Sri Lanka Institute of Textile & Apparel

Policy Title – Policy on Academic Ethics and Accountability

Number – 02

Functional Area – Academic

Effective Date – 02.05.2022

Approving Authority – The Board of Governors, Sri Lanka Institute of Textile & Apparel

Administrative Responsibility –Heads of Departments, Deans of Faculties, Academic Council and Board of Governors

Rationale & Purpose –

This policy covers principles of ethics and accountability for academic staff of Sri Lanka Institute of Textile & Apparel (SLITA) and it is based in part on the document titled "Ethics and Academic Accountability for the Academic Staff in SLITA"

Ethics and accountability are key factors that the society at large expects from any individual and it is more so from an academic in the SLITA. It is also of importance as students derive the basic tenets of ethical behavior and accountability in their educational experience and in their pursuit of knowledge taking the academic staff members as role models. Further, it fosters a culture that respects and adheres to fundamentals of ethical conduct globally. Furthermore, this would make an individual accountable for his or her actions and subsequently the professional and social consequences of such actions.

Accordingly, this policy covers teaching and learning activities, research, outreach and contribution to SLITA and National Development activities that an academic performs as part of their academic and administrative duties in SLITA.

This policy does not seek to encompass all possible scenarios that may arise in employment within or outside the SLITA, however, it provides a set of principles for the academic staff on ethics and academic accountability.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the document on general guidelines on academic workload calculation and reporting and relevant SLITA legislation, policies and procedures.

Scope –

This policy applies to all academic staff members of Sri Lanka Institute of Textile & Apparel (SLITA).

Policy Statement –

Academics in SLITA pursue excellence in education and research through the development of critical thinking, logic and reasoning and this is achieved with intellectual responsibility through ethical practice and effective stewardship of resources and the environment. In pursuit of above, the academics should have respect for each other, the undergraduates and the communities that they serve with the aim of building relationships of mutual benefit at the local, national and international levels.

Ethics in the Profession-

The word 'Ethics' is defined as a set of moral principles and "Ethical' relates to morals especially concerning human conduct (Oxford dictionary). Basic human ethical behavior is acquired from the family environment, relatives, acquaintances, school friends, and teachers. Thereafter, people gradually learn to appreciate ethical issues in everyday life.

In addition to basic human ethical behavior, the need to respect certain ethical issues and standards are inherent to an academic in SLITA. The purpose of this section is to sensitize SLITA teachers to important ethical issues before they have to confront them. These issues and related standards apply to all SLITA teachers irrespective of their chosen subject or discipline.

Ethical Principles in SLITA Teaching:

1. Content competence: SLITA teachers should continuously improve and maintain a highlevel of their subject knowledge and ensure that it is up to date in a rapidly advancing world.They should ensure that the study programme content is current, accurate, relevant and appropriate to the level of the study programme, and that it covers the minimum requirement defined in the syllabus for each subject.

2. Pedagogical competence: SLITA teachers should improve their pedagogical skills through development of their teaching methodology. They should communicate the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) to the students at the beginning of the study programme and have them aligned to the PLOs of the degree programme They should select the methods of instruction based on evidence and ensure that such methods of instruction are effective in helping students to achieve the PLOs. They should also be aware of

alternative instructional methods or strategies that are more effective in enabling thestudents to achieve the PLOs.

3. Dealing with sensitive topics: Some study programmes may contain topics that are likely to be sensitive or discomforting to students. In dealing with such topics, teachers should first explain why such topics have been included in the study programme and then discuss them in an open, honest, and positive manner.

4. Student development: Student development is the primary objective of education. Therefore, teachers should design their methods of instruction to facilitate learning, encourage autonomy and independent thinking in students. Teachers should always treat each and every student with respect and dignity and avoid any action that can impede student development. Further the academics should recognize students with special needs provide them equal opportunities to engage in learning activities.

5. Dual relationships with students: SLITA teachers' relationships with students should be based on pedagogical goals and academic requirements. Teachers should not enter into dual-role relationships with students that could lead to actual or perceived favoritism. They should not also engage in activities that are likely to discriminate or marginalize any studentor student group.

6. Valid assessment of students: Since the student performance at SLITA is greatly determined by the assessment policies and strategies of degree programmes, it is imperativethat teachers select assessment techniques that are consistent with the PLOs of the study programme. They should at the same time be reliable and valid as much as possible. It is also necessary that methods of assessment are communicated early to students at the beginning of the study programme.

7. Confidentiality: SLITA teachers should ensure that student grades, attendance records and private communications and other such material are treated as confidential. Thus, they should be released only for legitimate academic purposes or only with the students' consent. Before release of such material, SLITA teachers should ensure that the release of such information is beneficial to the students or prevent harm to others.

8. Respect for colleagues: Teachers should respect the dignity of their colleagues and work cooperatively with them in the interest of fostering student development. Thus, teachers should maintain professionalism in order to maximize student attainment of PLOs.

9. Respect for the Institution: The teachers should be aware of and respect the educational goals, policies and standards of the SLITA. They should always share a collective responsibility to work for the good of the SLITA.

Ethical Principles in Research:

All SLITA teachers are expected to conduct research. Ethical issues related to funding and conflicts of interest, sometimes, could arise in conducting research. Further, ethical issues could arise in the conduct of human and animal research, genetic research as well as in ethnic, religious and gender studies. The following are some examples of situations where ethics need to be considered in research undertaken by SLITA teachers.

1. Identification and justification of research problems: After an extensive literature review, the proponents of research should be able to highlight the gaps in current knowledge and how the intended study would bridge the said gap in knowledge. Due reference should be made to all relevant publications. Suppression or non-reporting of literature unfavorable to one's own proposed research is unethical.

2. Conflicts of interest/funding: At all times researchers should maintain transparency. The actual outcome of the project should be stated clearly. Self-interests including financial benefits, one's own firm beliefs and other gains in kind should be avoided. Quoting studies that only support the study outcome and failure to include negative results should also be avoided.

3. Utilization of funds, resources and methodology: Academics should use methods that are likely to achieve the objectives as, if not, it is not only unscientific but also unethical as valuable resources in the form of time, effort and funds are wasted. Hence, appropriate methods for the achievement of the objectives should be selected and funds should be allocated.

4. Ethical issues in social and biological research: In biological research as well as research on humanities and social sciences where information of an intimate nature is sought, certain guidelines have to be followed. These guidelines may be institutional, departmental, national and international in nature. Some ethical issues may also have legal and human (and animal) rights implications.

5. Reporting of results: All relevant results have to be reported. Suppression or non-reporting of unfavorable results is unethical. Likewise, the non-mentioning of the limitations of the research is deemed unethical.

6.Publication: Only information that is based on solid scientific principles and research conducted under ethically accepted norms should reach the society at large since scientific research has a social responsibility.

7.Duplicate publications: The same outcome of a research should be published only once. However, duplicate publications occur in different forms such as publishing in another source under a different title, fragmented and published as several separate papers and extending an already published paper by adding data. These publications are unethical and should be avoided.

8.Authorship: This is an important ethical issue in scientific publications. Authorship of a publication should be restricted to those who had been directly involved in the study. These involvements include conceptualization, design, collection and management of data, analysis, discussion and writing of the paper. Any other contribution should only be acknowledged in the paper.

9.Research fraud: Intentional dishonesty in research is unethical. These would include fabrication or invention of data, falsification or deliberate distortion of data and plagiarism. Copying considerable amounts of material without acknowledgement could also be included in research fraud.

Academic Freedom and Accountability

As per Encyclopedia Britannica, academic freedom is "the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure. Its basic elements include the freedom of teachers to inquire into any subject that evokes their intellectual concern; to present their findings to their students, colleagues, and others; to publish their data and conclusions without control or censorship; and to teach in the manner they consider professionally appropriate".

It is recognized that SLITA teachers should have 'Academic Freedom' to teach and carry out research without any interference; be open and flexible in their academic activities; and undertake activities outside their employment that enhance their intellect and professional skills, without forfeiting their primary commitments to the SLITA. Thus, there is necessityto develop guidelines on workload and work norms for academics to enable to exercise the

Above mentioned academic freedom without any adverse effects on their 'Academic Accountability.'

To capture all the above parameters, the workloads and work norms model for academics and duties & responsibilities applicable to their employment at SLITA are as follows:

Workload and Work Norms Model:

This model incorporates Teaching, Research, Outreach and Contribution to SLITA and National Development.

All academic members of the SLITA should be accountable for the workload done and contribution to research, outreach, SLITA and National development and should report annually to the Faculty/SLITA.

The contributions should be reported under the following headings;

1. Academic workload (Reporting as contact hours)

2. Research Supervision (Reporting as information)

3. Academic Coordination (Reporting as contact hours)

4. Teaching Workload Weights (Reporting of contribution as information)

5. Research & Development Workload Weights (Reporting of contribution as information)

6. SLITA and National Development Workload Weights (Reporting of contribution as information)

Specific work norms in the above areas should be decided by the respective faculties.

List of Duties of Academic Staff

1. Under general direction of Head of the Department of study to conduct such classes, deliver such lectures and perform such other teaching duties which are assigned to you.

2. Assist to conduct of examinations by setting and/or moderating examination papers, supervising, invigilating, paper marking and issuing results etc.,

3. Assist the Head of the Department to prepare annual academic calendar.

4. Assist the Dean of the Faculty and Head of the Department to maintain student discipline.

5. Assist the Head of the Department in the supervision and inspection of work of special students.

6. Promote Research and advancement of your subject.

7. Attend all meetings of statutory bodies and committees of which you are a member.

8. Attend all curriculum revision of courses and assist to introduce new courses after following SLQF standards.

9. Extend all assistance to the SLITA authorities to maintain student discipline.

10. Maintain attendance register of students of each course module.

11. Any other duties assigned by the Board of Governors, Dean of the Faculty, Head of the Department and Director General from time to time.