GITAM
DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY

F. No. GDU/CAO/R/128/Research Integrity & Publication Ethics/2025 29.08.2025

NOTIFICATION

GITAM is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic and research excellence. In line with this commitment, the University has formulated the ***Regulatory Guidelines for Research Integrity and Publication Ethics.*** These guidelines emphasize the importance of honesty, rigour, and ethical conduct in all stages of research and publication. The guidelines outline the responsibilities of researchers, supervisors, and institutions while also detailing procedures for addressing misconduct, ensuring transparency, and protecting the interests of all stakeholders.

The document applies to all faculty, researchers, and students engaged in research activities at GITAM. It provides clear directions on ethical practices in data collection, authorship, use of AI tools, publication, conflict of interest disclosure, and misconduct reporting mechanisms.

All faculty members, research scholars, and students are requested to ensure strict adherence in their research and supervisory roles. The Research and Development Cell (RDC) and the GITAM Research Integrity Committee (GRIC) will provide further training and clarifications, wherever necessary.

The guidelines are enclosed with this notification, which will come into effect immediately.

Registrar

Encl: As stated above.

To:

All Members of the Faculty across Campuses
Director – Research and Development Cell

Copy to:

All Pro VCs | Deans | Heads of Schools/Institutes | Directors | HoDs | CFO | CAO | CMO
PS to President / Vice-President / Secretary / Vice-Chancellor / Registrar

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GITAM

Annexure to the Notification:
F. No. GDU/CAO/R/128/Research Integrity & Publication Ethics/2025
Date: 29.08.2025

Regulatory Guidelines for Research Integrity and Publication Ethics

1. Introduction

These guidelines are developed to emphasise the importance of rigour and integrity in carrying out research at the GITAM Deemed to be University (GITAM). Everyone associated with research at GITAM is expected to maintain exemplary professional standards, including honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct in academic, research and development activities. This document outlines the responsibilities, expectations, and procedures for addressing any instances of misconduct and misdemeanours while safeguarding the rights and interests of all stakeholders. Responsible conduct of research involves thorough planning and execution, accurate review and reporting, as well as responsible authorship and publication of the research findings. It also includes, but not limited to, truthful and ethical reporting in proposals and reports made for funding to public and private funding agencies, commercial entities and philanthropic donors. Internal reports, including academic theses and requests for GITAM funding, will also be covered by these guidelines. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the GITAM Research Policy and IPR Policy.

2. Scope

The guidelines apply to all individuals engaged in academic and research activities at GITAM, including faculty, students (UG, PG, Doctoral), postdoctoral researchers, technical staff and project staff. It covers all forms of research, development and commercialization, including basic, applied, clinical, technological, and interdisciplinary, whether involving human participants, animals, environmental studies, AI-driven technologies, or secondary data as well as any confidential data. Research activities across the full lifecycle are included, from proposal development and ethics approval to data collection, publication, dissemination, as well as internal reports, reports submitted to external agencies and ministries, consultancy deliverables, documentation prepared for product development, technology certification, and technology transfer or licensing. They also govern collaborative projects, both domestic and international, and research conducted under institutional, industry, or government funding. Any research involving ethical, legal, biosafety, or reputational considerations, regardless of field or format, must comply with these guidelines. Researchers unsure of the applicability of the guidelines are required to consult the Research and Development Cell (RDC) for clarification. This ensures that all research at GITAM is conducted responsibly and aligns with national and global standards.

3. Ethical Principles

Research at GITAM is grounded in the following nine core principles. All researchers must demonstrate compliance with these principles at the proposal, conduct, and publication stages.

1. Integrity and Honesty: Collect, analyse, and report data truthfully; data fabrication, falsification, or misleading interpretations of data is prohibited.
2. Informed Consent: Secure informed and voluntary consent, protecting each participant’s right to withdraw without penalty.
3. Privacy & Confidentiality: Safeguard identifiable information and share data only under approved legal-ethicall conditions.

4. Risk Mitigation: Research involving humans, animals, or the environment must include measures to minimize harm, prioritizing the safety of all stakeholders, and subject to oversight of statutory ethical bodies.
5. Academic Freedom: Pursue knowledge without undue influence while respecting ethical, legal, and community norms.
6. Fairness: Equal opportunity should be provided to all participants without any discrimination, including gender, caste, religion, or socioeconomic status.
7. Transparency & Openness: Make methods, data, findings, and the usage of AI-tools discoverable and, where possible, openly accessible unless covered under specific and approved Non-Disclosure Agreements.
8. Sustainability & Social Responsibility: Consider long-term ecological and societal consequences; align research with relevant National Priorities and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) whenever feasible.
9. Ethical use of Technology & AI: Employ AI, big data, and dual-use technologies only with declared safeguards against bias, misuse, and unintended harm.
10. Ethical reporting of data and processes in scientific publications, internal and external reports, funding proposals and reports, made to public and private funding agencies, commercial and philanthropic entities.

4. Leadership, supervision, and training

Researchers are individually responsible to create an enabling research culture of mutual cooperation and collaboration and maintain high standards of integrity at all times. Heads of Laboratories and research supervisors will train, supervise, and mentor students and technical staff. Supervisors and laboratory heads will take overall responsibility for the validity of all published research. They will ensure that graduate students meet with their doctoral thesis committee regularly to monitor progress of the student's work, meeting deadlines, and resolving any conflicts that may arise before they get fully blown up. RDC will organise periodic training and skill development programs, including mandatory modules in ethics, for students and researchers to understand good practice and develop skills for advancing their careers.

5. Governance

The GITAM Research Integrity Committee (GRIC) is the principal body responsible for upholding and overseeing the implementation of the university's research integrity guidelines. GRIC ensures that all research conducted under GITAM's auspices adheres to the highest ethical and professional standards. The committee reviews allegations of research misconduct, initiates and supervises investigations, determines the severity of violations, and recommends appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions. GRIC also oversees review of guidelines, curates training programs on responsible research conduct, maintains the "White & Grey" journal list, and fosters a culture of integrity through institutional learning. The committee operates with full confidentiality, procedural fairness, and independence, ensuring that the rights of whistleblowers and respondents are protected. GRIC will hold quarterly reviews, conduct meetings as required for urgent matters, and issue updates, if required, to the guidelines annually. For more details, refer to Annexure B.

6. Responsibilities of the Researchers

Researchers at GITAM are expected to uphold the following responsibilities to ensure ethical high-quality research:

- Follow ethical guidelines: Comply with institutional and national ethical standards and legal requirements.
- Avoid misconduct: Refrain from plagiarism, data fabrication/ falsification/ misrepresentation, and authorship disputes.
- Maintain data integrity: Keep accurate, retrievable records using repositories (e.g., Open Science Framework, Institutional Archival Policy).
- Publish ethically: Submit to approved journals (GRIC White & Grey list).
- Credit contributions: Refer to the Publication and Authorship Guidelines (Annexure C).
- Disclose conflicts of interest: Inform the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of any competing personal or financial interests.
- Mentor responsibly: Train and guide junior researchers in ethical practices.
- Use AI responsibly: Ensure that AI tools (e.g., for data analysis, language editing, or content generation) are used transparently, ethically, and with proper attribution. Researchers must not allow AI-generated content to substitute for original intellectual contributions or misrepresent authorship.

7. Research Misconduct

Research misconduct undermines the integrity of academic inquiry and is strictly prohibited at GITAM.

7.1 Types of Misconduct

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism: Presenting another's text, ideas, images, code, or data, or one's own previously published work without clear acknowledgement.
- Fabrication: Making up data, participants, or results and recording or reporting them as real.
- Falsification: Manipulating materials, equipment, images, software, or data such that findings no longer reflect the actual work performed (e.g., selective omission, image splicing, undisclosed AI-generated figures). Inappropriate exaggeration of the research data and outcomes.
- Authorship Misconduct: Gift, guest, ghost, or coerced authorship; exclusion of deserving contributors; or false contribution statements in multi-author work. Authorship for financial or extraneous considerations is strictly prohibited.
- Undeclared AI or Automated Content: Conscious use of generative AI or automated tools to create text, images, code, peer reviews, or citations without disclosure and quality control.
- Duplicate/Salami Publication: Republishing the same research in multiple venues without disclosure, or slicing one study into several publications with minimal new insight.

- Non-adherence to applicable Ethics Approval: Collecting data or specimens, or commencing experiments, before receiving the relevant clearance or ethics approval; ignoring approved protocols; or failing to obtain informed consent.
- Non-adherence to Statutory Safety requirements: Conducting experiments or measurements without appropriate safety protocols as mandated by the law and university requirements. This includes chemical, biological, and electrical safe practices.
- Predatory Journal Misrepresentation: Submitting to journals with deceptive or non-peer-reviewed practices and falsely presenting them as legitimate outlets.

7.2 Articles Retraction

7.2.1 Detection & Initial Review

- It is the responsibility of the researcher to take corrective action if an error is found in the published findings. In case the findings are found to be in serious doubt, they should quickly publish a retraction, keeping the GRIC informed.
- The university will monitor retractions through academic databases and journal notifications.
- The university will also act if the journal or editor has notified the university authorities of any academic violations.
- Upon notification, a statutory investigation committee will conduct a preliminary investigation as set out in section 8.2.
- The respondent will be required to cooperate during the formal inquiry as set out in section 8.2.

7.2.2. Investigation & Disciplinary Actions

- If the retraction is demonstrated to be due to unintentional errors (e.g., mistakes in methodology, unintentional misinterpretation), corrective actions such as additional training or counselling will be prescribed.
- As soon as an instance of alleged research misconduct is brought to the attention, GRIC, if required, will secure and take custody of all relevant research records, including but not limited to raw data files, lab notebooks, software code, and electronic communications (e-mails, messaging logs) related to the matter.
- Researchers must not withhold, delete, alter, or claim exclusive ownership of any such records which are under scrutiny that were generated under GITAM auspices and/or with university resources.
- GRIC will create and maintain records of such secured materials.
- If the retraction is due to academic misconduct, the investigation process as mentioned in Clause 8.2 will be applicable.

7.3 Distinguishing Misconduct from Error

It is important to note that:

- Misconduct involves intentional or reckless behaviour such as repeated failures to follow basic ethical or procedural requirements.

- Honest errors, such as statistical miscalculations or misunderstandings of procedures, are not misconduct but must be corrected.
- In ambiguous cases, the GRIC will determine intent and severity based on evidence.

8. Reporting and Addressing Misconduct

8.1. Reporting Mechanism:

- Grievances can be submitted to the chair of GRIC in writing via email or letter.
- Whistleblower complaints are permitted and will be given strong protective consideration; however, all allegations must be supported by evidence.
- The institution is committed to safeguarding whistleblowers and their identity. Retaliation in any form is not permitted. Any breach will invite appropriate corrective administrative/disciplinary measures.

8.2. Investigation Process

Stage	Responsible Party	Timeline
Intake & Acknowledgement	RDC Director	Within 7 working days
Preliminary Review – assess whether the allegation falls under "research misconduct" and if the facts are credible	RDC Director + two GRIC members	≤ 10 working days
Full Investigation – five-member expert panel formation as recommended by the GRIC and duly approved by the VC (no conflict of interest; includes at least one external member under NDA).	Investigation Panel	≤ 45 calendar days (extensions must be justified to VC)
Draft Report & Response – respondent will be given time to comment on factual accuracy	Panel reports → Chair of the GRIC	10 days
GRIC Deliberation	GRIC → VC	10 days
VC Show-cause Notice	Time to answer the Notice	10 days
Final Decision, Notification & Sanction Implementation	Chair of GRIC → VC	Within 30 days of the GRIC report
Right of Appeal	Respondent may appeal to the Chancellor	Within 45 calendar days of notice
Review of Appeal	Chancellor will review and deliver a final decision	Within 30 days of appeal

Please note that the jury members are appointed based on the type of misconduct reported and from the research area pertaining to the misconduct.

8.3. Investigation Protocols should ensure:

- Confidentiality: All investigations will maintain strict confidentiality to protect both the whistleblower and respondent from undue harm. The identity and contextual details

of the whistleblower/complainant will be compulsorily redacted in all documents circulated to committees. Only the competent authorities have access to this information.

- Impartiality: Investigations will be conducted impartially by a panel recommended by GRIC and *duly approved by* the Vice-Chancellor.
- All GRIC meetings shall be formally recorded and minuted on the same day. The Convenor will maintain the official records, and the minutes shall be signed by all committee members present. Depositions of the respondents shall be signed by the respondent(s) attesting to the veracity.

Panel, upon completion of the investigation, should submit a report mentioning the severity of misconduct (Level 1 to Level 4) to GRIC.

8.4. Disciplinary Actions:

Based on the report submitted by the investigation panel, GRIC may recommend penalties which may include:

Level	Criteria	Recommended Action
Level 1	Minor negligence or first-time minor error	Written warning, training session
Level 2	Repeated carelessness; moderate breach	Written warning, funding suspension / Suspension / Discontinuation of the membership from DRC or IRC / any other committees which deal with Research and PhD related matters
Level 3	Severe misconduct; Serious Breach; reputational harm; academic fraud; intent to deceive; public misrepresentation	Removal from the list of eligible PhD supervisors/ Public correction / Suspension / demotion to a lower level/ Termination of employment
Level 4	Criminal behaviour; violation of law or safety norms	In addition to the above, Legal action; Reporting to external authorities

8.5. Restoration & Learning:

- When honest error is confirmed (not misconduct), GRIC facilitates rapid correction without penalty.
- GRIC will undertake sensitization exercises regularly such as seminars, workshops, and circulate anonymised case lessons to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

8.6.Appeal processes and Appellate Authority:

- Time limit for the appeal will be 45 days from date of receiving the final order from the Vice-Chancellor.
- Appeal should be made through the Vice Chancellor's office and should contain substantial new material for it to be considered.
- Chancellor of the University will be the appellate authority for any appeals and his/her decision will be final.

9. Review and Revision

The GRIC will review these guidelines periodically to ensure alignment with evolving national/international standards in research ethics. Feedback from faculty members, students, and external reviewers will be incorporated into revisions as needed.

10. Good Practices:

Depending on the area of research, researchers are encouraged to refer to relevant national and international guidelines for best practices and ethical standards evolved by major scientific agencies. These documents serve as reference material and do not constitute formal or legal adoption by GITAM *(Refer Annexure D).*

Annexures Attached:

Annexure A - Key Terms Definitions
Annexure B - GITAM Research Integrity Committee
Annexure C - Publication and Authorship Guidelines
Annexure D – References for Good Practice

Annexure A

Key Terms Definitions

Term	Definition
Research Misconduct	Intentional or reckless fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing, conducting, reviewing, or reporting research.
Fabrication	Making up data, participants, or results and recording or reporting them as if they were real.
Falsification	Manipulating research materials, equipment, processes, images, or data so that the record no longer accurately reflects the work performed.
Plagiarism	Presenting another's ideas, text, data, or creative output without proper acknowledgement, including self-plagiarism (duplicate publication).
Ghost / Gift / Honorary Authorship	Listing an individual who did not make a qualifying intellectual contribution (gift) or failing to list someone who did (ghost).
Conflict of Interest (COI)	A financial, professional, or personal interest that could compromise—or appear to compromise—objectivity or judgment in research.
Whistleblower	Any person who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct; protected from retaliation under this policy.
Retraction	Public notice that a published work is withdrawn because its findings are unreliable or unethical.
Predatory Journal	Outlet that charges fees without providing legitimate peer review or editorial standards, often excluded from UGC-CARE and major indexes.
AI-Generated Content	Text, images, code, or data created wholly or partly by machine-learning / AI systems (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL-E).
AI-Facilitated Misconduct	Any undeclared or deceptive use of AI tools that results in fabrication, plagiarism, image manipulation, or biased analysis.
Open Science	Practices that make methods, data, code, and publications openly accessible, including preregistration and open peer review.
Preregistration	Publicly posting study hypotheses, methods, and analysis plans before data collection.
Preprint	Public, non-peer-reviewed version of a manuscript; must be clearly labelled to prevent misinterpretation as final research.

Annexure B
GITAM Research Integrity Committee (GRIC)

GITAM Research Integrity Committee (GRIC) is a formal body established to uphold and promote the principles of research integrity, ethical conduct, and compliance with relevant policies and guidelines.

Composition of GRIC: GRIC includes members with expertise and roles designed to ensure effective oversight of research ethics and integrity. GRIC generally involves:

Pro-Vice Chancellor	Chairperson
Director, Research and Development Cell	Convenor / Member
Dean or IRC Chairperson	Member
Faculty GSHSS	Member
Faculty from any other school	Member

Its key roles, structure, and functions of GRIC typically include:

- Policy Development and Implementation: The GRlC develops, implements, and maintains institutional policies and procedures related to research misconduct and responsible conduct of research (RCR). It formulates guidelines to promote ethical research practices and compliance with regulations.
- Advisory Role: It serves as an advisory group to senior university leadership on matters of research integrity, safety, compliance, and reputational risks associated with research activities. The committee informs leadership about current and emerging issues in research ethics and integrity.
- Risk Assessment and Coordination: The committee coordinates efforts across various oversight bodies to assess, mitigate, and monitor risks related to research integrity, including compliance with funding requirements and emerging challenges such as artificial intelligence or foreign influence in research.
- Education and Training: GRIC is charged with developing and overseeing education programs on Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) for faculty, doctoral researchers, technical staff, and students. It evaluates existing training and plans for new initiatives to address evolving integrity challenges.
- Oversight of Misconduct Investigations: The committee will determine whether an allegation of research misconduct falls within the purview of the definition of the term, and will constitute a Standing Committee to carry out a full investigation. The Standing Committee will have no more than 2 members of GRIC Committee members, two faculty members - one who has appropriate subject-matter expertise, and another from an unrelated School.
- Communication and Liaison: It acts as a conduit for communication between the GITAM administration, research units, and external bodies regarding research integrity policies and

issues. The Director – RDC acts as a point of contact to ensure broad representation and effective dissemination of information.

- Whistle-blower Protection & Speak-Up Line: The committee operates an encrypted, anonymous reporting channel and guarantees non-retaliation, fair treatment, and the right of appeal for both complainants and respondents.
- Journal Integrity Programme (JIP): GRIC publishes a “white & grey” list of journals regularly, helping faculty avoid predatory outlets and meet funder mandates.

Annexure C
Publication and Authorship Guidelines

Publication Guidelines

- Approval for Publication: The individual responsible for overseeing the research program must approve all publications arising from the work. This approval should cover both the content of the manuscript, including the integrity of the results, adequacy of internal review, protection of intellectual property, and appropriate authorship, and the suitability of the intended publication venue.
- Open Access and Data Sharing: Open-access publication and open-source sharing of data are encouraged to promote transparency, reproducibility, and wider use of research findings. However, the author is responsible for any public release of data and must ensure it does not compromise future publications or intellectual property rights.
- Acknowledgement of Funding: All sources of funding must be clearly and accurately acknowledged in any publications or related communications.
- Communication of High-Impact Findings: Research findings with potential clinical significance or those likely to generate substantial public or media attention must be communicated to the relevant research funders prior to publication.
- Ethical and Legal Considerations: Published work should, where applicable, include a clear statement on the ethical and/or legal acceptability of the research, alongside a transparent description of the scientific methodology employed.
- Publication Integrity: Research outputs should typically be published as comprehensive, coherent studies rather than divided into multiple smaller publications, unless there is a justified reason, such as establishing priority with preliminary data.
- Focus on Quality: Greater emphasis should be placed on the quality, originality, and impact of publications rather than on the volume of output.
- Avoidance of Redundant Publication: Authors must refrain from submitting or publishing the same data or findings in more than one journal, except in cases of legitimate secondary publication with proper disclosure and permission.

Authorship

- Authorship should be limited to individuals who have made substantial intellectual contributions to the research and are thoroughly familiar with the content of the manuscript.
- All listed authors must have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for its content.
- Contributions from formal collaborators, technical staff, or others who provided direct or indirect support to the research must be appropriately acknowledged.
- This includes, but is not limited to, assistance with data collection, analysis, technical support, or provision of funding.
- All forms of support, including financial sponsorship, should be transparently disclosed in the acknowledgements section.

This section is adapted from the Guidelines on Good Research Practise of the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore.

Annexure D

References for Good Practices

- UGC Guidelines on Academic Integrity and Research Quality
- ICMR Guidelines for Research Integrity and Publication Ethics
- ICMR National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants
- CSIR Guidelines for Ethics in Research and Governance
- DST Policy on Conflict of Interest
- National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research
- CPSEA Guidelines