



विवेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः

SIKKIM ALPINE UNIVERSITY

Kamrang, Namchi, South Sikkim – 737126

(Established under Sikkim Alpine University Act, 2021)

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) ORDINANCE – 2026

Prepared by:

Office of the Assistant Director
Research & Development Cell
Sikkim Alpine University

Recommended by:

Academic Council: Date 11 September, 2026

Approved by:



Amendment Clause

This Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University constitute a statutory and operational framework governing doctoral research in the University. The document is designed to be dynamic and responsive to evolving academic standards and national policy directions.

Amendments to this Ordinance may be proposed by the Research Degree Committee (RDC), the Research & Development Cell, the Academic Council, or any other competent authority of the University. Any amendment shall become effective only after approval by the Academic Council and notification by the competent authority of the University.

Wherever any provision of this Ordinance is found to be inconsistent with the **UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2018 & 2022**, as amended from time to time, or any other applicable statutory provisions, the relevant statutory provisions shall prevail to the extent of such inconsistency until appropriate amendments are incorporated into this Ordinance.



1. PREAMBLE

Sikkim Alpine University is committed to fostering high-quality, ethical, innovative, and socially relevant doctoral research across all disciplines. The University recognizes the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) as the highest academic qualification awarded by the University, signifying a scholar's capacity to undertake independent, original, ethical, and impactful research that contributes to the advancement of knowledge and addresses contemporary societal challenges.

In alignment with its vision of academic excellence and regional responsibility, Sikkim Alpine University seeks to establish a robust doctoral framework that promotes intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary engagement, and responsible research conduct. The Ph.D. Ordinance is therefore framed to ensure that doctoral research conducted at the University adheres to nationally recognized standards while also addressing the unique socio-cultural and ecological context of the Himalayan region.

This Ordinance is formulated in accordance with:

- **UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2018**
- **University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022**
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and other applicable statutory provisions governing doctoral education in India.**

The University emphasizes the following guiding principles:

1.1 Interdisciplinary Research

Doctoral research at SAU shall encourage interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from sciences, social sciences, humanities, indigenous studies, and emerging domains. Scholars shall be supported in addressing complex contemporary challenges through collaborative and cross-disciplinary inquiry.



1.2 Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Recognizing the cultural richness and traditional wisdom of Sikkim and the North-East region, the University promotes research that documents, preserves, and critically examines indigenous languages, cultural practices, oral traditions, biodiversity knowledge, and community-based knowledge systems. Such research shall be conducted with due ethical safeguards and respect for community rights.

1.3 Himalayan and North-East Regional Priorities

Sikkim Alpine University encourages doctoral research that contributes to the holistic, sustainable, and inclusive development of the Himalayan region and the wider North-East of India. While maintaining global academic standards, the University recognizes its regional responsibility and promotes research that addresses local realities, indigenous knowledge systems, socio-cultural dynamics, ecological challenges, governance issues, innovation ecosystems, and emerging developmental needs.

Research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and ecological balance
- Biodiversity, natural resource management, and sustainable agriculture
- Indigenous languages, literature, and cultural preservation
- Education, pedagogy, and capacity building in regional contexts
- Public health, community well-being, and social inclusion
- Governance, public policy, and regional planning
- Entrepreneurship, tourism, trade, and economic development
- Technology adoption, digital transformation, and innovation systems
- Sustainable infrastructure and rural development
- Social justice, gender studies, and community empowerment



The University affirms that research undertaken in any discipline—whether in sciences, social sciences, humanities, management, commerce, languages, education, or interdisciplinary domains—may contribute meaningfully to regional advancement while maintaining national and international relevance.

1.4 Academic Integrity and Ethical Research Governance

All doctoral research shall strictly adhere to principles of academic integrity, transparency, and ethical responsibility. The University mandates compliance with its Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy, Ethical Research Policy, and all relevant regulatory frameworks. Originality, accountability, and responsible conduct shall form the cornerstone of doctoral scholarship at SAU.

1.5 Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Societal Impact

Sikkim Alpine University shall encourage doctoral research that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, technology development, policy interventions, sustainable solutions, and societal impact. The University recognizes that doctoral research should not only contribute to academic knowledge but also generate outcomes that benefit communities, industries, government, and society through innovation, intellectual property creation, evidence-based policy, and sustainable development.



2. TITLE, COMMENCEMENT & APPLICABILITY

2.1 Title

This Ordinance shall be called the “**Sikkim Alpine University Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Ordinance – 2026**”, hereinafter referred to as the “Ph.D. Ordinance”.

It shall govern the admission, registration, supervision, evaluation, and award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) by Sikkim Alpine University in accordance with the provisions contained herein and in conformity with the applicable regulations issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other competent statutory authorities, as amended from time to time.

2.2 Commencement

This Ordinance shall come into force with effect from the date of its approval by the Academic Council and subsequent notification by the competent authority of the University.

Provided that:

- a) All admissions made after the date of commencement shall be governed strictly by the provisions of this Ordinance.
- b) Scholars already registered prior to the commencement of this Ordinance shall continue to be governed by the regulations in force at the time of their registration, unless otherwise resolved by the University through transitional provisions approved by the Academic Council.

2.3 Applicability

This Ordinance shall apply to:

- a) All Schools, Departments, Centres, and Research Units of Sikkim Alpine University that are recognized by the University to offer doctoral programmes;
- b) All full-time and part-time Ph.D. scholars admitted to the University under approved categories;
- c) All faculty members recognized as Research Supervisors or Joint/Co-supervisors under the provisions of this Ordinance;



- d) All research conducted under the aegis of Sikkim Alpine University leading to the award of the Ph.D. degree.
- e) All statutory academic bodies constituted under this Ordinance, including the Research Degree Committee (RDC), Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and Research Advisory Committee (RAC), insofar as they perform functions relating to the administration and governance of the Ph.D. Programme.
- f) The Research & Development Cell, Ethics Committees, Academic Integrity Panels, and other University bodies entrusted with responsibilities relating to doctoral research under this Ordinance or the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

No School, Department, Centre, or other academic unit of the University shall offer, administer, or conduct a Ph.D. Programme except in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines framed thereunder, and subject to the fulfillment of the academic, infrastructural, ethical, and regulatory requirements prescribed by the University and the UGC.

2.4 Relationship with the Ph.D. Regulations

This Ordinance shall be read in conjunction with the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines of Sikkim Alpine University. While this Ordinance provides the statutory framework governing the doctoral programme, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines shall prescribe the detailed academic, administrative, procedural, and implementation-related provisions, provided that such provisions are not inconsistent with this Ordinance or applicable UGC Regulations. In the event of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Ordinance shall prevail.



3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PH.D. PROGRAMME

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme of Sikkim Alpine University is instituted to promote advanced scholarship, foster original and ethical research, and contribute meaningfully to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge for the advancement of society.

The specific objectives of the Ph.D. Programme shall be as follows:

3.1 Advancement of Original Research

The Ph.D. Programme shall encourage and facilitate independent, original, and rigorous research that contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a chosen discipline or across interdisciplinary domains. The research undertaken shall demonstrate critical inquiry, analytical depth, methodological soundness, and originality of thought, resulting in a substantive contribution to existing literature and scholarship.

3.2 Capacity Building in Research Methodology

The Programme shall aim to strengthen scholars' competencies in research design, methodology, academic writing, data analysis, ethical practices, and scholarly communication. Through structured coursework and guided supervision, the University shall ensure that scholars acquire the theoretical and practical tools necessary to conduct high-quality research in accordance with national and international standards.

3.3 Knowledge Creation Relevant to Society, Culture, Environment, and Policy

The University shall promote research that is socially relevant and responsive to contemporary challenges. Doctoral research shall, wherever appropriate, contribute to:

- Societal development and community engagement;
- Preservation and critical understanding of cultural and indigenous knowledge systems;
- Environmental sustainability and ecological responsibility;
- Evidence-based public policy, governance, and institutional development.



The University recognizes that knowledge creation must extend beyond academic boundaries and contribute constructively to regional, national, and global discourse.

3.4 Development of Future Researchers and Academicians

The Ph.D. Programme shall serve as a foundation for nurturing competent researchers, academicians, professionals, and thought leaders. The University shall strive to cultivate intellectual independence, ethical responsibility, scholarly integrity, and leadership qualities among doctoral scholars, thereby preparing them for careers in higher education, research institutions, industry, public service, and other knowledge-based sectors.

3.5 Promotion of Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Knowledge Translation

The University shall encourage doctoral research that promotes innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, intellectual property generation, technology development, and evidence-based solutions to contemporary challenges. The Ph.D. Programme shall encourage the translation of research outcomes into practical applications, public policy, community development, industry collaboration, and sustainable societal impact, wherever applicable.

3.6 Promotion of Internationalization and Research Collaboration

The University shall promote national and international research collaboration, interdisciplinary partnerships, academic mobility, and engagement with institutions, industries, research organizations, government agencies, and communities. The Ph.D. Programme shall encourage scholars to participate in collaborative research, academic exchange, conferences, publications, and global knowledge networks while maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity.



4. DEFINITIONS

In this Ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them below:

4.1 Ph.D. Scholar

"Ph.D. Scholar" means a candidate who has been duly admitted and registered under the provisions of this Ordinance to pursue research leading to the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) of Sikkim Alpine University, either on a full-time or part-time basis, in an approved School, Department, or Centre of the University.

4.2 Supervisor

"Supervisor" means a regular faculty member of Sikkim Alpine University, recognized and approved by the competent authority of the University to guide, supervise, and monitor the research work of a Ph.D. Scholar in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and applicable UGC Regulations.

The Supervisor shall be primarily responsible for providing academic guidance, monitoring research progress, and ensuring adherence to academic and ethical standards.

4.3 Joint Supervisor / Co-supervisor

"Joint Supervisor" or "Co-supervisor" means a faculty member of Sikkim Alpine University or of another recognized institution, approved by the competent authority of the University, who assists the Supervisor in guiding, mentoring, and supervising the research work of a Ph.D. Scholar, particularly in cases involving interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, collaborative research, or specialized expertise.

The Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall work in coordination with the Supervisor and shall share academic responsibilities as prescribed by the University. The appointment of a Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall not diminish the primary responsibility and accountability of the Supervisor for the overall supervision of the research scholar.



4.4 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

“Research Advisory Committee (RAC)” means a committee constituted by the University for each Ph.D. Scholar to review and monitor the progress of research work, provide academic guidance, and recommend continuation, modification, or completion of the research in accordance with this Ordinance.

The composition and functions of the RAC shall be as prescribed by the University under the relevant provisions of this Ordinance.

4.5 Coursework

“Coursework” means the mandatory academic component of the Ph.D. Programme comprising prescribed credit-based courses, including research methodology, subject-specific studies, and other approved academic requirements, to be completed by a Ph.D. Scholar within the stipulated period as per the provisions of this Ordinance.

4.6 Ethics Committees

“Ethics Committees” mean the duly constituted institutional bodies of Sikkim Alpine University responsible for reviewing and approving research proposals involving human participants, animals, biological materials, indigenous knowledge, environmental interventions, or other ethically sensitive domains, in accordance with national regulations and University policies.

Such committees may include, where applicable, Institutional Ethics Committees, Human Research Ethics Committees, Institutional Animal Ethics Committees, or other discipline-specific ethical review bodies recognized by the University.

4.7 Academic Integrity Panels

“Academic Integrity Panels” mean the institutional bodies constituted by the University in accordance with UGC regulations to ensure the promotion of academic integrity and the prevention of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct in research and scholarly work.



These Panels shall examine cases of alleged academic misconduct and recommend appropriate action in accordance with the University's Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism policies.

4.8 Research Degree Committee (RDC)

"Research Degree Committee (RDC)" means the statutory University-level academic body constituted under this Ordinance to oversee the admission, registration, supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and overall academic governance of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the applicable UGC Regulations.

4.9 Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

"Departmental Research Committee (DRC)" means the academic committee constituted at the School, Department, or Centre level to scrutinize applications, evaluate research proposals, recommend admissions, recommend the appointment of Supervisors/Joint Supervisors, and perform such functions as prescribed under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

4.10 Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell)

"Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell)" means the institutional body established by Sikkim Alpine University to promote research, innovation, ethics, collaborations, funding, intellectual property, research quality, and other research-related activities across the University. The R&D Cell shall function in coordination with the Research Degree Committee in matters relating to doctoral research and research governance.

4.11 Thesis

"Thesis" means the written document embodying the original and independent research undertaken by a Ph.D. Scholar in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) of Sikkim Alpine University.

4.12 Competent Authority

"Competent Authority" means the Vice-Chancellor, Academic Council, Registrar, Research Degree Committee, or any other authority empowered under the Act, Statutes, Ordinances,



Regulations, or official notifications of the University to exercise powers or discharge responsibilities under this Ordinance.

4.13 Interpretation

Unless the context otherwise requires, words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa, words importing one gender shall include all genders, and references to any statutory provision shall include any amendment, modification, or re-enactment thereof.



5. ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme of Sikkim Alpine University shall be governed by the eligibility criteria prescribed under the University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022, as amended from time to time, and such other norms as may be adopted by the University.

5.1 Educational Qualifications

A candidate seeking admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall have successfully completed any of the following qualifications from a recognized University or Institution:

a) A one-year/two-semester Master's Degree programme after a four-year Bachelor's Degree programme, with the prescribed minimum marks or grade;

or

b) A two-year/four-semester Master's Degree programme after a three-year or four-year Bachelor's Degree programme, with the prescribed minimum marks or grade;

or

c) A four-year/eight-semester Bachelor's Degree with Research, subject to the minimum CGPA requirement prescribed under UGC norms;

or

d) An M.Phil. Degree or an equivalent qualification recognized by the UGC;

or

e) An equivalent qualification from a foreign educational institution accredited by an assessment and accreditation agency approved or recognized in its home country.

The eligibility of candidates possessing qualifications from foreign educational institutions shall be determined in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) equivalence norms, where applicable, and the policies of the University.



5.2 Minimum Marks / Grades

A candidate shall have secured:

- Not less than **55% marks in aggregate**, or its equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed, in the qualifying examination;

or

- A minimum CGPA as prescribed by UGC for admission through a four-year Bachelor's Degree with Research.

The calculation of eligibility marks shall be based solely on qualifying examination performance without inclusion of grace marks, if any.

5.3 Relaxation of Marks

A relaxation of **5% marks**, or an equivalent relaxation of grade, shall be allowed for candidates belonging to:

- Scheduled Castes (SC)
- Scheduled Tribes (ST)
- Other Backward Classes (Non-Creamy Layer)
- Differently-Abled categories
- Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)
- Any other category as may be notified by the UGC or Government of India from time to time

Such relaxation shall be granted strictly in accordance with applicable UGC regulations and Government norms.



5.4 NET/JRF and Entrance Examination Provisions

Candidates possessing qualifications such as UGC-NET, UGC-CSIR NET, JRF, GATE, or other national-level fellowships recognized by the University Grants Commission shall be eligible for admission in accordance with the admission procedure prescribed by the University and the applicable UGC Regulations. Admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be based on a transparent and merit-based process.

- a) Candidates who have qualified for **UGC-NET/JRF or equivalent national-level examinations**, as recognized by the UGC, may be considered for admission in accordance with the weightage and admission criteria prescribed by the University, consistent with UGC Regulations.
- b) Candidates who have not qualified for NET/JRF may be required to appear for a **University-level Ph.D. Entrance Examination**, followed by an interview or research presentation, as prescribed by the University.
- c) The final selection of candidates shall be based on merit determined through prescribed evaluation procedures, ensuring compliance with UGC guidelines.

5.5 Interpretation of Eligibility

The determination of eligibility for admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be subject to the verification of academic qualifications, equivalence of degrees, reservation policies, and other eligibility conditions prescribed by the University and the applicable UGC Regulations. The decision of the competent authority of the University regarding eligibility shall be final, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and applicable statutory regulations.

5.6 Reservation Policy

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be subject to the reservation policy of the Government of India, the Government of Sikkim, the University Grants Commission, and the University, as applicable from time to time.



6. ADMISSION PROCEDURE

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be conducted in a transparent, merit-based, objective, and equitable manner in accordance with this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable UGC Regulations, as amended from time to time.

6.1 Modes of Admission

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme may be made through one or more of the following modes, as prescribed by the applicable UGC Regulations and the admission policy of the University:

- a) Through the University Ph.D. Entrance Test conducted by Sikkim Alpine University;
- b) Through national-level eligibility tests or fellowships recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), including UGC-NET, UGC-CSIR NET, Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), GATE, CEED, or any other examination or fellowship recognized by the University from time to time;
- c) Through any other mode of admission or category as may be prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and adopted by the University.

The detailed eligibility, admission categories, weightage, exemptions (where applicable), and evaluation criteria for each mode of admission shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines of the University in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

6.2 University Ph.D. Entrance Test

Where the University conducts a Ph.D. Entrance Test, the examination shall be designed to assess the candidate's research aptitude, analytical ability, subject knowledge, comprehension, and preparedness for doctoral research.

The structure, syllabus, qualifying criteria, evaluation methodology, and weightage of the Entrance Test shall be prescribed by the University in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.



6.3 Interview / Research Presentation

Candidates shortlisted through the prescribed admission process shall appear before a duly constituted **Departmental Research Committee (DRC)/Selection Committee** for an Interview and/or Research Presentation.

During the interaction, the Committee shall evaluate, among other factors:

- a) the candidate's research aptitude and academic competence;
- b) the clarity, originality, feasibility, and significance of the proposed research;
- c) the candidate's preparedness and motivation to undertake doctoral research;
- d) the availability of suitable supervisory expertise and research infrastructure within the University; and
- e) the alignment of the proposed research with the academic and research priorities of the University.

The recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC)/Selection Committee shall be forwarded to the **Research Degree Committee (RDC)** for consideration and approval in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

6.4 Merit-Based and Transparent Selection

The final selection of candidates shall be based on merit and shall be carried out through a transparent, objective, and equitable evaluation process in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and the admission policy of the University.

The evaluation process may include one or more of the following components:

- a) academic performance in the qualifying examination;
- b) performance in the University Ph.D. Entrance Test, wherever applicable;
- c) performance in the Interview and/or Research Presentation;



- d) qualification through national-level eligibility tests or fellowships recognized by the UGC;
- e) availability of suitable supervision and research facilities;
- f) reservation policy and statutory provisions applicable from time to time; and
- g) such other criteria as may be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

6.5 Approval of Admission

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be subject to:

- a) the availability of an eligible **Supervisor** and, wherever necessary, a **Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor**, within the supervision limits prescribed by the applicable UGC Regulations and the University;
- b) the availability of adequate research infrastructure and facilities for the proposed research;
- c) approval of the **Research Degree Committee (RDC)** and the competent authority of the University; and
- d) fulfillment of all admission requirements prescribed under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

The decision of the competent authority regarding admission shall be final.



7. DURATION OF THE PH.D. PROGRAMME

The duration of the Ph.D. Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall be governed by the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, as amended from time to time, the provisions of this Ordinance, and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines of the University.

7.1 Minimum Duration

The Ph.D. Programme shall be for a **minimum duration of three (3) years**, including coursework, from the date of admission/registration.

No Ph.D. degree shall be awarded before the completion of the prescribed minimum duration, except where expressly permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations.

7.2 Maximum Duration

The maximum duration for completion of the Ph.D. Programme shall be **six (6) years** from the date of admission/registration.

Failure to complete the Programme within the prescribed maximum period shall ordinarily result in cancellation of the registration unless an extension is granted in accordance with this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable UGC Regulations.

7.3 Extension and Special Provisions

- a) The University may grant an extension beyond the prescribed maximum duration only in exceptional circumstances, subject to the recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and the approval of the competent authority, in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.
- b) Women candidates and Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBD) with not less than forty per cent (40%) disability, as certified by the competent medical authority, shall be eligible for relaxation of the maximum duration in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.
- c) Women candidates shall be eligible for Maternity Leave and/or Child Care Leave in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and University rules. The period of



such leave shall not be counted towards the maximum duration of the Ph.D. Programme wherever so permitted under the applicable regulations.

- d) The total duration of the Ph.D. Programme, including all extensions and relaxations, shall be governed by the maximum limits prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations, as amended from time to time.

7.4 Suspension of Registration (Optional but Useful)

Where a Research Scholar is unable to pursue research due to prolonged illness, natural calamity, court orders, or any other exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control, the University may permit temporary suspension of registration in accordance with the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines and the applicable UGC Regulations. The period of such approved suspension shall be dealt with in the manner prescribed by the University.



8. RESEARCH SUPERVISION

The quality and integrity of doctoral research shall be ensured through competent and responsible research supervision in accordance with UGC Regulations and the provisions of this Ordinance.

8.1 Eligibility Criteria for Supervisors

A faculty member shall be eligible for recognition as a Research Supervisor for the Ph.D. Programme only if he or she satisfies the eligibility criteria prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations and the policies of the University.

Ordinarily, a Research Supervisor shall:

- a) be a regular, full-time faculty member of Sikkim Alpine University possessing a Ph.D. degree in the relevant or allied discipline;
- b) possess the minimum research credentials and publication requirements prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations for recognition as a Ph.D. Supervisor;
- c) demonstrate active engagement in research through quality publications, externally funded research projects, patents, consultancy, innovation, or other recognized scholarly contributions;
- d) fulfill such additional eligibility criteria as may be prescribed by the University from time to time.

Adjunct Faculty, Emeritus Professors, Visiting Faculty, Professors of Practice, Retired Faculty Members, Scientists, and Research Professionals from recognized institutions may be permitted to act as Supervisors, Joint Supervisors, or Co-supervisors, subject to the applicable UGC Regulations, approval of the competent authority, and fulfillment of the eligibility criteria prescribed by the University.

Recognition of Supervisors shall be granted by the University through the Research Degree Committee (RDC) and approved by the competent authority.

8.2 Maximum Number of Scholars per Supervisor

The supervision load shall include all Research Scholars for whom the faculty member is serving as Supervisor. The role of Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall ordinarily not be



counted towards the maximum supervision limit unless otherwise prescribed by the University or applicable UGC Regulations.

The allocation of scholars shall take into account:

- a) The academic rank and experience of the Supervisor;
- b) Ongoing supervision load;
- c) Availability of research infrastructure;
- d) Quality assurance considerations.

The University shall ensure equitable distribution of supervision responsibilities and maintain academic standards in the allocation process.

8.3 Joint Supervisor / Co-supervisor and Interdisciplinary Supervision

The University may appoint one or more Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors whenever the nature of the research requires interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, collaborative, inter-institutional, or specialized academic expertise.

- a) A Co-supervisor may be appointed from within the University or from another recognized institution, subject to approval by the competent authority.
- b) Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, collaborative, or inter-institutional research may be undertaken through appropriate Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor arrangements approved by the University.
- c) The appointment of a Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall not diminish the primary academic responsibility of the Supervisor.
- d) The roles, responsibilities, rights, and coordination mechanism between the Supervisor and the Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall be governed by the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines of the University.



8.4 Responsibilities of Supervisors

The Supervisor shall:

- a) provide academic guidance and mentorship to the Research Scholar;
- b) assist the Research Scholar in planning and conducting research in accordance with accepted academic and ethical standards;
- c) monitor the progress of research through periodic review;
- d) ensure compliance with the University's Ethical Research Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, and other applicable regulations;
- e) recommend submission of progress reports, synopsis, pre-submission seminar, and thesis as appropriate;
- f) encourage publication, participation in academic events, innovation, and responsible dissemination of research outcomes.

8.5 Change of Supervisor

The University may permit a change of Supervisor or Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor under exceptional circumstances, including retirement, resignation, transfer, prolonged absence, conflict of interest, disciplinary action, health reasons, or any other circumstance affecting effective research supervision, subject to the recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and the competent authority.



9. COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Ph.D. Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall include a mandatory coursework component designed to equip scholars with advanced research skills, disciplinary depth, and ethical research understanding in accordance with UGC Regulations. The coursework component shall provide every Research Scholar with a strong foundation in research methodology, disciplinary knowledge, research ethics, publication ethics, academic writing, scientific communication, and other competencies necessary for conducting high-quality doctoral research.

9.1 Mandatory Coursework

Every Ph.D. Scholar admitted to the Programme shall be required to complete prescribed coursework during the initial phase of the Programme.

The coursework shall ordinarily include:

- a) A course in **Research Methodology**, covering research design, quantitative and qualitative methods, academic writing, publication ethics, and related competencies;
- b) Subject-specific or discipline-oriented advanced courses relevant to the proposed area of research;
- c) Any additional course(s) as may be recommended by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and approved by the University.

The coursework shall be treated as a mandatory academic requirement for confirmation of Ph.D. registration and progression to the research phase of the Programme. The detailed curriculum, course contents, mode of delivery, and academic requirements shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

9.2 Credit Structure

The coursework shall comprise a **minimum of twelve (12) credits**, or such minimum credit requirement as may be prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) from time to time.

The coursework shall ordinarily include:

- a) Research Methodology;
- b) Advanced subject-specific or discipline-oriented courses;
- c) Research and Publication Ethics (where applicable);



- d) Any additional course(s) recommended by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and approved by the University.

The detailed credit distribution, curriculum, and course structure shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines. Coursework shall ordinarily be completed during the initial phase of the Ph.D. Programme within the time frame prescribed by the University under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

9.3 Evaluation and Completion Criteria

Coursework shall be evaluated through written examinations, assignments, seminars, presentations, practical exercises, continuous internal assessment, or any combination thereof, as prescribed by the University.

A Research Scholar shall obtain the minimum qualifying grade or percentage prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines. Successful completion of coursework shall be mandatory for confirmation of registration and progression to the research phase.

A Research Scholar who fails to complete the coursework requirements may be permitted to repeat the coursework or undertake such remedial measures as may be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines. Failure to successfully complete the coursework requirements within the prescribed period or failure to secure the minimum academic performance prescribed by the University may result in discontinuation, repetition of coursework, or such other action as may be provided under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines and the applicable academic regulations of the University.

9.4 Exemption / Transfer of Coursework

The University may permit exemption, transfer, or recognition of equivalent coursework completed at another recognized institution, if permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations and subject to the recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and the competent authority. The detailed procedure shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.



9.5 Review and Revision of Coursework

The coursework curriculum shall be reviewed periodically by the University through the Research Degree Committee (RDC) in consultation with the concerned Schools, Departments, and Boards of Studies to ensure continued alignment with the applicable UGC Regulations, emerging research priorities, and academic advancements.



10. RESEARCH GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

To ensure academic excellence, transparency, accountability, ethical conduct, and effective administration of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme, Sikkim Alpine University shall establish a structured research governance framework comprising institutional and doctoral academic bodies. These bodies shall function in coordination with one another in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, as amended from time to time.

The research governance framework of the University shall comprise the following bodies:

- a) **Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell);**
- b) **Research Degree Committee (RDC);**
- c) **Departmental Research Committee (DRC);**
- d) **Research Advisory Committee (RAC).**

Each body shall discharge its respective functions independently while maintaining effective coordination to ensure the quality, integrity, and efficient administration of doctoral research.

10.1 Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell)

The Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell) shall function as the University's apex institutional body for promoting research, innovation, academic integrity, research ethics, collaborations, capacity building, and overall research development across all disciplines.

Role and Functions

The Research & Development Cell shall, among other functions:

- a) formulate, review, and recommend institutional research policies and strategic initiatives;
- b) promote interdisciplinary and collaborative research within the University and with external institutions;
- c) facilitate research funding, consultancy, innovation, intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer activities;
- d) oversee institutional policies relating to research ethics, academic integrity, plagiarism prevention, responsible conduct of research, and research quality assurance;
- e) coordinate research promotion, faculty development, publications, conferences, workshops, and other research-related activities.

- f) monitor institutional research performance and contribute towards national and international research rankings, accreditation, and quality assurance initiatives;
- g) provide policy guidance to the Research Degree Committee and other research-related bodies wherever required; and
- h) perform such other functions relating to research development and governance as may be assigned by the University from time to time.

The constitution, tenure, powers, and operational procedures of the Research & Development Cell shall be governed by the relevant University notifications and policies.

10.2 Research Degree Committee (RDC)

The Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall be the statutory academic body responsible for the governance, administration, monitoring, and quality assurance of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme of the University.

Role and Functions

The Research Degree Committee shall:

- a) oversee the implementation of the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines;
- b) recommend approval of admissions to the Ph.D. Programme based on the recommendations of the Departmental Research Committees;
- c) recommend recognition and allocation of Research Supervisors and Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and University norms;
- d) oversee the constitution and functioning of the Departmental Research Committees (DRCs) and Research Advisory Committees (RACs);
- e) monitor the academic quality, progress, and overall administration of the doctoral programme;
- f) recommend approval of thesis submission, evaluation, and award of the Ph.D. degree in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance;
- g) ensure compliance with applicable UGC Regulations, University policies, and statutory requirements governing doctoral education; and
- h) perform such other functions relating to the governance of the Ph.D. Programme as may be assigned by the competent authority of the University.



The constitution, tenure, quorum, powers, and detailed operational procedures of the Research Degree Committee shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

10.3 Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

Every School, Department, or Centre recognized to offer the Ph.D. Programme shall constitute a Departmental Research Committee (DRC).

The Departmental Research Committee shall function as the departmental academic body responsible for implementing the doctoral programme and ensuring academic quality within its respective discipline.

Role and Functions

The Departmental Research Committee shall:

- a) scrutinize applications received for admission to the Ph.D. Programme;
- b) conduct interviews, research presentations, or other evaluation processes as prescribed by the University;
- c) recommend admission of eligible candidates to the Research Degree Committee;
- d) recommend the appointment and allocation of Research Supervisors and Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors based on academic expertise, research interests, and supervision availability;
- e) examine and recommend research proposals and synopsis for registration;
- f) monitor the academic progress and research standards of scholars within the Department;
- g) review recommendations received from the Research Advisory Committees and forward appropriate recommendations to the Research Degree Committee; and
- h) perform such other academic functions relating to doctoral research as may be prescribed under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

The constitution and functioning of the Departmental Research Committee shall be prescribed by the University.



10.4 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) shall be constituted for every Ph.D. Scholar immediately after registration.

The Research Advisory Committee shall function as the scholar-specific academic body responsible for providing continuous academic guidance, monitoring research progress, and ensuring the timely completion of the doctoral research.

Role and Functions

The Research Advisory Committee shall:

- a) approve and periodically review the detailed research proposal of the Research Scholar;
- b) provide academic guidance regarding research methodology, literature, experimental design, data analysis, and other research-related matters;
- c) review the progress of research at intervals prescribed by the University and recommend continuation, modification, extension, or other appropriate academic action;
- d) advise the Research Scholar regarding publications, conference presentations, research ethics, and academic integrity;
- e) evaluate the readiness of the Research Scholar for pre-submission seminar and thesis submission;
- f) recommend submission of the doctoral thesis to the Departmental Research Committee; and
- g) perform such other functions relating to research supervision and academic monitoring as may be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

Continuation of registration in the Ph.D. Programme shall be subject to satisfactory progress as recommended by the Research Advisory Committee and approved through the prescribed academic process.

10.5 Coordination Among Research Bodies

The Research & Development Cell, Research Degree Committee, Departmental Research Committee, and Research Advisory Committee shall function in a coordinated and complementary manner to ensure effective governance of doctoral research.



The Research & Development Cell shall provide institutional leadership in research policy, ethics, innovation, research promotion, and quality enhancement.

The Research Degree Committee shall function as the principal statutory academic body responsible for the governance and administration of the Ph.D. Programme.

The Departmental Research Committee shall implement doctoral research activities at the School, Department, or Centre level and shall forward its recommendations to the Research Degree Committee.

The Research Advisory Committee shall provide scholar-specific academic guidance and continuous monitoring throughout the duration of the Ph.D. Programme.

All recommendations relating to doctoral research shall ordinarily be processed through the appropriate academic hierarchy to ensure transparency, accountability, quality assurance, and compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the applicable UGC Regulations.



11. EVALUATION, SUBMISSION & ASSESSMENT

The evaluation and assessment of the Ph.D. thesis at Sikkim Alpine University shall be conducted in accordance with UGC Regulations and the provisions of this Ordinance to ensure academic rigor, transparency, and integrity.

11.1 Pre-Submission Seminar

Prior to submission of the thesis, every Ph.D. Scholar shall deliver a **Pre-Submission Seminar** in the concerned School or Department.

The purpose of the Pre-Submission Seminar shall be:

- a) To present the research findings and conclusions of the study;
- b) To obtain academic feedback and suggestions;
- c) To assess the readiness of the thesis for submission.

The recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee shall be forwarded through the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration, wherever applicable.

11.2 Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Ethical Compliance

The thesis shall comply with the University's Academic Integrity Policy, Ethical Research Policy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy (where applicable), and the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, as amended from time to time.

- a) The similarity index of the thesis shall fall within the permissible limits prescribed by the UGC and the University from time to time.
- b) Any instance of academic misconduct or excessive similarity shall be dealt with in accordance with the University's Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism framework.

No thesis shall be accepted for evaluation unless it has been certified as compliant with prescribed plagiarism norms.

11.3 Thesis Submission

Upon satisfactory completion of the research work and fulfillment of all academic requirements, including coursework and progress reviews, the Ph.D. Scholar shall submit the thesis in the prescribed format within the stipulated duration of the Programme.



The thesis shall:

- a) Represent original research work carried out by the Scholar;
- b) Demonstrate scholarly rigor and substantive contribution to knowledge;
- c) Conform to the format and submission guidelines prescribed by the University.

The submission of the thesis shall be subject to certification by the Supervisor and recommendation of the Research Advisory Committee. The Research Scholar shall also submit all prescribed certificates, declarations, ethical clearances, plagiarism reports, and other documents required by the University before the thesis is accepted for evaluation.

11.4 Appointment of Examiners

The doctoral thesis shall be evaluated by suitably qualified examiners appointed by the University in accordance with the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, this Ordinance, and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

Upon recommendation of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) that the Research Scholar has satisfactorily completed all academic requirements and is eligible for thesis submission, the matter shall be placed before the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration. Upon approval by the RDC, the competent authority of the University shall appoint the examiners for evaluation of the thesis.

The examiners shall:

- a) possess recognized expertise in the relevant or allied field of research;
- b) satisfy the eligibility criteria prescribed by the University and the applicable UGC Regulations;
- c) conduct an independent, objective, confidential, and impartial evaluation of the thesis; and
- d) submit their evaluation reports in the manner prescribed by the University.

The number of examiners, their appointment procedure, evaluation methodology, timelines, and related operational matters shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

11.5 Viva Voce Examination

Upon receipt of favourable evaluation reports from the appointed examiners, the Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall recommend the conduct of the Viva Voce Examination through



the concerned School, Department, or Centre in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

The Viva Voce Examination shall:

- a) assess the Research Scholar's understanding of the research work and the originality, significance, and contribution of the research to the discipline;
- b) evaluate the Scholar's ability to defend the research methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations;
- c) provide an opportunity for academic discussion, scholarly scrutiny, and constructive academic interaction; and
- d) be conducted in a fair, transparent, and academically rigorous manner.

The Viva Voce Examination shall ordinarily be conducted as an open academic defence unless otherwise decided by the competent authority under exceptional circumstances.

Following successful completion of the Viva Voce Examination, the Viva Voce Board shall submit its recommendations to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), which shall examine the proceedings and forward its recommendations to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration and further recommendation to the competent authority.

11.6 Revision / Resubmission of Thesis

Where the appointed examiner(s) and/or the Viva Voce Board recommend revision, modification, clarification, or resubmission of the thesis, the recommendations shall be communicated to the Research Scholar through the Supervisor.

The Supervisor shall guide the Research Scholar in carrying out the required revisions. Upon completion of the prescribed revisions, the corrected thesis shall be reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and subsequently placed before the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) for consideration.

The DRC shall examine the revised submission and forward its recommendations to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for further action in accordance with the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

Where the thesis is not recommended for the award of the Ph.D. degree, the matter shall be considered by the Research Degree Committee (RDC), whose recommendations shall be



forwarded to the competent authority for appropriate decision in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the applicable Regulations.

11.7 Institutional Repository and Recommendation for Award of Degree

Upon successful completion of the evaluation process, Viva Voce Examination, and fulfillment of all academic, ethical, and statutory requirements prescribed under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, the Research Scholar shall submit the final corrected version of the thesis in the format prescribed by the University.

The final approved thesis shall be deposited in the University's Institutional Repository and such national repositories, including Shodhganga, as may be prescribed under the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) shall certify the satisfactory completion of the research work. The Departmental Research Committee (DRC) shall review the complete record of the Research Scholar and recommend the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) to the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

The Research Degree Committee (RDC), upon satisfying itself that all academic, ethical, procedural, and statutory requirements prescribed under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines have been fulfilled, shall recommend the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) to the competent authority of the University.

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) shall be awarded only after approval by the competent authority of the University and shall be conferred in accordance with the provisions of the University Act, this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and other applicable statutory provisions.



12. AWARD OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) DEGREE

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) shall be awarded by Sikkim Alpine University to a Research Scholar who has successfully fulfilled all academic, research, ethical, and statutory requirements prescribed under this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

12.1 Conditions for Award

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) shall be awarded only after the Research Scholar has successfully fulfilled all of the following requirements:

- a) completed the prescribed minimum duration of the Ph.D. Programme in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations;
- b) successfully completed the prescribed coursework and all other academic requirements of the Programme;
- c) successfully completed the approved research work under the guidance of the Supervisor and, where applicable, the Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor;
- d) fulfilled all requirements relating to research ethics, academic integrity, plagiarism compliance, and other statutory obligations prescribed by the University;
- e) successfully submitted and defended the doctoral thesis in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines;
- f) obtained favourable recommendations from the appointed examiners and the Viva Voce Board; and
- g) received the recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and Research Degree Committee (RDC), followed by the approval of the competent authority of the University.

The recommendation of the Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall form the basis for placing the matter before the competent authority for the award of the Degree.

12.2 Approval and Conferment of the Degree

Upon satisfying itself that the Research Scholar has fulfilled all academic, ethical, procedural, and statutory requirements prescribed under this Ordinance and the applicable Regulations, the competent authority of the University shall approve the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).



The Degree shall be conferred in accordance with the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Act, the Statutes, this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

12.3 Compliance with Statutory Regulations

The award of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree shall at all times remain subject to:

- a) the University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022, as amended from time to time;
- b) the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, as amended from time to time;
- c) the Sikkim Alpine University Act, the Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, and other policies of the University; and
- d) any other applicable statutory provisions governing doctoral education in India.

In the event of any inconsistency between this Ordinance and the applicable statutory provisions, the latter shall prevail to the extent of such inconsistency until appropriate amendments are incorporated into this Ordinance.

12.4 Repository Submission and Public Access

Following the approval and award of the Degree, the University shall ensure that the final approved version of the doctoral thesis is deposited in the University's Institutional Repository and submitted electronically to the INFLIBNET Centre (Shodhganga) or any other repository prescribed by the University Grants Commission from time to time.

The University may also make the thesis available for academic access and scholarly use in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, Copyright Policy, and other applicable regulations.



13. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ETHICAL COMPLIANCE & RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH CONDUCT

Sikkim Alpine University affirms that academic integrity, ethical conduct, honesty, transparency, accountability, and responsible research practices constitute the foundation of doctoral education. Every Research Scholar, Supervisor, Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor, and every academic body constituted under this Ordinance shall uphold the highest standards of academic and professional ethics throughout the duration of the Ph.D. Programme.

13.1 Compliance with Academic Integrity and Research Ethics

All research undertaken under the Ph.D. Programme shall strictly comply with:

- a) the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, as amended from time to time;
- b) the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy;
- c) the University's Ethical Research Policy;
- d) the University's policies governing the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), where applicable; and
- e) such other statutory regulations, ethical guidelines, or directives issued by the University Grants Commission, Government of India, or other competent authorities from time to time.

Research Scholars shall ensure that all research outputs, including research proposals, thesis, publications, conference presentations, datasets, software, and other scholarly works, represent original academic work and appropriately acknowledge the contributions of others through accepted citation and referencing practices.

Supervisors and Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors shall actively promote responsible research conduct and ensure compliance with the applicable academic integrity and ethical standards throughout the research process.

13.2 Ethical Compliance in Research

Research involving human participants, animals, biological materials, indigenous knowledge, environmental interventions, traditional knowledge systems, sensitive personal data, or any



other ethically regulated domain shall require prior approval from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee(s) or other competent ethics review body recognized by the University.

No research requiring ethical approval shall commence unless the necessary approvals have been obtained in accordance with the University's Ethical Research Policy and applicable statutory requirements.

The University shall ensure that all doctoral research conforms to:

- a) national and international ethical standards;
- b) applicable statutory and regulatory requirements governing the discipline concerned;
- c) institutional policies on responsible conduct of research; and
- d) ethical principles relating to confidentiality, informed consent, environmental responsibility, and protection of intellectual property and community rights, wherever applicable.

13.3 Academic Misconduct

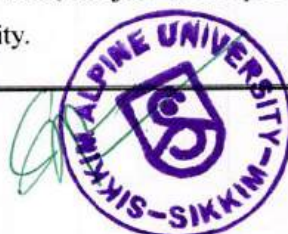
Any act of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification of data, misrepresentation, unethical authorship practices, manipulation of research findings, unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence, violation of ethical approvals, or any other form of research misconduct shall constitute academic misconduct under this Ordinance.

Allegations of academic misconduct shall be examined by the Academic Integrity Panel, Ethics Committee, or any other competent authority constituted by the University in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and University policies.

Upon completion of due inquiry and following the principles of natural justice, the competent authority may impose one or more of the following actions:

- a) revision, correction, or rejection of the research work or thesis;
- b) suspension or cancellation of the Research Scholar's registration;
- c) withdrawal or cancellation of the award of the Ph.D. Degree, where warranted;
- d) disciplinary action against any person found responsible for academic misconduct; or
- e) any other action considered appropriate under the University Act, Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, and institutional policies.

The decision of the competent authority shall be final, subject to the provisions relating to appeal or review, if any, prescribed by the University.



13.4 Promotion of Responsible Research Culture

Sikkim Alpine University shall actively promote a culture of responsible research conduct through awareness programmes, research ethics training, academic integrity workshops, responsible use of emerging technologies, capacity-building initiatives, and periodic review of institutional research policies.

The Research & Development Cell, in coordination with the Research Degree Committee (RDC), Ethics Committee, Academic Integrity Panel, and other competent academic bodies, shall periodically review and strengthen institutional mechanisms for ensuring ethical, transparent, and high-quality doctoral research.



14. WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION, TERMINATION & DISCIPLINARY PROVISIONS

The registration of a Research Scholar under the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme may be withdrawn, cancelled, suspended, or terminated in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable statutory regulations. All actions under this Chapter shall be undertaken in accordance with the principles of natural justice, fairness, transparency, and due process.

14.1 Voluntary Withdrawal

A Research Scholar may voluntarily withdraw from the Ph.D. Programme at any stage of the Programme by submitting a written application through the Supervisor to the concerned Department or School.

The application shall be reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) before being forwarded to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for recommendation to the competent authority.

Upon approval by the competent authority:

- a) the registration of the Research Scholar shall stand withdrawn from the date specified in the approval order;
- b) the withdrawal shall not ordinarily entitle the Research Scholar to any refund of fees unless otherwise provided under the University's rules and regulations; and
- c) any subsequent admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be treated as a fresh admission and shall be governed by the regulations in force at that time.

14.2 Termination on Academic Grounds

The registration of a Research Scholar may be terminated on academic grounds where the Scholar:

- a) fails to complete the prescribed coursework within the stipulated period;
- b) demonstrates consistently unsatisfactory research progress as reported by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC);
- c) fails to submit the doctoral thesis within the maximum permissible duration of the Programme without obtaining an approved extension;



- d) repeatedly fails to comply with the academic requirements prescribed under this Ordinance or the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines; or
- e) abandons the research programme without prior approval or without maintaining the minimum academic engagement prescribed by the University.

Recommendations for termination shall ordinarily originate from the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), be examined by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and thereafter be placed before the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for recommendation to the competent authority.

No registration shall be terminated on academic grounds unless the Research Scholar has been informed of the deficiencies and has been provided a reasonable opportunity to present an explanation before the competent authority.

14.3 Termination on Grounds of Misconduct

The registration of a Research Scholar may be cancelled or terminated where the Scholar is found guilty of:

- a) plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct;
- b) fabrication, falsification, manipulation, or misrepresentation of research data or findings;
- c) violation of approved ethical protocols or misuse of ethical approvals;
- d) submission of false, forged, or misleading information or documents at any stage of the Programme;
- e) unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence or other technologies in violation of the University's Academic Integrity or Ethical Research Policies;
- f) conduct prejudicial to the academic reputation, discipline, or integrity of the University.

Such cases shall be examined by the appropriate Academic Integrity Panel, Ethics Committee, or any other competent committee constituted by the University.

The recommendations of the concerned committee shall be placed before the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration before submission to the competent authority for final decision.

The University may impose one or more disciplinary actions, including cancellation of registration, rejection of the thesis, suspension from the Programme, withdrawal of the awarded

degree (where applicable), or any other action permissible under the University's rules and the applicable UGC Regulations.

14.4 Appeal and Review

A Research Scholar aggrieved by any decision relating to withdrawal, suspension, cancellation, or termination of registration may submit an appeal before the competent authority of the University within the period prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

The appeal shall be examined in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the University, and the decision of the competent authority shall be final.

14.5 Final Authority

The final decision relating to withdrawal, suspension, cancellation, termination of registration, or any disciplinary action under this Ordinance shall rest with the competent authority of the University based upon the recommendations of the appropriate academic and statutory bodies constituted under this Ordinance.

All proceedings under this Chapter shall be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice, applicable statutory regulations, and the University's policies governing doctoral education.



15. POWERS OF THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES

The administration, governance, regulation, and oversight of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall vest in the competent statutory and academic authorities of the University in accordance with the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Act, Statutes, this Ordinance, the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

The respective authorities shall exercise their powers and discharge their responsibilities in a coordinated manner to ensure academic excellence, transparency, accountability, and quality assurance in doctoral education.

15.1 Role of the Academic Council

The Academic Council shall be the principal academic authority of the University in matters relating to doctoral education and research.

The Academic Council shall:

- a) approve, review, amend, or repeal the Ph.D. Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines;
- b) approve policies governing doctoral admissions, coursework, supervision, research governance, evaluation, examination, and award of the Ph.D. Degree;
- c) approve or ratify recommendations relating to the award of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance;
- d) ensure that the Ph.D. Programme remains consistent with the applicable UGC Regulations and national standards of higher education and research;
- e) consider and approve such other academic matters relating to doctoral education as may be referred to it by the competent authority.

The decisions of the Academic Council shall be final in all academic matters relating to the Ph.D. Programme, subject to the provisions of the University Act and other applicable statutory provisions.



15.2 Role of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor shall be the Chief Academic and Executive Officer of the University and shall exercise overall supervision over the implementation of this Ordinance.

The Vice-Chancellor shall:

- a) ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines;
- b) exercise such powers as may be necessary for the proper administration and governance of the Ph.D. Programme;
- c) approve or authorize actions under this Ordinance in accordance with the powers vested in the office;
- d) resolve matters requiring immediate administrative or academic decisions, subject to reporting or ratification by the appropriate statutory authority wherever required;
- e) exercise such other powers as may be necessary to safeguard academic standards, research quality, and institutional integrity.

The decisions of the Vice-Chancellor taken in good faith under this Ordinance shall be binding unless modified by the appropriate statutory authority of the University.

15.3 Role of the Research & Development Cell

The Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell) shall function as the University's institutional body for promoting research, innovation, research quality, academic integrity, research ethics, capacity building, collaborations, and research policy implementation.

Without prejudice to the powers of the statutory authorities of the University, the Research & Development Cell shall:

- a) facilitate the implementation of institutional research policies and strategic research initiatives;
- b) promote interdisciplinary research, innovation, consultancy, intellectual property, publications, and externally funded research;
- c) coordinate research ethics, academic integrity, plagiarism prevention, and responsible research practices in collaboration with the concerned institutional committees;



- d) facilitate coordination among the Research Degree Committee (RDC), Schools, Departments, Centres, Libraries, Ethics Committees, Academic Integrity Panels, and other research-related bodies of the University;
- e) monitor institutional research performance and support quality enhancement initiatives relating to research, accreditation, and national and international rankings;
- f) perform such other functions relating to research development as may be assigned by the competent authority of the University.

15.4 Role of the Research Degree Committee and Other Research Committees

The Research Degree Committee (RDC), Departmental Research Committees (DRCs), and Research Advisory Committees (RACs) shall function as the statutory academic bodies responsible for the governance, implementation, monitoring, supervision, evaluation, and quality assurance of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

These committees shall exercise such powers and perform such responsibilities as are assigned to them under this Ordinance and the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.

The Research Degree Committee shall coordinate the functioning of the Departmental Research Committees and Research Advisory Committees to ensure consistency, transparency, academic quality, and compliance with the applicable statutory regulations governing doctoral education.

The constitution, tenure, powers, quorum, and operational procedures of these committees shall be prescribed under the Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines.



16. SAVINGS, TRANSITIONAL, INTERPRETATION, REMOVAL OF DIFFICULTIES & AMENDMENTS

This Ordinance shall apply to all admissions made to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme from the date of its commencement, unless otherwise specifically provided under this Ordinance or any subsequent resolution of the competent authority of the University.

16.1 Savings

As this constitutes the first statutory Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University, all administrative orders, notifications, circulars, guidelines, instructions, or procedures relating to doctoral education issued prior to the commencement of this Ordinance shall, to the extent they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance or the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, be deemed to have been validly issued and shall continue to remain effective until replaced, amended, or withdrawn by the University.

Any action taken, approval granted, registration made, committee constituted, or decision rendered prior to the commencement of this Ordinance shall remain valid, provided such action is not inconsistent with this Ordinance or the applicable statutory regulations.

16.2 Transitional Provisions

Research Scholars admitted prior to the commencement of this Ordinance shall ordinarily continue to be governed by the regulations, ordinances, guidelines, or academic provisions applicable at the time of their admission, unless otherwise resolved by the Academic Council or directed by the competent authority in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

Where any provision of this Ordinance is beneficial to the Research Scholar and is not inconsistent with the applicable statutory regulations, the University may permit its application to existing Research Scholars through appropriate notification or order.

16.3 Interpretation

In the event of any doubt regarding the interpretation of any provision of this Ordinance, the matter shall be referred to the competent authority of the University, whose decision shall be final, subject to the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Act, Statutes, Ordinances, and the decisions of the Academic Council.



16.4 Removal of Difficulties

If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Ordinance, the Vice-Chancellor may, on the recommendation of the Research Degree Committee (RDC) or the Research & Development Cell, issue such orders, directions, or clarifications as may be necessary to remove the difficulty, provided that such orders are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Act, this Ordinance, or the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

Every such order or direction shall be placed before the Academic Council at its next meeting for information, confirmation, or ratification, as the case may be.

16.5 Amendments

The provisions of this Ordinance shall be reviewed periodically by the Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell) and the Research Degree Committee (RDC), wherever necessary, and amendments, modifications, or revisions may be recommended to the Academic Council in accordance with the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Act and the applicable UGC Regulations.

Where any provision of this Ordinance becomes inconsistent with any statutory regulation issued by the University Grants Commission or any other competent authority, the statutory regulation shall prevail to the extent of such inconsistency until appropriate amendments are incorporated into this Ordinance.

