NLSIU RESEARCH POLICY 2023

1. Background

The University is committed to the pursuit of academic excellence, with significant emphasis on research in law, policy, the social sciences and the humanities. It is the University's policy to encourage and support research and scholarship as these are essential for advanced teaching/learning, to the creation of knowledge, and to the intellectual growth of academic and research staff. Hence, excellence in research and scholarship is expected of persons holding academic and research appointments as set out below.

2. Applicability

This Policy applies to faculty members at NLSIU who are under permanent employment as well as faculty, academic fellows and research staff at NLSIU, on fixed term contracts of one year or more. Part-time and visiting faculty, researchers and consultants are not covered under this Policy and should be guided by the terms and conditions of their contract.

3. Research in the University

3.1 Research at NLSIU is primarily carried out through its individual faculty members through their individual or collaborative faculty initiatives, multi-year research projects, Research Centres and Chairs.

3.2 From AY 2023-24, the University will implement changes to enhance faculty involvement at all levels of the research and publication system at the University.

3.3 The Dean - Research assisted by the Senior Manager Research and other staff will coordinate and support the ongoing research work of faculty, Centres and Chairs.

3.4 **Chairs at NLSIU**

3.4.1 A model Endowed Chair position at the University would comprise a Chair Professor supported by Associate/ Assistant Professor(s), post-doctoral and doctoral researchers. As a first step, the University shall ensure that all Chairs have at least one Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor in charge of the Chair's activities from AY 2023-24.

3.4.2 Faculty members so appointed will be responsible for advancing the research, policy and legal reform and other intellectual activities in the subject area covered by the Chair.

3.4.3 It is strongly recommended that each academic year, the Chair should:
   a. conduct at least one research workshop/ consultation on an ongoing or recently completed project,
   b. prepare at least one policy brief on an emerging area of law and policy,

    c. publish at least one journal article on an ongoing area of research, and

    d. obtain and supplement external funding for research projects that align with the focus of the Chair.

3.4.4 Where a Chair is Fully Endowed (i.e. endowment supports the salary and benefits due to a Professor/ Associate Professor), appointments to those Chairs have been made through the selection process mandated by the Executive Council.

3.4.5 Where the Chair is Partially Endowed (i.e. endowment does not support salaries and benefits due to a Professor/ Associate Professor), the University will appoint faculty members working in the subject area of the Chair to take charge of the Chair's activities for a term of 2 (two) years.

3.4.6 All faculty in-charge of a Chair are requested to submit proposals to the Dean - Research on their plans of activities (including a calendar and budget) for the Chair for AY 2023-24 by the deadline communicated by the Dean - Research. Where the available interest from the endowed corpus fund for the Chair is inadequate, the University may supplement the available funds subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 2 lakhs per annum for each Chair.

3.4.7 Each team in-charge of a Chair will submit an annual report in June each year to the Registrar regarding the activities conducted, with a copy to the Dean - Research.

3.5 Research Centres at the University

3.5.1 In order to revitalise the Research Centres, give all colleagues a fair opportunity to display their talent and abilities, develop cross-disciplinary research, and encourage collaborative and collective leadership in the academic work of the University, with effect from AY 2022-23 all Centres shall adopt a collaborative leadership model with two or more Co-Directors.

3.5.2 The role of Centres shall be to actively make research and policy interventions. All training programmes shall be anchored by the PACE team and Centre staff may be engaged in these training programmes, as required.

3.5.3 Centres must establish a mandate and work only within their mandate, to optimise the time and resources of the Centre and avoid duplication of work. All activities outside the mandate will be organised by other Centres or faculty members, as relevant.

3.5.4 The University will appoint Co-Directors to all Centres. To allow for continuity, the Co-Directors will serve with staggered terms. Appointments shall be for 2 (two) years, with fresh appointments of a Co-Director made after two years to ensure continuity within each Centre.

3.5.5 Further, in the event that any current Centre Directors or Coordinators have been appointed for a term that exceeds a period of 2 (two) years, then their ongoing term shall be deemed completed on June 30, 2024.

3.5.6 All critical decisions (including decisions to bid for projects, budget or staffing related, or project-related) regarding the Centre shall be taken by the Co-Directors collectively. If the Co-Directors are unable to arrive at a decision, then the Dean - Research shall have a casting vote.

3.5.7 All members of the faculty and research staff are encouraged to approach the Co-Directors and affiliate themselves as relevant Faculty Fellows for the AY 2023-24. Fellows are expected to contribute to the academic/research activities of the Centre. All affiliations to a Centre remain subject to confirmation by the Dean - Research and Registrar.

3.5.8 Each term, a Centre must mandatorily conduct: (i) at least one public event or other discussion on an ongoing or recently completed project, and (ii) internal University poster display or paper presentation of an ongoing or recently completed project.

3.5.9 All Co-Directors are requested to submit proposals to the Dean - Research on their mandate and plans of activities (including a calendar) for the Centre for AY 2023-24 by the deadline communicated by the Dean - Research. Centres will secure funding to conduct activities and hire Research Fellows and Interns in line with the recruitment policies of the University. Where the available interest from the corpus fund for the Centre (if any) are inadequate and the Centre is unable to secure any external funding, the University may supplement the available funds subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 2 lakhs per annum for each Centre.

3.5.10 Centres will submit a written report on their activities at the end of each term and present the report to the Registrar with a copy to the Dean - Research.

3.6 Research Clusters

3.6.1 All faculty and researchers at the University are grouped into research clusters based on their subject matter expertise. The research clusters are expected to constitute the 'core group' of University's expertise on the subject matter. For instance, if the University receives a proposal for a research collaboration, the relevant research cluster shall be expected to anchor the University's participation in the research project. All media queries will be directed to the research clusters.

3.6.2 Members of a research cluster shall also mentor PhD students working in their areas of interest in coordination with the Chair and Vice Chair of the PhD Programme, as well as participate and comment on their PhD presentations and public *viva voce* examinations.

3.6.3 Members of a research cluster are encouraged to collaborate to develop research projects for external funding. For any externally funded project, the PI has to be a faculty member. Any Researcher/ Academic Fellow may develop a project in coordination with one or more faculty members as Co-PIs.

3.7 Faculty Boards for University Journals

3.7.1 Each journal published by the University will have a Faculty Board attached to it. This includes all journals led by students and those anchored by Research Centres.

3.7.2 The Vice Chancellor shall appoint Faculty Boards for all Journals for a term of 2 (two) years.

3.7.3 The Faculty Board for each journal will work with the Editor, NLSIU, to supervise the functioning of the Journal . They will work with existing Editorial Boards to ensure the smooth functioning of all journal processes, timely publication, and quality content. The responsibilities of the Faculty Board are listed below.

- *Annual functions*

ii. **Composition of Editorial Board:** The Faculty Board for every journal will be involved in the selection of the Editorial Board and team.

iii. **Journal progress report:** They will conduct an annual assessment of the issue/s published in the previous year and identify key priorities for the journal in the coming year. The assessment criteria will cover quality of submissions, readership and citation statistics, and promotion activities.

- *Continuous functions*

i. The Faculty Board will convene monthly virtual meetings with the journal editors to take stock of the issue/s in progress and ensure that the review process is on track.

ii. In order to ensure quality and rigour in the review process, Faculty Board members will intervene at two stages:

a. Once a submission passes the desk check, they will serve as internal peer reviewers and help the team identify one more external reviewer.

b. Once two sets of reviews are in, they will take a final decision on whether the submission should be accepted, rejected or sent back for further revision.

iii. The Faculty Board will help develop the academic standing of the journal and promote the journal across various platforms.

3.7.4 Members of the Faculty Boards may make contributions to the Journal so long as it is not the main peer reviewed articles section of the journal. In such cases, they will not be involved in the review or decision-making process.

4. **Individual Research Commitments**

4.1. All members of the faculty, academic fellows and research staff to whom this Policy is applicable are expected to conduct their scholarly research and publish the results of that research consistent with the highest standards of ethical conduct, truth, and accuracy.

4.2. Each individual member of the faculty, academic fellows and research staff has a commitment to:

4.2.1. Present at least 1 draft academic paper of not less than 4000 words in the Faculty Seminar or Research Colloquium every academic year, and

4.2.2. Publish at least 1 peer-reviewed journal article/book chapter/monograph/edited book each academic year, or

4.2.3. Publish at least 2 pieces each of about 800-1200 words on the NLSIU Research Blog/other academic blogs/ newspaper editorials every academic year.

Provided that where a faculty member has been allotted extensive University administrative responsibilities continuing throughout the academic year, these commitments may be suitably modified by the Vice Chancellor.

4.3. To better enable and support academic research conducted by faculty, each faculty member shall be eligible for funding of up to INR 2 lakhs every two years as a Conference Travel Grant. Detailed guidelines in this regard have been issued by the University in terms of the 'Policy for Support for Conference Participation' (Policy No. FIN-CONF-001) and shall be reviewed from time to time.

5. **Externally Funded Research Projects**

5.1. Faculty are encouraged to take up external research projects for which a memorandum of agreement has been entered into between the University and an external funder. Faculty members responsible will serve as Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators.

5.2. The project proposals, including budgets for the projects, will require an approval of the Dean - Research, Registrar and Vice Chancellor. At least 10% of the entire budget will be set aside as institutional fee.

5.3. Every faculty member can devote up to 20% of their time (during the academic term) to externally funded research projects.

5.4. The University requires that researchers share the results of their research with the larger University community by depositing the research outputs in the University online scholarship repository.

6. Institutional support

6.1. The Vice Chancellor shall nominate a faculty member as the Dean - Research every academic year. The Dean - Research will be assisted by the Senior Manager Research and other staff as necessary.

6.2. A strong research culture is promoted at the University through the following initiatives:

   i. The University has adopted the highest standards for Promotions through its Career Advancement Scheme which places importance on research and publications.

   ii. A cadre of Academic Fellows may assist Faculty in their research based on their availability as determined by the Dean - Research.

   iii. A writing and publication support office will administer journals, and provide editorial and writing support to all faculty, academic and research staff, students and research scholars.

   iv. Before a Research Centre, Chair or Project releases a journal, paper or report in the public domain, it shall be circulated/ presented at a Faculty Seminar.

6.3. The University will provide secretarial support on a shared basis to all Centres and Chairs .

6.4. The authorised signatories for any Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement documenting a research project shall be the Vice Chancellor or the Registrar of NLSIU.

7. Open access policy

The University encourages an open access policy to promote the dissemination of knowledge. This is based on the University's essential purposes: to impart knowledge and to expand the store of knowledge. Both are clearly inhibited when open publication, free discussion, or access to research are limited.

8. Data Management and Ethics Approval

8.1. The University expects faculty members/ Chairs/ Centres to retain all research data, whether resulting from external sponsorship or not, and to provide access to the data when requested to do so by authorized institutional officials.

8.2. Requests from third parties (i.e. persons outside the University) for access to research data should be forwarded to the appropriate Offices of the Vice Chancellor and the Dean - Research before a response is made.

8.3. Where any research conducted by a Centre/ Chair/ individual faculty member/ doctoral student involves field research with human actors, approval is required to be obtained from the Ethics Review Board of the University.

9. Intellectual Property

9.1. Faculty may retain copyright of their lecture notes, manuscripts and other writings.

9.2. Any report/ policy brief/ paper prepared by a faculty member, academic fellow or researcher on behalf of a Centre or Chair will remain the copyright of the author(s). Where any financial assistance has been received from the Centre or Chair, due acknowledgment may be made at the time of publication.

9.3. Ownership and licences to any intellectual property generated in the course of an externally funded research project will be governed by the terms of the project agreements.

10. Policy Revision Guidance

This policy will be reviewed once a year (from the date of issue) by all the stakeholders.

***

Copy to:

1. All Faculty Members
2. All Research Staff
3. All Academic Fellows

CC to: Registrar / VC Office / Registrar Office / Dean Research/CFAO/People and Culture/COO