Guide to Scientific Integrity Policies and Research Ethics at Onaizah Colleges

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Research Center



In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Introduction

Disregarding research ethics is a serious violation that affects both the scientific and ethical integrity of research work. Researchers need to respect the privacy, academic integrity, and professional conduct of their peers. Distorting the objective nature of the research process by introducing personal biases directly contradicts the core principles of research ethics. Therefore, Onaizah colleges seek to promote scientific integrity and uphold the highest standards of ethical practices in research. The colleges' goal is to enhance the credibility of research outputs, intellectual contributions, and patents generated through the management of research initiatives within the colleges. This effort aims to establish a distinguished reputation both locally and internationally for maintaining exceptional standards of scientific integrity.

The colleges are committed to adhering to necessary regulations for publishing all scientific articles, to minimize any violations that may occur in the absence of a regulatory body monitoring and organizing the ethical aspects of scientific research. Onaizah Colleges aim to avoid any unprofessional conduct within academic and scientific communities, both locally and internationally. Furthermore, the colleges emphasize transparency in scientific publishing and the disclosure of any material or immaterial conflicts of interest when writing research papers and proposals, and during the peer-review process.

Onaizah Colleges have prioritized research ethics in alignment with Islamic teachings and human rights. In accordance with the national policy on scientific integrity and research ethics issued by the Research, Development, and Innovation Authority (RDIA) in the education and science sector of Saudi Arabia, the 2022 guideline for research policies and procedures at Onaizah Colleges confirms that:

> Onaizah Colleges are committed to upholding global ethical standards in research conducted by researchers within the college community, whether directly funded by Onaizah Colleges or supported by external sources. The colleges are also dedicated to supporting research integrity to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with ethical principles and rigorous standards.

Purpose of the Guide

Onaizah Colleges aim, through this guide, to protect intellectual property and the creative output produced by faculty members, staff, students, and anyone associated with the colleges. This guide represents an important phase that the colleges emphasize to educate all researchers and affiliates about the rights of others in the field of scientific research, while striving to maintain the integrity of scientific production related to the colleges. Additionally, the guide outlines the necessary procedures to protect intellectual property rights within the research scope of the colleges. It aims to establish guidelines and regulations to prevent unintentional violations of others' intellectual property while ensuring the ethical and strategic utilization of intellectual property to advance the research and institutional objectives of the colleges.

Meaning of Scientific Integrity

Scientific integrity is one of the most fundamental principles that ensures the credibility and reliability of rigorous research. It is one of the essential ethical obligations for researchers across all academic disciplines. This principle requires strict adherence to proper scientific methodologies, including the accurate acknowledgment of original sources for all ideas and information. This requires researchers to uphold honesty and transparency throughout every stage of the research process, thereby ensuring the credibility and reliability of scholarly work.
Scientific integrity can be achieved in various ways, including:

1. Maintaining others' ownership: Attributing quotes, innovations, and information to their rightful owners.
2. Reviewing others' ideas and research methodologies: Presenting them without undermining their intentions.
3. Exercising caution in transcribing texts: Ensuring accurate attribution to their authors, free from errors, distortion, or alterations in writing style.
4. Presenting evidence of opposing views: Maintaining honesty and objectivity when criticizing the researcher's theoretical interpretation.

Accurate and precise attribution of scientific ideas to their original authors is crucial for protecting their intellectual property, preserving their rights, and ensuring that their scientific contributions are properly recognized and not overlooked. It also enables readers to evaluate the ideas presented in a researcher's work, distinguish them from the researcher's own contributions, track the evolution of their thoughts, and understand the objectives of the research. This, in turn, helps clarify the supporting discussion points.

The preservation of scientific integrity is fundamental to intellectual property protection, fostering trust in the research and academic work conducted at the colleges, whether presented by students as part of course requirements or in the pursuit of their academic degrees.

Meaning of Violating Scientific Integrity Principles

Violations of scientific integrity principles occur when another person's ideas or works are used without proper citation, whether directly or through paraphrasing. This practice breaches both literary and scientific standards, whether it is done intentionally or unintentionally. In other words, these violations involve the unauthorized use of others' work, undermining the credibility of scientific research.

Violations of scientific integrity occur also when researchers quote or replicate text from Arabic or foreign sources without properly citing or attributing it to the original authors, which constitutes plagiarism and violates intellectual property rights. It is crucial for researchers to accurately document all quotations in a systematic and scientific manner to protect themselves and avoid legal consequences, even when referencing their own prior work. Additionally, researchers must respect the rights of others and adhere to research ethics, as plagiarism is a serious violation of scientific integrity that can lead to significant penalties.

Furthermore, these violations are actions that fundamentally contradict the principles of scientific integrity. Such behaviors include manipulating results, fabricating ideas, or misattributing work to individuals other than the original authors with the intent to deceive. Among these, scientific plagiarism is one of the most prevalent and serious offenses, as it infringes upon intellectual property rights and can result in legal repercussions. Additionally, these violations undermine the contributions of original authors and provide an unfair advantage to the researcher or student, disadvantaging peers who rely on their own efforts and adhere to the principles of scientific integrity.

Violations of scientific integrity encompass various forms, such as:

1. The adoption of an entire or partial scientific work by a plagiarist, claiming it as their own, which involves removing the original author's name and replacing it with their own.
2. Quoting ideas from specific research work and reorganizing or rephrasing them without referencing the original author. This also includes transferring information from printed or electronic sources and using it without adhering to proper citation rules for such sources.
3. Using data, such as maps, tables, and experimental results, without citing the original sources from which they were obtained.
4. Commissioning another person to write a research paper or project, whether for payment or not.
5. Using information from a specific source without placing quotation marks or clarifying its origin.
6. Including fictitious references that the researcher did not consult to increase the number of references in the study.
7. Inaccurately conveying the opinions of authors, such as attributing a view to an author that they did not express or misinterpreting a view to support the researcher's perspective.
8. Altering or deleting parts of texts to align with the researcher's inclinations and preferences.
9. Disregarding evidence that supports opposing views while only highlighting evidence that supports the researcher's opinion.
10. Failing to attribute the quoted text or idea to the original author.
11. Replacing certain words or results to make them appear as the researcher's invention.
12. Translating works without obtaining permission from the rights holder of the original work.

Importance of Avoiding Violations of Scientific Integrity Principles

Properly crediting scientific ideas to their original authors is essential in academic research. This practice protects the intellectual property rights of scholars, ensuring their contributions are acknowledged and maintained. It also helps readers differentiate between the researcher's own ideas and those of others, offering clarity on the research direction and objectives while promoting insightful discussions.

1. Deception and breach of trust: Any violations of scientific integrity principles are a form of deception, as they present the works of others in a distorted manner and falsely claim ownership.
2. Violation of copyright: Failing to obtain permission from the original author can lead to legal consequences, including fines and legal issues.
3. Negative impact on others: Violations of scientific integrity principles undermine the efforts of others, giving an unfair advantage to those who engage in such practices over those who work diligently on their research.
4. Promoting academic ethics: The commitment of faculty members to ethical standards enhances the quality of scientific research, ensuring fairness and equal opportunities, which reduces unfair practices in promotions and incentives.
5. Creating a healthy competitive environment: Adherence to work ethics fosters fair competition among faculty members, increasing their scientific output and positively impacting student performance.
6. Violation of the scientific integrity charter: Any violations of scientific integrity principles represent a breach of the scientific integrity charter, negatively affecting the reputation of research programs, universities, and countries in general.

Types of violations of scientific integrity principles

Violations of scientific integrity principles can be classified into six main types:

1. **Violation due to direct copying and pasting:**
   This occurs when text or sentences are used as they are from the original source without quotation marks or citation.
2. **Violation by changing or replacing words:**
   This involves quoting text from a specific source while altering some words and rephrasing it to make it seem original. Although rephrasing is possible, it is always necessary to cite the original source.
3. **Violation resulting from mimicking writing style:**
   This includes following the same structure or method used in the original text's writing and sequencing, which may not align with the current topic, thus violating the originality of the idea and style.
4. **Violation through borrowing from other sources:**
   This is used to clarify or support a specific idea, but the borrowed information must be documented and the original source cited.
5. **Violation through plagiarism of ideas:**
   This involves including information or ideas from other sources without proper attribution, instead of documentation within the text or in the reference list, to ensure academic integrity.
6. **Violation through identity theft:**
   This refers to presenting work, ideas, or research results under someone else's name, including exploiting another researcher's name in research works without their knowledge or consent. This can occur intentionally, where the researcher attributes work to someone else who did not perform it, or accidentally, due to a lack of understanding of proper citation rules.

Reasons leading to violations of scientific integrity principles

The factors that increase the likelihood of violations of scientific integrity principles can be summarized as follows:

1. **Weak Research Skills:** Lack of mastery of research techniques may lead to difficulties in gathering information correctly.
2. **Weak Language Skills:** A deficiency in linguistic expression may lead some individuals to copy texts instead of rephrasing them.
3. **Low Awareness of Risks:** A lack of understanding regarding the consequences of violating scientific integrity principles and research ethics in research work.
4. **Immature Culture Regarding Scientific Integrity Violations:** The absence of a comprehensive understanding of the concept of violations of scientific integrity principles and research ethics and the importance of knowing them.
5. **Lack of Academic Integrity Culture:** A failure to adhere to ethical principles in research and study.
6. **Pursuit of Academic Success:** A focus on obtaining high grades instead of paying attention to scientific content.
7. **Limited Knowledge of Citation Methods:** Unawareness of how to document sources correctly.
8. **Unfamiliarity with Proper Quotation Practices:** A lack of knowledge on how to quote and document appropriately.

Approaches to avoid violations of scientific integrity principles

There are several ways to help prevent violations of scientific integrity principles, thereby maintaining the integrity of scientific research:

1. **Awareness:**
   It is essential to have a clear understanding of how to convey and document information correctly in scientific research.
2. **Use of Quotation Marks:**
   When presenting certain information or rephrasing it, proper quotation marks should be used.
3. **Follow Approved Documentation Methods:**
   Ensure the correct methods are used for documenting sources in scientific research.
4. **Careful Paraphrasing:**
   A common mistake is failing to cite the source when rephrasing information. It is preferable to summarize complex or lengthy ideas and rephrase them to reduce the likelihood of inference, while ensuring they are documented in the text and reference list.
5. **Accurate Quoting:**
   When transferring information or entire sentences, quotation marks must be used, and the source should be clearly stated, even when rephrasing.
6. **Proper Citation/Documentation:**
   Ensure that every source is documented correctly according to approved methods, maintaining a consistent format across all references.
7. **Prepare a Comprehensive Reference List:**
   The reference list should include a variety of sources, such as scientific articles, books, academic theses, newspapers, and reputable scientific and social websites, with all information properly documented in the text and reference list.

Consequences of violations of scientific integrity principles

The widespread availability of scientific research online has facilitated violations of scientific integrity principles, contributing to the emergence of what is known as digital plagiarism among students and researchers. As a result, many universities and academic institutions have taken strict measures to combat these violations, which stem from a small group.

It is important to note that the discovery of any violation of scientific integrity principles in submitted research proposals can lead to severe penalties, ranging from blacklisting offenders to imposing financial fines. Modern technologies, such as plagiarism detection software, have facilitated the monitoring of practices and violations of scientific integrity; this process begins with preliminary procedures to verify suspected violations, followed by steps to impose appropriate penalties.

Consequently, a researcher may face penalties including:

1. Loss of Trust: Loss of trust between the researchers and the scientific journals they interact with, which affects their scientific output and reputation.
2. Difficulty in Future Research: The researcher may find it very challenging to fulfill the required procedures for future research.
3. Loss of Research Participation: The researcher may lose many opportunities for research participation and involvement in international conferences.
4. Exposure to Various Penalties: Facing different penalties as a result of violating principles of scientific integrity and research ethics.

Procedure for penalties at Onaizah Colleges

A. Suspected academic plagiarism:

1. To verify the case of infringement, the Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Scientific Integrity and Scientific Research Ethics will be notified of the incident involving a violation of the principles of scientific integrity and scientific research ethics.
2. The Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Scientific Integrity and Scientific Research Ethics will receive the incident's supporting documentation.
3. In the event that has been indicated in 2, the reasons and justifications for suspecting that the researcher is not the author of the work must be attached, as well as evidence, such as inconsistency in the writing style or language, or the level of writing not being appropriate to the researcher's level, or the presence of inappropriate references or sources.

B. Investigation:

1. The Permanent Committee for Scientific Integrity and Ethics of Scientific Research at Onaizah Colleges verifies cases of scientific integrity violations. After reviewing the evidence, the researcher is asked to attend a meeting to address questions about the observed case.
2. Ensure that the researcher understands the nature of the behaviors that violate the norms of scientific integrity.
3. Explain the cause of suspicion. The researcher violated their scientific integrity and was discovered with electronic plagiarism and citation detection technologies that analyze similarity percentages.
4. If a researcher is suspected of not writing the research, he/she is asked to give drafts to confirm his/her identity as the author.

C. Decision and penalties:

First: In the case of a researcher from the faculty members

- If it is proven, following a thorough investigation, that the researcher has violated any of the principles of scientific integrity or research ethics, the appropriate penalties will be imposed.
- An official warning will be issued to the researcher for breaching the standards of scientific integrity and research ethics.
- In the event of a confirmed violation, a substantial penalty, such as a salary deduction, may be imposed as a deterrent.
- A warning or dismissal from Onaizah Colleges may be issued if deemed necessary.

Second: In the case of the student

- Plagiarism will be reported to the student's department head for investigation, followed by submission to the college Dean for further action.
- If a student violates the integrity requirements related to their coursework or research, the matter will be referred to the disciplinary committee of the Colleges of Onaizah for review.

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