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To: Academic and Research Community of NDU

Subject: **NDU Guidelines for Ethical and Credible Research Publishing**

اسلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ

Dear Sir/ Madam,

1. In line with the recommendations of the Research Validation Committee (RVC), approved by the President of NDU on 10 December 2025, all research work must be published exclusively in credible and reputable journals. Ensuring the quality and integrity of scholarly publications is essential not only for safeguarding individual academic standing but also for protecting and enhancing the institutional reputation of NDU.
2. Authors must exercise due diligence before submitting manuscripts to any journal or research publishing outlet. This includes reviewing the quality and consistency of previously published issues, confirming transparent and credible peer-review and editorial policies, verifying the academic standing of editorial board members, and ensuring that the journal is not under suspension, delisting, or withholding status.
3. It has been observed that some journals and publishers engage in questionable practices that undermine academic standards. These practices include, but are not limited to, unrealistically rapid peer-review processes; unclear or non-transparent editorial policies; inadequate or superficial peer review; guaranteed or unusually rapid acceptance; ghost publishing practices, including uncredited authorship or misattributed contributions; false, misleading, or unverifiable indexing claims; and fictitious or misrepresented editorial boards. In addition, hijacked or cloned journals—which falsely present themselves as legitimate publications—pose a serious threat to research integrity. Publications appearing in such outlets, or in journals making deceptive claims regarding indexing status or impact

metrics, may not be recognized for academic evaluation, promotion, research assessment, or institutional reporting.

4. For internationally indexed journals, authors may verify journal status through Scopus and Web of Science using the free limited-access logins provided, including checks for any withholding, suppression, or coverage changes. Journal Citation Reports (JCR) may also be consulted to assess impact factors and citation data. The HEC Journal Recognition Policy 2024 not only governs national journals but also provides categorization of international journals, which should be taken into account when selecting publication outlets. Additional guidance is available through the QEC NDU Checklist for Quality Journals, accessible on the NDU website

5. Authors are strongly encouraged to consult resources such as Retraction Watch, Cabells' List, and Beall's List to avoid publishing in or citing retracted, predatory, or otherwise dubious journals. Staying informed through reputable publishers and organizations—such as Elsevier, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), which promotes transparency and ethical standards in open-access publishing, and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)—and participating in Web of Science e-training, made available to universities through the HEC website, is also recommended.

6. By adhering to these guidelines, researchers can ensure that their work meets ethical standards, gains appropriate academic recognition, and contributes meaningfully to their discipline. Publications appearing in journals later found to be compromised, delisted status may not be recognized for official academic purposes. Compliance with this guideline is mandatory to uphold academic integrity and research excellence at NDU.

7. This guideline is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



Dir QEC
(Dr Farrukh Idrees)

