiya Vidyavihar University will be governed by a set of norms formulated by the Board of University Teaching and Research (BUTR). BUTR is in existence and constituted as per the guidelines of Clause no. 26 of the first Statutes of SVU and it typically convenes twice a year.

4.2 <u>Somaiya Institute for Research and Consultancy -</u>

The Somaiya Institute for Research and Consultancy (SIRAC) role involves initiating research ideas, fostering, nurturing, and facilitating collaborative and interdisciplinary research projects that span across various disciplines within the Higher Education Institutes and Schools of Somaiya Vidyavihar and Ayurvihar.

4.2.1 <u>Research Management</u>

The intention is to devise strategies for amalgamating various functional units into a unified operational system, creating a single point of access for efficient administration and effective research management at Somaiya Vidyavihar University.

a. Intramural Seed funding – This encompasses the screening, assessment, evaluation and selection of research projects, allocation of initial approval orders for projects and periodic monitoring of the progress of funded teams' research activities.

b. IPR, ethical and legal matters - To effectively safeguard the intellectual property rights arising from research at constituent units of SVU, an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cell is established and managed by SIRAC. This cell shall provide guidance on protecting various forms of intellectual property, including processes, products, technological inventions, and artistic creations, for both faculty and students. The overarching framework for managing intellectual property rights aligns with the established IPR policy of Somaiya Vidyavihar University.

5. Research Workforce

5.1 <u>Research Faculty</u>

Somaiya Vidyavihar University advocates the selection of faculty members based on their research accomplishments, ensuring well-balanced work responsibilities that allow them to actively participate in research, academic, and administrative duties. Additionally, the university encourages institute heads, with approval from the Vice-Chancellor, to contemplate the reappointment or designation of retired faculty members or scientists with exemplary research backgrounds as Mentors, Scientists, Chair Professors, Professor Emeritus and Professor of Eminence, selectively. This initiative aims to cultivate a strong research

culture by providing mentorship and guidance by experienced and accomplished faculty members or research scientists with national and international experience to the Research Community in SVU.

5.2 Post-Doctoral and Research Fellows

The university actively promotes and endeavours to attract researchers holding prestigious fellowships such as DST-Ramanujan, DBT-Ramalingaswami, DST Inspire, and DST Women Scientists to become integral parts of our research ecosystem. The applications shall be encouraged throughout the year, and the selected fellows shall be appointed at the Somaiya Institute for Research and Consultancy. In addition to their research responsibilities, these fellows may be provided with the opportunity to engage in teaching, tutoring, and mentoring students within the institutes under Somaiya Vidyavihar University.

5.3 Research and Teaching Associates (RTAs)

The university selects Research and Teaching Associates (RTAs) through SIRAC for each institute to conduct doctoral research. RTAs are involved in providing teaching assistance to faculty members, with a maximum commitment of 10 hours per week. The qualifications and selection process for RTAs is modelled on National Junior Research Fellowships. The maximum age limit for RTA applicants is below 30 years.

5.4 Research Associates (RAs)

Depending upon the requirement, Institutes and Colleges may hire Research Associates through a selection committee, which includes the Dean of Research or a nominee as one of its members. There is no age limit for the recruitment of Research Associates. In addition to working on research projects, they may be provided an opportunity to engage in teaching or tutoring subject to requirement.

5.5 Ph.D.

Students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. at SVU can do so by successfully clearing the SVU-PhD entrance examination, followed by a subsequent interview. Once provisionally admitted or selected, students are required to complete one year of coursework to confirm their enrollment and secure their seats in the program. Candidates who have successfully qualified through a national examination with a valid certificate are not required to take the SVU entrance exam.

6. Research Awards and Recognition

An annual research budget is sanctioned every year by Somaiya Vidyavihar University to cater to the research needs of the University.

6.1. Institute funds

Respective Institutes can support and encourage researchers depending upon the individual institute budgets. The selection will be at the institute level, based on their guidelines and format, and shall adopt the options given below.

   i. providing support money for research; and/or
  ii. provide registration money and/or travel fare for conferences or seminars; and/or
 iii. provide cash prize for research publications/granted patents/extramural funding received by the University. The publications must be in high-impact factor peer-reviewed journals. The extramural funding must be on emerging thrust areas and must have a significant impact on the research credentials of the University.

The same will be reviewed from time to time by the BUTR.

6.2 External funding and consultancy

   i. Prior to submission, all applications for external research funding must undergo a review process by the Head of the Respective Institute/College in SVU. A record of all the submitted applications shall be maintained by the Head of the Institute/College and shall be made available to the Dean Research Office as and when necessary.

  ii. Researchers are strongly encouraged to submit their projects to various funding agencies. The Dean of Research, or an equivalent authority at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, shall closely monitor upcoming opportunities from different funding agencies that are soliciting research proposals for funding.

 iii. Faculty members and other researchers are required to adhere to the prescribed guidelines, norms, and procedures when managing external research, consultancy, and other contracts.

 iv. Faculty members can request leave to support their research efforts, including Overseas Conference Leave. Such requests should be submitted to their respective College/Institute for approval, following the leave rules established by their College/Institute or the equivalent governing body of Somaiya Vidyavihar University once the necessary requirements have been met.

6.3 Travel & Conference Grant

The policy will be announced by the HR and Registrar's office and the same will be circulated to all the faculty of Somaiya Vidyavihar University.

6.3.1 Research Scholarships

The existing Research and Teaching Associates (RTA) program is already established, and additional funds and scholarships may be incrementally introduced each year to further support these initiatives.

6.3.2 Excellence in Research Awards

Research faculty members with exceptional research achievements shall be recognized and honored with the "Dr. S. K. Somaiya Award for Excellence in Research." This annual award evaluates research accomplishments over the preceding five years, acknowledging and celebrating outstanding contributions to the field.

7. Basic Obligations and Responsibilities

7.1. The University shall implement appropriate steps to disseminate any information to the research community and keep them updated on regulatory framework relevant to research.

7.2. Code of Ethics: Upholding professional standards in research requires adherence to the principles of professionalism, encompassing qualities such as honesty, integrity, objectivity, accuracy, reliability, excellence, and quality in all research processes.

7.3. Researcher/Principal Investigator (PI)/Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) - The primary responsibility for the selection and execution of research lies with the researcher/PI/Co-PI. He/she/they should: i. Conduct research with honesty and integrity. ii. Familiarize themselves with and adhere to the regulatory framework, regulations, policies, and guidelines of relevant agencies. iii. Never misrepresent their academic, professional, or employment qualifications or experience. iv. Obtain necessary approvals, including but not limited to ethics, protocol, and standard operating procedure approvals, before commencing research activities that require prior approval. v. Maintain a comprehensive record of research outcomes in a shareable format. vi. Publish their research findings, except where the University has a valid reason for withholding them.

7.4 Supervisors/guides involved in research should take reasonable steps to: i. Ensure that assigned students are well-informed about their obligations regarding academic integrity and ethical research conduct. ii. Provide students with any research-related documents they are required to sign. iii. Disclose to students any special conditions, such as restrictions on publication, limitations on future data use, and intellectual property ownership, which could impact a student's decision to participate in the research.

8. Authorship, Publication and Communication

i.   Somaiya Vidyavihar University encourages faculty to publish their completed research work ONLY in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus /Web-of-Science.

ii. Researchers MUST avoid publishing in predatory/dubious journals or any association in any capacity with them.

iii. Publications in dubious/predatory/deceptive journals and conferences will not be considered for any academic benefits.

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iv. Prior to submission, it is mandatory to generate a report for plagiarism check, using appropriate software available to all faculty, researchers, and students.

v. The University shall raise awareness within the research community regarding questionable research practices, unethical publishing, and predatory journals.

vi. The researcher must update the information related to all their research publications in the faculty profile.

vii. Somaiya Vidyavihar University expects all research outputs emanating from its portal to be made publicly available.

viii. It is the responsibility of the researcher/faculty to ensure rightful distribution of the authorship of published work. It must include names of only those who have made significant scholarly contributions to the work.

ix. Research faculty must ensure that in cases of co-authored publications primarily based on a student's work, including dissertations or theses, the student is given appropriate recognition as first author, following the established conventions of the respective discipline.

x. In the absence of a formal agreement among research collaborators, the following principles will determine the order of authorship attribution:

   a. Authorship should be credited to researchers who have made significant scholarly contributions to the work and share responsibility and accountability for the outcomes.

   b. Authorship attribution is contingent on:

      i. The quality and quantity of a researcher's contributions.

      ii. The level of responsibility and accountability a researcher holds for the results.

      iii. The order of authorship should not be influenced by factors such as compensation for contributions, employment status, or seniority.

xi. Individuals who solely provide administrative and/or managerial support to a collaborative research project do not qualify for co-authorship.

xii. Researchers and faculty members at this university are prohibited from engaging in or offering their services as ghostwriters for any research publications.

xiii. All research-related materials such as powerpoint presentations, posters, brochures, flyers, pamphlets, and any other publications (excluding journals and books) must adhere to the University's branding guidelines.

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xiv. The Research Community shall engage with the PR team to actively communicate their research activities.

xv. The University Library and Information Technology shall work on a portal for Institutional Research Repository and signing of MoU with UGC- INFLIBNET to access and upload the research information through Shodh Ganga.

9. Collaboration and external research

i. Researchers are prohibited from entering or participating in any agreement where an agency or individual with a vested interest conceals information that may influence the interpretation of research findings.

ii. The Principal Investigator is responsible for adhering to the relevant regulatory framework applicable to the research project and for keeping the research team informed of the necessary compliance.

iii. When a Researcher conducts research for an external agency that falls outside their academic responsibilities to the University, the following guidelines apply:

   a. The Researcher must uphold integrity and adhere to the highest ethical standards.
   b. Compliance with the disclosure requirements of the Regulatory Framework governing conflicts of interest, conflicts of commitment, and consulting activities is mandatory.
   c. The Researcher is required to submit a letter from the external agency or personnel to the Dean of Research, with a copy provided to the Head of the Institute and the Registrar. The letter should state that the "Activities (specify) undertaken by the researcher (name) are carried out in their private capacity, not as an employee or representative of the University."
   d. The Researcher must not utilize university personnel, equipment, or facilities without obtaining written approval for such usage from the Dean of Research and must make provisions for financial arrangements to reimburse the University in advance for such use.

iv. Consultancy Policy- The University permits their faculty members to participate in consultancy services/projects if these activities do not impede their regular duties. Engaging in consultancies requires the prior approval of the designated Research and Development (R&D) Cell or Heads. The revenue-sharing structure for consultancy and related services may be in the range of 30- 70% depending on the utilization of the Institution's resources. The same will be reviewed from time to time by the BUTR and other statutory bodies of SVU.

10. Research Misconduct, Disputes, and Disciplinary Action

i. The Board of Research and Consultancy of the University would ensure that ethical approaches are followed in the pursuit of research.

ii. An intentional act of plagiarizing, stealing, fabricating, and falsifying data and results is a grave offense. It will be dealt with according to UGC Regulations for Plagiarism "Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions (HEI)" 2018.

iii. The University is dedicated to safeguarding its employees from unfounded accusations and will respond to any individual(s) responsible for making such claims.

iv. Disputants (collaborators/project team members) must first attempt to resolve their dispute amicably between themselves; in absence of amicable resolution the disputants can approach the Dean, Research of the Institute and/or Director-Research, Somaiya Vidyavihar University for redressal.

The decision of the Vice Chancellor in any research-related dispute will be conclusive and binding.