



विवेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः

SIKKIM ALPINE UNIVERSITY

Kamrang, Namchi, South Sikkim – 737126

(Established under Sikkim Alpine University Act, 2021)

Ph.D. REGULATIONS & GUIDELINES – 2026

(Operational & Implementing Document)

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

These Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines are operational and procedural in nature and are framed under the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University. They are intended to provide detailed procedures, implementation mechanisms, and administrative guidelines for the effective conduct and management of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements and established academic standards.

The University reserves the right to review, amend, revise, modify, or update these Regulations & Guidelines from time to time to ensure continued alignment with the University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations governing doctoral education, including the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022, as amended from time to time, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and other applicable statutory provisions or policy directives issued by the competent authorities. Revisions may also be undertaken to strengthen research governance, academic integrity, ethical research practices, quality assurance, administrative efficiency, and institutional requirements.

Any amendment, revision, or modification to these Regulations & Guidelines shall come into effect only upon approval by the Academic Council of Sikkim Alpine University and subsequent notification by the competent authority of the University.

In the event of any ambiguity, inconsistency, or conflict between these Regulations & Guidelines and the Ph.D. Ordinance, the provisions of the Ordinance shall prevail. However, for all operational, procedural, and implementation-related matters, the detailed provisions contained in these Regulations & Guidelines shall be followed, provided they are not inconsistent with the Ordinance or the applicable UGC Regulations.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Regulations

These Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines are framed under the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University to provide a comprehensive operational and procedural framework for the effective implementation, administration, and management of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme. While the Ph.D. Ordinance establishes the statutory foundation of the Programme, these Regulations & Guidelines prescribe the detailed procedures, standards, academic requirements, and implementation mechanisms governing admission, coursework, supervision, research progress, evaluation, thesis submission, examination, and award of the Ph.D. degree.

The purpose of these Regulations is to:

- a) Ensure transparency, fairness, and merit-based selection in admission to the Ph.D. programme;
- b) Establish uniform academic standards across all Schools and Departments;
- c) Promote high-quality, original, and ethically conducted research;
- d) Strengthen research governance through structured monitoring mechanisms; and
- e) Facilitate compliance with national regulatory requirements and best academic practices.

These Regulations aim to maintain academic excellence while fostering innovation, interdisciplinary research, and socially relevant scholarship.

1.2 Relationship with the Ph.D. Ordinance

These Regulations are framed under and derive their authority from the Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University. The Ordinance constitutes the statutory governing instrument, whereas these Regulations provide the detailed procedural and implementing provisions necessary for effective execution of the doctoral programme.

In the event of any ambiguity, inconsistency, or conflict between these Regulations and the Ph.D. Ordinance, the provisions of the Ordinance shall prevail. However, for all operational, procedural, and implementation-related matters, the detailed provisions contained in these Regulations & Guidelines shall be followed, provided they are not inconsistent with the



Ordinance or the applicable UGC Regulations. All academic and administrative processes under the Ph.D. programme shall be carried out in conformity with both the Ordinance and these Regulations.

1.3 Alignment with Statutory Regulations

These Regulations & Guidelines have been framed in accordance with the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations governing doctoral education, including the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022, as amended from time to time, and other relevant statutory provisions, notifications, and directives issued by the University Grants Commission and other competent authorities.

The operational framework relating to admission, coursework, supervision, research governance, evaluation, academic integrity, ethical compliance, and award of the Ph.D. degree has been designed to ensure conformity with national standards for doctoral education. Wherever applicable, the provisions of the relevant UGC Regulations shall be deemed to form part of these Regulations & Guidelines.

1.4 Applicability

These Regulations shall apply to all Ph.D. programmes offered by Sikkim Alpine University across all Schools, Departments, Centres, and interdisciplinary research units.

They shall be binding upon:

- a) Research Scholars;
- b) Supervisors and Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors;
- c) Departmental Research Committees (DRCs);
- d) Research Advisory Committees (RACs);
- e) Research Degree Committee (RDC);
- f) Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell);
- g) All academic and administrative authorities involved in doctoral governance.



These Regulations shall apply from the date of their approval and notification and shall govern all admissions and academic processes conducted thereafter.

1.5 Interpretation of the Regulations

These Regulations & Guidelines shall be read in conjunction with the Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University. Matters not expressly provided for herein shall be governed by the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, and the decisions of the competent authority of the University.



2. PH.D. ADMISSION REGULATIONS

2.1 Admission Notification

Sikkim Alpine University shall ordinarily invite applications for admission to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme once every academic year through an official admission notification published on the University's website and other appropriate public platforms.

The admission notification shall specify, among other details:

- a) Schools, Departments, Centres, or disciplines in which admissions are offered;
- b) Number of available seats and discipline-wise intake;
- c) Availability of recognized Research Supervisors and their vacant supervision capacity;
- d) Eligibility criteria prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations;
- e) Details of the Entrance Test, wherever applicable;
- f) Schedule for application, Entrance Test, Interview, and admission;
- g) Prescribed application procedure and fees; and
- h) Any other information considered necessary by the University.

All admissions shall be conducted in a transparent, merit-based, and non-discriminatory manner in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and University policies.

2.2 Annual Intake Policy

The University shall ordinarily admit Research Scholars once every academic year.

The annual intake shall be determined based on:

- a) availability of recognized Research Supervisors;
- b) availability of laboratory, library, research, and other infrastructural facilities;
- c) the maximum supervision limits prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations;
- d) departmental research capacity and institutional priorities; and
- e) recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC);

The University reserves the right to increase, decrease, suspend, or modify the intake in any discipline depending upon academic or administrative requirements.



2.3 Seat Matrix and Supervisor Availability

The seat matrix shall be prepared discipline-wise before every admission cycle.

The number of available seats shall be determined based on:

- a) the number of eligible Research Supervisors;
- b) available supervision vacancies;
- c) departmental research capacity;
- d) laboratory, library, and research infrastructure; and
- e) compliance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

No admission shall be made unless suitable supervision is available. The finalized seat matrix shall be approved by the competent authority before publication.

2.4 Reservation Policy

Reservation of seats shall be implemented in accordance with the applicable Government of India, State Government, University Grants Commission (UGC), and University regulations.

Relaxation in eligibility criteria, qualifying marks, and other concessions shall be granted to eligible candidates strictly in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions.

2.5 University Ph.D. Entrance Test

The University shall ordinarily conduct a Ph.D. Entrance Test for admission to the doctoral programme.

The Entrance Test shall assess the candidate's:

- a) research aptitude;
- b) research methodology;
- c) analytical and critical thinking ability;
- d) subject-specific knowledge; and
- e) preparedness for doctoral research.



The detailed examination pattern, syllabus, qualifying criteria, and other operational details shall be notified by the University before the commencement of the admission process.

2.6 Entrance Test Structure

The University Entrance Test may consist of one or more papers covering research methodology, research aptitude, and discipline-specific knowledge.

The mode of examination, duration, pattern, question format, and evaluation methodology shall be prescribed by the University and notified through the admission notification.

2.7 Entrance Test Syllabus

The syllabus for the Entrance Test shall ordinarily include:

- a) Research Methodology;
- b) Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods;
- c) Research Ethics and Academic Integrity;
- d) Scientific and Academic Writing;
- e) Data Analysis and Interpretation; and
- f) Advanced discipline-specific knowledge relevant to the proposed field of research.

The detailed syllabus shall be published on the University's website before the commencement of the admission process.

2.8 Qualifying Marks

The minimum qualifying marks in the Entrance Test shall be as prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations and University policies.

Relaxation in qualifying marks for candidates belonging to reserved categories shall be granted in accordance with the applicable Government and UGC norms.

Only candidates securing the prescribed qualifying marks shall be eligible to appear for the Interview/Research Proposal Presentation.

2.9 Exemption from the University Entrance Test

Candidates who have qualified any of the following national-level examinations shall be exempted from appearing in the University Ph.D. Entrance Test, subject to the applicable UGC Regulations:



- a) UGC-NET with Junior Research Fellowship (JRF);
- b) UGC-NET without JRF but eligible for admission to the Ph.D. Programme;
- c) CSIR-NET/JRF;
- d) GATE, CEED, or any other national-level examination or fellowship recognized by the University Grants Commission for admission to the Ph.D. Programme.

Such candidates shall be required to appear before the Selection Committee for the Interview/Research Proposal Presentation, which shall constitute the basis for assessing their suitability for admission.

2.10 Interview / Research Proposal Presentation

Candidates qualifying through the University Entrance Test and candidates exempted under Section 2.9 shall appear before a duly constituted Selection Committee for an Interview and/or Research Proposal Presentation.

The Selection Committee shall assess:

- a) subject knowledge and research aptitude;
- b) originality, feasibility, and significance of the proposed research;
- c) awareness of research methodology, academic integrity, and research ethics;
- d) interdisciplinary relevance, wherever applicable;
- e) availability of suitable supervision; and
- f) compatibility of the proposed research with the research priorities of the Department and the University.

The Committee shall record its observations and recommendations in writing.

2.11 Preparation of the Final Merit List

The final merit list shall be prepared in accordance with the admission policy prescribed by the University.

For candidates admitted through the University Entrance Test, the merit shall be based on the prescribed weightage of the Entrance Test and the Interview/Research Proposal Presentation.



For candidates exempted from the University Entrance Test under Section 2.9, the merit shall be determined based on their performance in the Interview/Research Proposal Presentation and other criteria prescribed by the University in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

The recommendations of the Selection Committee shall be placed before the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) for scrutiny and recommendation and thereafter before the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for approval.

Admission shall be confirmed only after approval by the competent authority and completion of all admission formalities.

2.12 Admission Offer and Registration

Candidates selected for admission shall complete document verification, payment of prescribed fees, registration, and other admission formalities within the period notified by the University.

Failure to complete the prescribed formalities within the stipulated time may result in cancellation of the admission offer.

2.13 Cancellation of Admission

Admission to the Ph.D. Programme may be cancelled by the University if:

- a) the candidate is found to have furnished false, forged, or misleading information or documents;
- b) the candidate fails to satisfy the prescribed eligibility criteria;
- c) admission has been obtained through suppression of material facts or misrepresentation;
- d) the prescribed admission formalities are not completed within the stipulated period; or
- e) any other ground exists that renders the admission invalid under the applicable University or UGC Regulations.

The cancellation of admission shall be made only after following the prescribed procedure and the principles of natural justice.



3. ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION & ADMISSION CATEGORIES

3.1 Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for admission to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme shall be governed by the provisions of **Chapter 5 of the Ph.D. Ordinance of Sikkim Alpine University** and the applicable **University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations**, as amended from time to time.

Applicants shall possess the prescribed academic qualifications, minimum marks or grade, and other eligibility requirements specified under the Ph.D. Ordinance and the applicable statutory regulations.

Candidates possessing qualifications awarded by foreign universities or institutions shall produce an equivalence certificate or such other documentary evidence as may be prescribed by the appropriate statutory authority before admission.

Applicants holding qualifications in allied, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or professional disciplines may also be considered for admission, provided the proposed area of research is academically relevant and approved by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC).

3.2 Verification of Eligibility

All applications received for admission to the Ph.D. Programme shall be scrutinized and verified by the University before the admission process is completed.

The verification process shall include:

- a) verification of educational qualifications and academic transcripts;
- b) verification of reservation category certificates, wherever applicable;
- c) verification of fellowship or national eligibility examination certificates, where applicable;
- d) verification of experience certificates or other supporting documents, where required; and
- e) verification of equivalence certificates in respect of foreign qualifications.

Admission shall remain provisional until all documents have been verified by the University.



If, at any stage, any information or document submitted by the candidate is found to be false, forged, misleading, or materially incorrect, the University may cancel the admission in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations and other applicable rules.

3.3 Fellowship-Based and National Eligibility Test Admissions

Candidates qualified through national-level fellowships or eligibility examinations recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), including UGC-NET/JRF, CSIR-NET/JRF, GATE (where applicable), DST, DBT, ICMR, ICSSR, or any other fellowship or eligibility examination recognized by the University from time to time, shall be considered for admission in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

Such candidates shall be exempted from appearing in the University Ph.D. Entrance Test but shall be required to appear before the duly constituted Selection Committee for the Interview and Research Proposal Presentation.

Admission under this category shall remain subject to:

- a) fulfillment of the prescribed eligibility requirements;
- b) satisfactory performance in the Interview and Research Proposal Presentation;
- c) availability of a recognized Research Supervisor;
- d) feasibility of the proposed research;
- e) recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC);
- f) approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC); and
- g) approval by the competent authority of the University.

3.4 Interdisciplinary and Allied Discipline Admissions

Candidates seeking admission to interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research programmes may possess qualifications from allied or related disciplines, provided the proposed research demonstrates clear academic relevance to the intended field of doctoral research.

The Departmental Research Committee (DRC) shall examine such cases with reference to:

- a) the candidate's academic background;
- b) previous coursework and specialization;
- c) research experience, wherever applicable;



- d) the proposed research topic and its interdisciplinary relevance; and
- e) availability of suitable supervision and research facilities.

Where necessary, the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) may recommend prerequisite coursework or additional academic requirements before registration.

3.5 Recognition of M.Phil. Qualifications

Candidates possessing an M.Phil. degree awarded prior to the discontinuation of M.Phil. programmes under the applicable UGC Regulations may be considered eligible for admission to the Ph.D. Programme in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance and the applicable UGC Regulations.

Recognition of such qualifications shall be subject to verification of the validity of the M.Phil. degree and compliance with the applicable statutory provisions.

Completion of an M.Phil. programme shall not automatically entitle a candidate to exemption from coursework, research requirements, or any other component of the Ph.D. Programme unless specifically permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations and approved by the University.



4. RESEARCH GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE (OPERATIONAL)

The administration and implementation of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall be carried out through a structured research governance framework comprising the Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell), the Research Degree Committee (RDC), the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). These bodies shall function in coordination to ensure academic quality, transparency, accountability, ethical research conduct, and compliance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable UGC Regulations.

4.1 Research & Development Cell (R&D Cell)

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

The R&D Cell shall, among other functions:

- a) facilitate the implementation of the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations & Guidelines;
- b) coordinate the activities of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), Schools, Departments, Libraries, Ethics Committees, Academic Integrity Panels, and other research-related bodies of the University;
- c) promote research quality, interdisciplinary research, research collaborations, funded research, publications, innovation, and intellectual property;
- d) organize research training programmes, workshops, faculty development programmes, and research capacity-building initiatives;
- e) facilitate institutional compliance relating to research governance, accreditation, national rankings, and statutory reporting; and
- f) perform such other research-related functions as may be assigned by the competent authority of the University.

The composition, tenure, and operational procedures of the R&D Cell shall be as notified by the University from time to time.



4.2 Research Degree Committee (RDC)

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

The RDC shall:

- a) ensure implementation of the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations & Guidelines;
- b) consider recommendations received from the Departmental Research Committees (DRCs);
- c) approve matters relating to admission, registration, supervisor allocation, research progress, thesis submission, and other doctoral academic matters requiring University-level approval;
- d) monitor compliance with UGC Regulations, University policies, academic integrity, and research ethics;
- e) recommend matters relating to doctoral research to the competent authority and the Academic Council, wherever required; and
- f) review and periodically strengthen the quality assurance framework of the Ph.D. Programme.

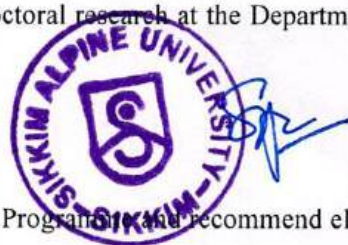
The composition, tenure, quorum, and operational procedures of the Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall be prescribed by the University through separate notification.

4.3 Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

Every Department or School offering the Ph.D. Programme shall constitute a Departmental Research Committee (DRC). The DRC shall function as the principal academic body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of doctoral research at the Department or School level.

The DRC shall:

- a) scrutinize applications for admission to the Ph.D. Programme and recommend eligible candidates;
- b) verify the availability of Research Supervisors, Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors, laboratory facilities, and research infrastructure;



- c) examine and recommend research proposals and synopsis before forwarding them to the Research Degree Committee (RDC), wherever applicable;
- d) monitor departmental research activities and review recommendations received from the Research Advisory Committees (RACs);
- e) recommend continuation, modification, suspension, or other academic actions based on the progress of Research Scholars; and
- f) forward recommendations requiring University-level approval to the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

The Head of the Department or a senior faculty member nominated by the competent authority shall ordinarily serve as the Chairperson of the DRC.

4.4 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

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

The Research Advisory Committee shall ordinarily consist of:

- a) the Research Supervisor (Chairperson);
- b) the Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor, wherever applicable;
- c) one or two faculty members or subject experts from the Department or allied discipline; and
- d) an external subject expert, wherever considered necessary by the Department or the Research Degree Committee (RDC), particularly in interdisciplinary or collaborative research.

The Research Advisory Committee shall:

- a) guide the Research Scholar in the planning and conduct of research;
- b) review and recommend the research proposal and synopsis;
- c) monitor the progress of research through periodic reviews;
- d) provide academic guidance relating to methodology, ethics, publication, and research quality;
- e) recommend continuation, modification, or corrective measures based on the Research Scholar's progress; and



- f) certify the readiness of the Research Scholar for the pre-submission seminar and subsequent thesis submission.

The RAC shall function as the immediate academic mentoring and monitoring body for the Research Scholar.

4.5 Operational Workflow and Reporting Mechanism

The operational workflow of the Ph.D. Programme shall ordinarily follow the following academic hierarchy:

Research Scholar → Supervisor / Joint Supervisor → Research Advisory Committee (RAC) → Departmental Research Committee (DRC) → Research Degree Committee (RDC) → Competent Authority → Academic Council (where applicable).

Recommendations concerning admission, registration, research progress, synopsis approval, thesis submission, examination, extension of registration, and award of the Ph.D. Degree shall ordinarily follow the above academic hierarchy unless otherwise provided under these Regulations or directed by the competent authority.

The Research & Development Cell shall coordinate the implementation of this framework and maintain institutional records relating to doctoral research for quality assurance, accreditation, statutory compliance, and institutional reporting.

All minutes, reports, recommendations, approvals, and related records of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), Departmental Research Committees (DRCs), and Research Advisory Committees (RACs) shall be properly documented and maintained by the respective bodies in accordance with the University's record management procedures.



5. SUPERVISOR & JOINT SUPERVISOR / CO-SUPERVISOR REGULATIONS

The supervision of doctoral research at Sikkim Alpine University shall be entrusted to recognized faculty members possessing appropriate academic qualifications, research competence, and supervisory expertise in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

The University shall ensure that doctoral supervision is guided by the principles of academic excellence, research integrity, ethical responsibility, accountability, and effective mentorship.

5.1 Eligibility Criteria for Research Supervisors

A faculty member shall be eligible to act as a Research Supervisor if he or she:

- a) is a regular full-time faculty member of Sikkim Alpine University;
- b) possesses a Ph.D. degree in the relevant or allied discipline;
- c) has demonstrated research competence through quality publications and other scholarly contributions in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations; and
- d) fulfills such other eligibility criteria as may be prescribed by the University from time to time.

Adjunct Faculty, Emeritus Professors, Retired Faculty Members, Visiting Faculty, Scientists, Researchers, or experts from other recognized institutions may be permitted to serve as Joint Supervisors/Co-supervisors or, where specifically permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations and approved by the University, as Research Supervisors.

Recognition of a faculty member as a Research Supervisor or Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall be made by the competent authority upon the recommendation of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC).



5.2 Maximum Number of Research Scholars

The maximum number of Research Scholars that may be supervised by a Research Supervisor at any given time shall be governed by the applicable UGC Regulations.

Until revised by the UGC, the maximum supervision capacity shall ordinarily be:

- a) Professor – Eight (08) Research Scholars;
- b) Associate Professor – Six (06) Research Scholars;
- c) Assistant Professor – Four (04) Research Scholars.

Only actively registered Research Scholars shall ordinarily be counted while determining the supervision capacity of a Research Supervisor.

The University may revise these limits in accordance with amendments issued by the University Grants Commission from time to time.

5.3 Allocation of Research Supervisors

The allocation of a Research Supervisor shall be based on:

- a) the expertise and research specialization of the faculty member;
- b) availability of supervision vacancies;
- c) suitability of the proposed research topic;
- d) availability of laboratory, field, library, or research facilities, wherever applicable;
- e) recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC); and
- f) approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

The allocation of the Research Supervisor shall ordinarily be finalized at the time of admission or registration and shall be notified by the University.

No Research Scholar shall commence doctoral research without the formal approval of a recognized Research Supervisor.



5.4 Appointment of Joint Supervisor / Co-supervisor

Where the proposed research is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, collaborative, or requires specialized expertise not available with a single Research Supervisor, the University may appoint a **Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor**.

A Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor may be appointed from:

- a) another Department, School, or Centre of Sikkim Alpine University;
- b) another recognized University, Research Institution, Industry, Government Organization, or National Laboratory; or
- c) any other institution approved by the competent authority.

The appointment shall be based on the recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

The respective academic responsibilities of the Research Supervisor and the Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor shall be clearly defined at the time of appointment.

In all cases, at least one recognized Research Supervisor from Sikkim Alpine University shall ordinarily serve as the primary Research Supervisor.

5.5 Change of Research Supervisor

A change of Research Supervisor or Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor may be permitted under exceptional circumstances, including:

- a) retirement, resignation, deputation, long-term leave, or demise of the Supervisor;
- b) prolonged inability of the Supervisor to discharge supervisory responsibilities;
- c) proven academic or professional misconduct;
- d) irreconcilable academic differences adversely affecting the progress of research;
- e) substantial modification of the approved research topic requiring different expertise; or
- f) any other reason considered appropriate by the competent authority.

Applications for change of Supervisor shall be submitted through the Department concerned to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC).



The recommendations of the DRC shall be placed before the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for approval and thereafter submitted to the competent authority.

The change of Supervisor shall not ordinarily affect the registration status of the Research Scholar.

5.6 Roles and Responsibilities of Research Supervisors

Every recognized Research Supervisor shall:

- a) guide the Research Scholar in identifying a suitable research problem and developing a scientifically and academically sound research proposal;
- b) provide continuous academic guidance throughout the research programme;
- c) ensure compliance with the University's Ethical Research Policy, Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy, and applicable UGC Regulations;
- d) guide the responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence and digital research tools in accordance with University policy;
- e) monitor the Research Scholar's progress through regular meetings and periodic reviews;
- f) encourage quality publications, conference presentations, research collaborations, and scholarly dissemination of research findings;
- g) certify the readiness of the Research Scholar for synopsis submission, pre-submission seminar, thesis submission, and Viva Voce Examination;
- h) maintain proper records of supervisory meetings, progress reports, recommendations, and other academic communications;
- i) promptly report any significant academic, ethical, or administrative issues affecting the Research Scholar to the appropriate University authorities; and
- j) promote an academic environment characterized by integrity, professionalism, inclusiveness, and mutual respect.

Research Supervisors shall exercise due diligence in ensuring that research conducted under their supervision maintains the highest standards of academic quality, originality, ethical conduct, and scholarly excellence.



6. COURSEWORK REGULATIONS

Coursework shall constitute a mandatory academic component of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University and shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

Successful completion of the prescribed coursework shall be a prerequisite for confirmation of registration and continuation in the doctoral research programme.

6.1 Objectives of Coursework

The coursework shall be designed to strengthen the Research Scholar's academic foundation and research competence by developing advanced knowledge, methodological skills, ethical research practices, academic writing abilities, and critical thinking necessary for independent doctoral research.

The coursework shall aim to:

- a) develop competence in research methodology and research design;
- b) strengthen discipline-specific theoretical and analytical knowledge;
- c) promote academic integrity, publication ethics, and responsible research practices;
- d) familiarize Research Scholars with emerging research tools, digital resources, and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in research; and
- e) prepare Research Scholars for independent, original, and high-quality doctoral research.

6.2 Credit Requirements

Every Research Scholar shall successfully complete coursework carrying a minimum of twelve (12) credits, or such higher credit requirement as may be prescribed by the applicable UGC Regulations or the University from time to time.

The detailed curriculum, course structure, credit distribution, teaching scheme, and syllabus shall be prescribed separately by the University and approved by the Academic Council.



Where necessary, Schools or Departments may recommend additional coursework relevant to the proposed area of research, subject to approval by the competent authority.

6.3 Components of Coursework

The coursework shall ordinarily include the following components:

- a) Research Methodology;
- b) Advanced Discipline-Specific Course(s);
- c) Research Ethics, Publication Ethics, Academic Integrity, and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence;
- d) Interdisciplinary, elective, laboratory, field-based, or skill-oriented courses, wherever applicable.

The detailed distribution of credits among the above components shall be determined by the University in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and the academic requirements of the respective discipline.

6.4 Attendance Requirements

Every Research Scholar shall maintain a minimum of 75% attendance in each coursework component.

Shortage of attendance may be condoned only under exceptional circumstances such as certified medical emergencies or other valid reasons recognized by the University, subject to the approval of the competent authority.

A Research Scholar who fails to satisfy the prescribed attendance requirement shall not ordinarily be permitted to appear in the coursework examination.

6.5 Evaluation of Coursework

The performance of the Research Scholar shall be assessed through one or more of the following modes of evaluation:

- a) Continuous Internal Assessment;
- b) Written Examination;
- c) Assignments and Academic Writing;



- d) Seminars or Presentations;
- e) Practical, Laboratory, Field, or Project-based Assessment, wherever applicable; and
- f) Such other evaluation methods as may be approved by the University.

The conduct of examinations, moderation, evaluation, grading, and declaration of results shall be governed by the applicable University Examination Regulations.

6.6 Minimum Performance Requirement

A Research Scholar shall secure the minimum marks or grade prescribed under the applicable UGC Regulations and the University's Examination Regulations in each coursework component.

Only after successful completion of the prescribed coursework shall the Research Scholar become eligible for confirmation of registration, synopsis submission, and continuation of doctoral research.

6.7 Re-examination and Improvement

A Research Scholar who fails to secure the prescribed minimum performance in any coursework component shall be permitted to reappear in the failed paper(s) or component(s) in accordance with the University's Examination Regulations.

Failure to successfully complete the coursework within the prescribed period or within the maximum number of permissible attempts may result in cancellation of registration upon the recommendation of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and approval of the competent authority.

6.8 Completion of Coursework

The prescribed coursework shall ordinarily be completed within one semester or six months from the date of admission, unless otherwise permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations.

Extension of time for completion of coursework may be granted only under exceptional circumstances upon the recommendation of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), approval of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and approval of the competent authority.



Successful completion of coursework within the prescribed period shall be mandatory for continuation in the Ph.D. Programme.

6.9 Coursework Exemption

A Research Scholar who has successfully completed equivalent Ph.D. coursework from a recognized University or Institution may apply for exemption or transfer of credits, wherever permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations.

Such applications shall be examined by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and recommended to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration. Grant of exemption or transfer of credits shall not be automatic and shall require the approval of the competent authority.



7. RESEARCH PROPOSAL / SYNOPSIS REGULATIONS

Following successful completion of the prescribed coursework, every Research Scholar shall prepare and submit a detailed Research Proposal (Synopsis) for approval. The Research Proposal shall demonstrate the originality, feasibility, academic significance, methodological soundness, and ethical compliance of the proposed doctoral research.

Approval of the Research Proposal shall authorize the Research Scholar to commence the approved research work under the supervision of the recognized Research Supervisor.

7.1 Timeline for Synopsis Submission

Every Research Scholar shall ordinarily submit the Research Proposal (Synopsis) within six (6) months from the successful completion of the prescribed coursework.

Under exceptional circumstances, an extension of up to three (3) months may be granted upon the recommendation of the Research Supervisor, endorsement by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and approval by the competent authority.

Failure to submit the synopsis within the prescribed period without valid justification may result in review of the Research Scholar's continuation in the Ph.D. Programme.

7.2 Format and Structure of the Research Proposal

The Research Proposal shall be prepared in the format prescribed by the University and shall ordinarily include:

- a) Title of the Research
- b) Introduction and Background
- c) Review of Literature
- d) Statement of the Research Problem
- e) Research Gap
- f) Objectives



- g) Research Questions/Hypotheses (where applicable)
- h) Research Methodology
- i) Ethical Considerations
- j) Scope and Limitations
- k) Tentative Chapterization
- l) Work Plan and Timeline
- m) Expected Outcomes
- n) References

The University may revise the prescribed format from time to time.

7.3 Departmental Synopsis Presentation

The Research Scholar shall present the proposed synopsis before the faculty members and research scholars of the concerned Department.

The presentation shall provide an opportunity for academic discussion and constructive feedback regarding:

- a) originality and significance of the proposed research;
- b) feasibility of the proposed methodology;
- c) ethical considerations;
- d) availability of institutional facilities; and
- e) overall academic quality.

Suggestions received during the presentation shall ordinarily be incorporated into the revised synopsis before submission to the Research Advisory Committee (RAC).



7.4 Review by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

The revised synopsis shall be placed before the Research Advisory Committee (RAC).

The RAC shall:

- a) evaluate the academic merit and originality of the proposal;
- b) examine the research methodology;
- c) assess ethical compliance;
- d) recommend modifications wherever necessary;
- e) recommend approval or resubmission of the synopsis.

Only after recommendation of the RAC shall the synopsis be forwarded to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC).

7.5 Departmental Research Committee (DRC) Review

The Departmental Research Committee shall examine the recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee and review:

- a) departmental feasibility;
- b) availability of supervision;
- c) infrastructure and research facilities;
- d) compliance with the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations.

The DRC may recommend:

- a) approval;
- b) minor revision;
- c) major revision; or
- d) rejection with recorded reasons.



Where University-level approval is required, the recommendations of the DRC shall be forwarded to the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

7.6 Approval of the Research Proposal

The Research Degree Committee (RDC), wherever applicable, shall examine the recommendations received from the Departmental Research Committee and recommend approval to the competent authority.

The Research Proposal shall be deemed approved only after approval by the competent authority of the University.

The date of approval shall be treated as the official date of approval of the Research Topic.

7.7 External Expert Evaluation (Where Required)

The University may obtain the opinion of an external subject expert where:

- a) the research is highly specialized;
- b) interdisciplinary supervision is involved;
- c) external technical expertise is required; or
- d) the competent authority considers such evaluation necessary.

The observations of the external expert shall ordinarily be advisory in nature.

7.8 Ethical Clearance

Research involving human participants, animals, biological materials, indigenous knowledge, environmental interventions, sensitive personal data, or any other regulated research domain shall require prior approval from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee(s) recognized by the University.

No fieldwork, experimentation, laboratory work, interviews, surveys, or data collection involving ethical approval shall commence until the necessary ethical clearance has been obtained.

The Ethics Clearance Certificate shall form part of the approved synopsis records.



7.9 Synopsis Submission Procedure

The submission of the Research Proposal (Synopsis) shall follow the procedure prescribed by the University.

The Research Scholar shall submit:

- a) Two (02) spiral-bound hard copies of the synopsis to the concerned Department;
- b) One copy shall be retained by the Department for official records;
- c) One copy shall be returned to the Research Scholar after completion of the evaluation process along with the recommendations of the concerned committees.

The Research Supervisor, Head of the Department, and External Expert (where applicable) shall complete and sign the prescribed Synopsis Recommendation Report, incorporating recommendations regarding academic suitability, ethical compliance, and feasibility of the proposed research, in the format approved by the University.

Following departmental approval, the Head of the Department shall forward the approved synopsis, Synopsis Recommendation Report, and all supporting documents in electronic format to the Assistant Director (Research).

A copy of the communication shall also be marked to:

- a) Registrar
- b) Deputy Dean (Academics)
- c) Deputy Registrar (Examinations)
- d) Assistant Dean of the concerned School
- e) Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

for institutional record, academic coordination, examination processing, and issuance of the appropriate **Ethics Clearance Certificate**, wherever applicable. The Assistant Director (Research) shall maintain the institutional repository of approved research proposals and facilitate further processing in coordination with the concerned academic and administrative authorities. The University may revise the synopsis submission procedure, documentation requirements, and communication workflow through notification or office order from time to time without requiring amendment of these Regulations.



8. PROGRESS MONITORING & CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH

Continuous monitoring of research progress shall be an integral component of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University. Every Research Scholar shall undergo periodic academic review to ensure satisfactory progress, maintenance of research quality, adherence to ethical standards, timely completion of research, and compliance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

8.1 Six-Monthly Progress Reports

Every Research Scholar shall submit a **Six-Monthly Progress Report** through the Research Supervisor to the **Research Advisory Committee (RAC)**.

The report shall ordinarily include:

- a) work completed during the reporting period;
- b) progress achieved against the approved research plan;
- c) data collection, experimentation, fieldwork, or analysis completed, wherever applicable;
- d) publications, conference presentations, seminars, workshops, or other academic activities undertaken;
- e) compliance with ethical approvals and academic integrity requirements;
- f) work proposed for the subsequent review period; and
- g) remarks and recommendations of the Research Supervisor.

Submission of the prescribed progress report shall be mandatory for continuation of the doctoral programme.

8.2 Review by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Every Research Scholar shall make a progress presentation before the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) at least once every six (6) months.



The RAC shall:

- a) evaluate the academic progress of the Research Scholar;
- b) assess the quality, originality, and relevance of the research work undertaken;
- c) review compliance with the approved research objectives and methodology;
- d) examine adherence to ethical standards, academic integrity, and responsible research practices;
- e) assess publications, academic presentations, and other research outputs, wherever applicable; and
- f) recommend continuation, modification, corrective measures, or other academic action.

The observations and recommendations of the RAC shall be recorded in the prescribed format and forwarded to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC).

8.3 Review by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

The Departmental Research Committee (DRC) shall examine the recommendations received from the Research Advisory Committee and review the overall academic progress of the Research Scholar.

The DRC shall:

- a) verify the completeness of the progress reports and supporting documents;
- b) review compliance with coursework, synopsis approval, ethical clearance, publication requirements, and other academic obligations;
- c) recommend continuation, conditional continuation, or corrective measures, wherever necessary; and
- d) forward recommendations requiring University-level approval to the Research Degree Committee (RDC).

The DRC shall function as the Department's principal academic monitoring body for doctoral research.



8.4 Review by the Research Degree Committee (RDC)

The Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall review the recommendations received from the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and monitor the overall quality and progress of doctoral research across the University.

The RDC may:

- a) approve continuation of registration;
- b) recommend corrective academic measures;
- c) recommend extension of registration in accordance with these Regulations;
- d) recommend suspension or termination of registration in cases of persistent unsatisfactory progress; or
- e) make such other recommendations as may be necessary for maintaining academic quality and compliance with the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations.

Recommendations of the RDC requiring statutory approval shall be forwarded to the competent authority.

8.5 Unsatisfactory Progress and Corrective Measures

Where the progress of a Research Scholar is found to be unsatisfactory, the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) may recommend one or more of the following corrective measures:

- a) written academic advisory;
- b) revision of the research plan or methodology;
- c) additional coursework, training, laboratory work, fieldwork, or research skill development;
- d) enhanced supervision and more frequent progress reviews;
- e) conditional continuation for a specified review period.

If satisfactory progress is not achieved despite the prescribed corrective measures, the matter shall be referred to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and subsequently to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for appropriate recommendations.



No adverse action affecting the registration of a Research Scholar shall be taken without providing the Research Scholar an opportunity to present an explanation in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

8.6 Extension of Registration

Where a Research Scholar is unable to complete the research work within the prescribed minimum duration, extension of registration may be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable UGC Regulations.

Applications for extension shall ordinarily be:

- a) recommended by the Research Supervisor;
- b) reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC);
- c) endorsed by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC);
- d) recommended by the Research Degree Committee (RDC); and
- e) approved by the competent authority of the University.

Extension shall be granted only within the maximum duration prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance.

Special provisions relating to maternity leave, child care leave, medical leave, disability, or other exceptional circumstances shall be governed by the applicable UGC Regulations and University policies.

8.7 Maintenance of Progress Records

The Research Supervisor, Research Advisory Committee (RAC), Departmental Research Committee (DRC), and Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall maintain complete records of all progress reports, review meetings, recommendations, corrective actions, and approvals relating to each Research Scholar.

The Research & Development Cell shall maintain the institutional repository of progress monitoring records for quality assurance, statutory compliance, accreditation, and institutional reporting purposes.



9. ETHICS APPROVAL & RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

All doctoral research conducted at Sikkim Alpine University shall be carried out in accordance with the University's Ethical Research Policy, the applicable statutory regulations, and internationally accepted principles of responsible research conduct.

Research involving human participants, animals, biological materials, indigenous knowledge, environmental interventions, sensitive personal data, or any other ethically regulated domain shall require prior approval from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee(s) recognized by the University.

No research activity requiring ethical approval shall commence until written approval has been obtained from the competent Ethics Committee.

9.1 Research Requiring Ethical Approval

Ethical approval shall ordinarily be mandatory for research involving, but not limited to:

- a) human participants, surveys, interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, or collection of personal or sensitive information;
- b) animal experimentation or research involving live animals;
- c) biological materials, microorganisms, pathogens, genetically modified organisms, recombinant DNA technology, or laboratory biosafety;
- d) indigenous knowledge systems, traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, ethnographic studies, or community-based research;
- e) biodiversity documentation, environmental sampling, ecological interventions, or protected areas;
- f) any research that may involve potential ethical, legal, environmental, cultural, or biosafety concerns.

The University may notify additional categories of research requiring ethical approval from time to time.



9.2 Institutional Ethics Committees

Ethical review shall be carried out by the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee(s) constituted or recognized by Sikkim Alpine University in accordance with the University's Ethical Research Policy and the applicable statutory regulations.

The constitution, jurisdiction, powers, operational procedures, and responsibilities of the Ethics Committees shall be governed by the University's Ethical Research Policy and other applicable regulatory requirements.

Where necessary, the University may constitute additional Ethics Committees or recognize external Ethics Committees for specialized areas of research.

9.3 Ethical Approval Process

Research Scholars shall obtain ethical approval before commencing any research activity requiring ethical clearance.

Applications for ethical approval shall ordinarily include:

- a) the approved Research Proposal;
- b) research protocol;
- c) methodology;
- d) participant information sheets and informed consent documents, wherever applicable;
- e) risk assessment and mitigation measures;
- f) data protection and confidentiality plan; and
- g) such other documents as may be prescribed by the concerned Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Committee may approve, conditionally approve, seek modifications, defer, or reject the application after due review.

9.4 Ethical Compliance During Research

Every Research Scholar and Research Supervisor shall ensure continuous compliance with the approved ethical protocol throughout the duration of the research.



Where there is any significant modification to the approved research design, methodology, study population, sampling procedure, or ethical considerations, prior approval of the concerned Ethics Committee shall be obtained before implementing such changes.

The Ethics Committee may require periodic progress reports, monitoring visits, amendments, or continuing review wherever considered necessary.

9.5 Ethics Compliance Certificate

Where ethical approval is applicable, every Research Scholar shall submit an Ethics Compliance Certificate issued by the appropriate Ethics Committee at the time of thesis submission.

The certificate shall confirm that:

- a) the approved ethical protocol was followed;
- b) all applicable ethical requirements were complied with;
- c) no serious ethical violation occurred during the conduct of the research; and
- d) the research was completed in accordance with the University's Ethical Research Policy.

No thesis requiring ethical approval shall ordinarily be accepted for evaluation without the prescribed Ethics Compliance Certificate.

9.6 Non-Compliance with Ethical Requirements

Failure to obtain the required ethical approval, violation of approved ethical protocols, fabrication or suppression of ethical information, or any other breach of the University's Ethical Research Policy shall constitute research misconduct.

Such cases shall be dealt with in accordance with the University's Ethical Research Policy, Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy, the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable statutory regulations.

The University may impose appropriate academic or disciplinary action after following the prescribed procedure and the principles of natural justice.



10. PLAGIARISM, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & RESPONSIBLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Sikkim Alpine University is committed to promoting the highest standards of academic integrity, originality, honesty, transparency, and responsible research conduct in all doctoral research.

Every Research Scholar, Research Supervisor, Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor, and all persons associated with the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme shall comply with the provisions of the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy, Ethical Research Policy, the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, and these Regulations & Guidelines.

No synopsis or thesis shall be accepted for evaluation unless it complies with the prescribed standards of academic integrity and originality.

10.1 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Every Research Scholar shall ensure that all research work submitted to the University represents original scholarly contribution.

The Research Scholar shall:

- a) appropriately acknowledge all sources of information;
- b) follow accepted citation and referencing practices;
- c) avoid plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, duplication, and any other form of academic misconduct;
- d) comply with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy and the applicable UGC Regulations.

The permissible similarity limits, categories of plagiarism, exclusions, and penalties shall be governed by the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy and the applicable UGC Regulations.



10.2 Similarity Assessment

Every synopsis, thesis, dissertation, or other research document prescribed by the University shall be subjected to similarity assessment using University-approved plagiarism detection software before acceptance for evaluation.

The similarity assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy.

The similarity assessment report shall form part of the thesis submission documents wherever prescribed by the University.

10.3 Academic Integrity Review

Where the application of plagiarism detection software is not adequate due to the nature of the discipline, language, cultural documentation, creative writing, translation, or other scholarly work, the University may undertake an academic review through the appropriate Academic Integrity Panel or any other committee constituted for this purpose.

Such review shall evaluate the originality, authenticity, scholarly contribution, and appropriate attribution of sources in accordance with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy.

The recommendations of the Academic Integrity Panel shall be recorded and placed before the competent authority, wherever required.

10.4 Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The University recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools may assist Research Scholars in certain aspects of academic work when used responsibly and ethically.

Research Scholars may use AI-assisted tools for purposes such as:

- a) language refinement and grammar correction;
- b) formatting and document organization;
- c) literature discovery and preliminary information retrieval;
- d) coding assistance, statistical support, or other research support activities, wherever appropriate;
- e) other purposes specifically permitted under the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy.



The use of Artificial Intelligence shall not replace the Research Scholar's original intellectual contribution.

10.5 AI Disclosure and Restrictions

Where Artificial Intelligence tools have been used during the preparation of the research work, the Research Scholar shall disclose such use in the manner prescribed by the University.

Artificial Intelligence shall **not** be used for:

- a) fabrication or manipulation of research data;
- b) falsification of research findings or experimental results;
- c) generation of false citations, references, images, or research evidence;
- d) misrepresentation of AI-generated content as original scholarly work; or
- e) any other purpose prohibited under the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy or Ethical Research Policy.

The Research Scholar and the Research Supervisor shall jointly certify that the thesis represents an original scholarly contribution prepared in accordance with the University's academic integrity requirements.

10.6 Violations and Disciplinary Action

Any allegation of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, misuse of Artificial Intelligence, or other form of academic misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with:

- a) the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy;
- b) the University's Ethical Research Policy;
- c) the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations;
- d) the Ph.D. Ordinance; and
- e) these Regulations & Guidelines.

Cases of alleged academic misconduct shall be examined by the Academic Integrity Panel, Ethics Committee, or any other competent authority constituted by the University.

Appropriate academic or disciplinary action may be taken after following the prescribed procedure and the principles of natural justice.



11. MANDATORY PUBLICATION & ACADEMIC PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

To promote high-quality research, scholarly communication, and dissemination of research findings, every Research Scholar enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall fulfill the prescribed publication and academic presentation requirements before submission of the Ph.D. thesis.

These requirements shall constitute mandatory academic requirements for thesis submission unless otherwise exempted by the competent authority in accordance with the applicable University and UGC Regulations.

11.1 Mandatory Publication Requirement

Every Research Scholar shall publish a minimum of two (02) research papers, or obtain formal acceptance for publication, based substantially on the approved doctoral research before submission of the Ph.D. thesis.

The publications shall:

- a) represent original research arising from the approved doctoral work;
- b) comply with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy, Ethical Research Policy, and applicable UGC Regulations;
- c) be published or formally accepted before submission of the thesis; and
- d) acknowledge Sikkim Alpine University as the institutional affiliation of the Research Scholar, wherever applicable.

Co-authorship with the Research Supervisor and/or Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor is encouraged wherever academically appropriate and in accordance with disciplinary practices.

11.2 Quality of Publications

The required publications shall ordinarily appear in peer-reviewed journals of recognized academic quality.

Preference shall be given to journals indexed in nationally or internationally recognized indexing databases or other journals approved by the University.

Publications appearing in predatory, cloned, deceptive, or otherwise non-credible journals shall not be accepted.



The Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall have the authority to determine the acceptability of publications, wherever necessary.

11.3 Mandatory Academic Presentations

Every Research Scholar shall make a minimum of two (02) academic presentations based on the approved doctoral research before submission of the Ph.D. thesis.

The presentations may be made through any combination of the following:

- a) National Conference;
- b) International Conference;
- c) National Webinar;
- d) International Webinar;
- e) National Symposium;
- f) International Symposium;
- g) National Seminar; or
- h) International Seminar.

The academic events shall be organized by recognized Universities, Research Institutions, Professional Bodies, Scientific Societies, Government Organizations, or other institutions of recognized academic standing.

Both physical and online presentations shall be acceptable, provided the academic event satisfies the quality standards prescribed by the University.

11.4 Submission of Supporting Documents

At the time of thesis submission, every Research Scholar shall submit:

- a) copies of the published research papers or official journal acceptance letters;
- b) documentary evidence of the publication status of the journals, wherever applicable;
- c) certificates of presentation for the required conferences, seminars, webinars, or symposia;
- d) copies of abstracts, proceedings, presentation certificates, or other supporting documents, wherever applicable; and
- e) such other documents as may be prescribed by the University.



11.5 Certification by the Research Supervisor

The Research Supervisor shall certify that:

- a) the publications and academic presentations are substantially derived from the approved doctoral research;
- b) the work represents the original scholarly contribution of the Research Scholar;
- c) the research complies with the University's Ethical Research Policy and Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy; and
- d) the mandatory publication and academic presentation requirements prescribed under these Regulations have been fulfilled.

The prescribed certification shall form part of the thesis submission documents.

11.6 Exceptional Cases

In exceptional circumstances, where compliance with the publication or academic presentation requirements is demonstrably affected by factors beyond the control of the Research Scholar, the matter may be examined by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and recommended to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for consideration. Any relaxation, if granted, shall require the approval of the competent authority and shall be consistent with the applicable UGC Regulations and the academic standards of the University.



12. MINIMUM COMPLIANCE BEFORE SUBMISSION

Prior to submission of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) thesis, every Research Scholar shall fulfill all academic, research, ethical, administrative, and regulatory requirements prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

No thesis shall be accepted for evaluation unless the prescribed compliance requirements have been fulfilled and certified by the competent authorities.

12.1 Successful Completion of Coursework

The Research Scholar shall have successfully completed the prescribed coursework and satisfied all requirements relating to:

- a) minimum prescribed credits;
- b) minimum pass requirements;
- c) attendance requirements; and
- d) other academic obligations prescribed by the University.

Proof of successful completion of coursework shall accompany the application for thesis submission.

12.2 Approved Research Proposal (Synopsis)

The Research Proposal (Synopsis) shall have been duly approved in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.

The approved research topic shall ordinarily remain the basis of the doctoral research.

Any major modification to the approved research proposal shall require prior approval of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), endorsement by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), recommendation of the Research Degree Committee (RDC) wherever applicable, and approval by the competent authority.

12.3 Ethical Compliance

Where ethical approval is applicable, the Research Scholar shall submit the prescribed Ethics Compliance Certificate issued by the appropriate Institutional Committee(s) recognized by the University.



The certificate shall confirm that the research has been conducted in accordance with the approved ethical protocol and the University's Ethical Research Policy.

12.4 Plagiarism Clearance and Academic Integrity

The thesis shall undergo similarity assessment using University-approved plagiarism detection software in accordance with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy.

The Research Scholar shall submit:

- a) Plagiarism Clearance Certificate;
- b) Similarity Assessment Report; and
- c) Academic Integrity Declaration,

as prescribed by the University.

Where required, the Academic Integrity Panel may recommend additional academic review before acceptance of the thesis.

12.5 Publication Requirement

The Research Scholar shall have fulfilled the mandatory publication requirement prescribed under Chapter 11 of these Regulations.

Documentary evidence of the required publications, including published articles or official acceptance letters, shall be submitted along with the thesis submission documents.

12.6 Academic Presentation Requirement

The Research Scholar shall have fulfilled the mandatory requirement of presenting at least two (02) research papers in recognized Conferences, Seminars, Webinars, or Symposia as prescribed under Chapter 11 of these Regulations.

Relevant certificates, proceedings, abstracts, or other documentary evidence shall accompany the thesis submission.

12.7 Pre-Submission Seminar

Prior to submission of the thesis, every Research Scholar shall deliver a Pre-Submission Seminar before the faculty members and research scholars of the concerned Department.

The seminar shall provide an opportunity for academic discussion, critical review, and feedback on the completed research.



Upon satisfactory completion of the seminar:

- a) the Research Supervisor shall certify the readiness of the thesis;
- b) the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) shall recommend the thesis for submission;
- c) the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) shall review the recommendations and forward the proposal to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) wherever University-level approval is required; and
- d) the competent authority shall grant permission for submission of the thesis.

12.8 AI Disclosure Statement

The Research Scholar shall submit an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Disclosure Statement, wherever AI-assisted tools have been used during the preparation of the thesis.

The disclosure shall comply with the University's Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy and shall clearly specify the nature and extent of AI-assisted support used during the research.

12.9 Supervisor's Certification

The Research Supervisor shall certify that:

- a) the thesis represents the original work of the Research Scholar;
- b) the research has been completed in accordance with the approved synopsis;
- c) all mandatory academic, ethical, publication, and presentation requirements have been fulfilled;
- d) the thesis complies with the University's Ethical Research Policy and Plagiarism & Academic Integrity Policy; and
- e) the thesis is suitable for submission for evaluation.

12.10 Final Compliance Verification

Before forwarding the thesis for evaluation, the Assistant Director (Research), in coordination with the concerned Department and Examination Section, shall verify that all prescribed documents and compliance requirements have been fulfilled.

Only after successful verification shall the thesis be forwarded for examination in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations.



13. THESIS SUBMISSION REGULATIONS

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) thesis shall be submitted only after successful completion of all academic, ethical, administrative, and regulatory requirements prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

The thesis shall embody the Research Scholar's original contribution to knowledge and shall be prepared in accordance with the University's approved Thesis Format Guidelines.

13.1 Permission for Thesis Submission

A Research Scholar shall submit the Ph.D. thesis only after obtaining formal permission from the competent authority of the University.

Permission for submission shall ordinarily be granted upon:

- a) recommendation of the Research Supervisor;
- b) successful completion of the Pre-Submission Seminar;
- c) recommendation of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC);
- d) endorsement by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC);
- e) recommendation of the Research Degree Committee (RDC), wherever applicable; and
- f) fulfillment of all requirements prescribed under Chapter 12 of these Regulations.

13.2 Preparation and Format of the Thesis

The thesis shall be prepared strictly in accordance with the **University-approved Thesis Preparation and Formatting Guidelines**.

The thesis shall ordinarily contain:

- a) Cover Page;
- b) Title Page;
- c) Certificates and Declarations;
- d) Abstract;
- e) Acknowledgements;
- f) Table of Contents;
- g) List of Tables, Figures, Plates, and Abbreviations, wherever applicable;
- h) Main Chapters;
- i) Summary and Conclusions;



- j) References or Bibliography prepared in the prescribed citation style; and
- k) Appendices, annexures, datasets, supplementary material, or other supporting documents, wherever applicable.

The detailed formatting specifications relating to paper size, margins, fonts, pagination, referencing style, binding, and other technical requirements shall be prescribed separately by the University.

13.3 Submission of the Thesis

The Research Scholar shall submit the thesis in the manner prescribed by the University.

The submission shall ordinarily include:

- a) the prescribed number of hard-bound copies;
- b) one electronic copy in searchable PDF format;
- c) all certificates, declarations, and supporting documents prescribed by the University; and
- d) such other documents as may be notified by the University from time to time.

The exact number of hard copies and mode of submission shall be notified separately by the University through administrative notification.

13.4 Electronic Repository and Digital Submission

In addition to the printed copies, the Research Scholar shall submit an electronic copy of the final approved thesis.

The electronic copy shall:

- a) be identical to the final hard-bound version;
- b) include all certificates, declarations, and annexures;
- c) be archived in the University's Institutional Research Repository; and
- d) be submitted through the University's online research management system or such other digital platform as may be prescribed.



13.5 Submission to INFLIBNET–Shodhganga

Following the successful completion of evaluation, incorporation of corrections (where applicable), successful Viva Voce Examination, and approval for the award of the Ph.D.

Degree, the University shall upload the final approved electronic version of the thesis to the INFLIBNET Shodhganga Repository in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

The electronic thesis submitted to Shodhganga shall be identical to the final version approved by the University.

13.6 Documents to Accompany the Thesis

The following documents shall accompany the thesis submission:

- a) Application for Thesis Submission;
- b) Supervisor's Certificate;
- c) Research Scholar's Declaration of Originality;
- d) Plagiarism Clearance Certificate and Similarity Assessment Report;
- e) Ethics Compliance Certificate, wherever applicable;
- f) Publication and Academic Presentation Compliance Certificates;
- g) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Disclosure Statement, wherever applicable;
- h) No-Dues Certificate issued by the University; and
- i) such other documents as may be prescribed by the University.

Incomplete submissions shall not ordinarily be accepted for evaluation.

13.7 Custody and Archiving of the Thesis

The final approved thesis shall become part of the permanent academic records of Sikkim Alpine University.

The University shall preserve printed and electronic copies of the thesis in accordance with its record management, library, and archival policies.

Access to the thesis shall be governed by the University's Intellectual Property Policy, Copyright Policy, Open Access Policy, and other applicable regulations.



14. EVALUATION & VIVA VOCE REGULATIONS

The Ph.D. thesis submitted by a Research Scholar shall undergo a comprehensive, confidential, and impartial evaluation process to assess its originality, academic merit, methodological rigor, and contribution to knowledge.

The evaluation process shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, and the University's Examination Regulations.

14.1 Panel of Examiners

After the Research Scholar has been granted permission to submit the thesis, the Research Supervisor shall submit to the University a confidential panel of examiners in the prescribed format.

The panel shall ordinarily consist of experts:

- a) possessing recognized expertise in the relevant field of research;
- b) affiliated with Universities, Research Institutions, National Laboratories, or other recognized academic or research organizations;
- c) representing different institutions to ensure impartiality and diversity of academic opinion; and
- d) from within India and, wherever feasible, from abroad.

The panel shall ordinarily contain not fewer than six (06) names, unless otherwise prescribed by the University.

The appointment of examiners shall be made by the competent authority.

14.2 Appointment of Examiners

The University shall ordinarily appoint two (02) external examiners from the approved panel for evaluation of the thesis.

The appointment shall be made through the Examination Section under the approval of the competent authority.



The identity of the appointed examiners and all correspondence relating to the evaluation shall remain confidential until completion of the examination process.

The Research Supervisor shall not participate in the evaluation of the thesis as an external examiner.

14.3 Evaluation of the Thesis

Each examiner shall independently evaluate the thesis and submit a detailed evaluation report in the format prescribed by the University.

The evaluation report shall clearly indicate whether the thesis is:

- a) recommended for the award of the Ph.D. Degree;
- b) recommended subject to minor corrections;
- c) recommended after major revision and resubmission; or
- d) not recommended for the award of the Ph.D. Degree.

The University may prescribe a reasonable timeline for submission of evaluation reports and may issue reminders wherever necessary.

14.4 Difference of Opinion Among Examiners

Where the reports of the examiners are conflicting or substantially divergent, the University may:

- a) seek clarification from the examiners;
- b) appoint an additional external examiner;
- c) obtain further expert opinion; or
- d) adopt such procedure as may be approved by the competent authority in accordance with the University's Examination Regulations.

The decision of the competent authority regarding further evaluation shall be final.

14.5 Revision and Resubmission

Where the examiners recommend revision of the thesis, the Research Scholar shall revise the thesis within the period prescribed by the University.

The revised thesis shall be accompanied by a detailed Response to Examiners' Comments indicating the action taken on each observation.



Where required, the revised thesis may be forwarded to the original examiner(s) or such other examiner(s) as determined by the competent authority for re-evaluation.

14.6 Constitution of the Viva Voce Board

Upon receipt of favourable evaluation reports, the University shall constitute a Viva Voce Board.

The Board shall ordinarily comprise:

- a) one of the external examiners;
- b) the Research Supervisor;
- c) the Deputy Dean (Academics) of the concerned School or the nominee of the competent authority, who shall ordinarily act as the Chairperson; and
- d) such other member(s) as may be approved by the University.

Where the external examiner is unable to participate physically, the Viva Voce Examination may be conducted through secure online or hybrid mode, subject to the approval of the competent authority.

14.7 Conduct of the Viva Voce Examination

The Viva Voce Examination shall ordinarily be conducted as an open academic defence unless otherwise decided by the University.

During the Viva Voce Examination, the Research Scholar shall:

- a) present the major findings of the research;
- b) demonstrate knowledge of the subject and research methodology;
- c) respond to questions raised by the Viva Voce Board; and
- d) defend the originality, significance, and conclusions of the research.

The Viva Voce Board may also invite questions from faculty members, Research Scholars, and other participants present during the open defence, wherever applicable.



14.8 Recommendation of the Viva Voce Board

After completion of the Viva Voce Examination, the Viva Voce Board shall submit its recommendation to the University.

The Board may recommend:

- a) award of the Ph.D. Degree;
- b) award of the Ph.D. Degree after incorporation of minor corrections;
- c) revision and re-submission of specified portions of the thesis; or
- d) non-award of the Ph.D. Degree, with recorded reasons.

The recommendations shall be forwarded through the Examination Section for approval by the competent authority in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance.

14.9 Submission of Corrected Thesis

Where corrections are recommended by the examiners or the Viva Voce Board, the Research Scholar shall submit the corrected version of the thesis along with a compliance report certified by the Research Supervisor.

The corrected thesis shall be accepted only after verification that all mandatory corrections have been satisfactorily incorporated.

14.10 Declaration of Result

Upon successful completion of the evaluation process, incorporation of the prescribed corrections, and approval by the competent authority, the University shall declare the result and initiate the process for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree in accordance with the Ph.D. Ordinance and the applicable University Regulations.



15. AWARD OF THE Ph.D. DEGREE & POST-AWARD COMPLIANCE

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree shall be awarded only after the Research Scholar has successfully completed all academic, ethical, administrative, and regulatory requirements prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations.

The award process shall ensure academic integrity, procedural transparency, statutory compliance, and proper institutional documentation.

15.1 Approval for Award of the Ph.D. Degree

Upon successful completion of the evaluation process, incorporation of the prescribed corrections (where applicable), and successful completion of the Viva Voce Examination, the complete dossier of the Research Scholar shall be forwarded to the competent authority for approval of the award of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree.

The dossier shall ordinarily include:

- a) reports of the external examiners;
- b) Viva Voce Examination Report;
- c) compliance report for corrections, wherever applicable;
- d) Plagiarism Clearance Certificate and Similarity Assessment Report;
- e) Ethics Compliance Certificate, wherever applicable;
- f) publication and academic presentation compliance documents;
- g) recommendation of the Viva Voce Board; and
- h) such other documents as may be prescribed by the University.

The award of the degree shall be processed only after verification of all prescribed requirements.

15.2 Approval by the Competent Authority

The recommendation for the award of the Ph.D. Degree shall be placed before the competent authority of the University for approval in accordance with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance and the Statutes of the University.

Where required under the Statutes or other applicable University regulations, the award of the Ph.D. Degree shall be reported to or ratified by the Academic Council.



15.3 Provisional Degree Certificate

Following approval of the award of the Ph.D. Degree, the University may issue a Provisional Degree Certificate certifying that the Research Scholar has successfully fulfilled all requirements prescribed for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree.

The Provisional Degree Certificate shall remain valid until the formal degree is conferred at the University's Convocation.

15.4 Conferment of the Degree

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree shall ordinarily be conferred during the University's Convocation.

Where the Convocation is not held immediately after approval of the award, the degree may be issued in accordance with the University's Convocation Regulations and other applicable rules.

15.5 Institutional Repository and INFLIBNET–Shodhganga Submission

Following approval of the award of the Ph.D. Degree, the University shall:

- a) upload the final approved electronic version of the thesis to the INFLIBNET–Shodhganga Repository in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations;
- b) archive the thesis in the University's Institutional Digital Repository;
- c) preserve the thesis in the University Library and Departmental archives in accordance with the University's record management policy; and
- d) make the thesis available for academic reference, subject to the University's Intellectual Property Policy, Copyright Policy, confidentiality requirements, and other applicable regulations.

15.6 Post-Award Responsibilities

After the award of the Ph.D. Degree, the Research Scholar shall continue to uphold the principles of academic integrity and responsible research conduct.

Where any proven case of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, unethical research practices, or other serious academic misconduct is subsequently established, the University may initiate appropriate proceedings in accordance with the Ph.D. Ordinance, the Plagiarism & Academic



Integrity Policy, the Ethical Research Policy, the applicable UGC Regulations, and other relevant University rules.



16. EXTENSION, LEAVE & CONTINUATION OF REGISTRATION

The duration, extension of registration, and leave provisions applicable to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme at Sikkim Alpine University shall be governed by the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, the applicable University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, and other relevant policies of the University.

The University shall maintain academic rigor while providing reasonable flexibility in genuine and exceptional circumstances.

16.1 Duration of the Ph.D. Programme

The duration of the Ph.D. Programme shall be governed by the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance.

Accordingly:

- a) the minimum duration of the Ph.D. Programme shall ordinarily be three (03) years, including coursework, from the date of admission/registration;
- b) the maximum duration shall ordinarily be six (06) years from the date of admission/registration;
- c) any relaxation beyond the prescribed duration shall be governed by the applicable UGC Regulations and the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance.

16.2 Leave Provisions

Research Scholars may be granted leave during the tenure of the Ph.D. Programme in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and University policies.

Leave may be granted under circumstances including:

- a) maternity leave;
- b) child care leave;
- c) medical leave;
- d) disability-related leave;
- e) fieldwork-related contingencies; or
- f) other exceptional circumstances approved by the competent authority.



Applications for leave shall ordinarily be recommended by the Research Supervisor and processed through the Department concerned.

Grant of leave shall not automatically extend the maximum duration of the Ph.D. Programme unless specifically permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations and approved by the competent authority.

16.3 Extension of Registration

Where a Research Scholar is unable to complete the doctoral research within the prescribed duration, extension of registration may be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Applications for extension shall ordinarily be:

- a) recommended by the Research Supervisor;
- b) reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC);
- c) endorsed by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC);
- d) recommended by the Research Degree Committee (RDC); and
- e) approved by the competent authority of the University.

Extension shall be granted only within the maximum duration permissible under the applicable UGC Regulations and the Ph.D. Ordinance.

The University may grant extension in one or more phases depending upon the academic progress of the Research Scholar.

16.4 Continuation During the Extended Period

A Research Scholar whose registration has been extended shall continue to:

- a) submit periodic progress reports;
- b) participate in Research Advisory Committee (RAC) reviews;
- c) comply with all academic, ethical, and administrative requirements prescribed by the University;
- d) maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout the extended period.

Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress during the extended period may result in withdrawal of the extension or such other academic action as may be recommended by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC), the Research Degree Committee (RDC), and approved by the competent authority.



16.5 Fee and Financial Requirements

The payment of continuation fees, extension fees, examination fees, or any other charges during the extended period of registration shall be governed by the Fee Structure and Financial Norms notified by the University from time to time.

The detailed fee structure shall be prescribed separately by the competent administrative authority of the University.

Payment of the prescribed fees shall not by itself confer any right to extension of registration, which shall remain subject to fulfillment of the academic requirements prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations.

16.6 Lapse of Registration

Where a Research Scholar fails to complete the Ph.D. Programme within the maximum duration prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance and the applicable UGC Regulations, and no further extension is permissible or approved, the registration shall ordinarily lapse.

Any request for restoration or reconsideration shall be dealt with only in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations, the Ph.D. Ordinance, and such provisions as may be approved by the competent authority.



17. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

The University may, from time to time, introduce additional categories of doctoral programmes, collaborative research arrangements, interdisciplinary research pathways, industry-sponsored doctoral programmes, international joint supervision mechanisms, credit transfer provisions, dual/joint degree programmes, or any other academic initiatives in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations, the Ph.D. Ordinance, and other statutory provisions governing doctoral education.

The detailed procedures governing such programmes or academic initiatives shall be prescribed separately by the University through appropriate Regulations, Guidelines, Notifications, or Office Orders, as approved by the competent authority and, where required, by the Academic Council.

Nothing contained in this Chapter shall be construed as creating an automatic right of admission, registration, conversion, transfer, credit transfer, upgradation, or participation in any such programme unless specifically approved by the University in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions.



18. FEE STRUCTURE & FINANCIAL NORMS

The fees and financial requirements applicable to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme shall be governed by the Fee Structure, Financial Norms, Notifications, and other administrative orders issued by Sikkim Alpine University from time to time.

The detailed fee structure, including admission fees, registration fees, coursework fees, continuation fees, examination fees, thesis submission fees, extension fees, and any other charges, shall be prescribed separately by the competent administrative authority of the University.

All Research Scholars shall pay the prescribed fees within the timelines notified by the University.

Failure to pay the prescribed fees within the stipulated period may result in such administrative action as may be provided under the University's Financial Rules, Examination Regulations, and other applicable administrative policies.

The University reserves the right to revise or modify the fee structure and other financial norms from time to time with the approval of the competent authority.

18.1 Categories of Fees

The University may prescribe fees and other financial charges under one or more of the following categories:

- a) Admission and Registration Fees;
- b) Coursework and Examination Fees;
- c) Annual Continuation Fees;
- d) Thesis Submission and Evaluation Fees;
- e) Extension of Registration Fees;
- f) Convocation and Degree Fees;
- g) Repository, Library, Laboratory, or other academic service charges; and
- h) Any other fees or charges approved by the competent authority.



The applicability and amount of each fee shall be notified separately by the University.

18.2 Fellowships, Scholarships and Financial Assistance

Research Scholars receiving fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, sponsored research support, or any other financial assistance shall comply with the conditions prescribed by the respective funding agency and the University.

The grant of any fellowship, scholarship, fee concession, or financial assistance shall not exempt a Research Scholar from compliance with the academic requirements prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinance and these Regulations.

18.3 Fee Concessions and Refunds

Fee concessions, waivers, refunds, or exemptions, wherever applicable, shall be governed by the University's Financial Rules, Government policies, fellowship conditions, and other administrative orders issued from time to time.

No Research Scholar shall claim any fee concession or refund as a matter of right unless specifically approved by the competent authority.

18.4 Interpretation of Financial Matters

Any matter relating to fees, financial obligations, or administrative charges not specifically provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the competent administrative authority of the University in accordance with the University's Financial Rules and applicable statutory provisions.



19. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL & APPEALS

Sikkim Alpine University shall provide a fair, transparent, impartial, and time-bound mechanism for addressing grievances relating to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme. Every Research Scholar shall have the right to seek redressal of genuine academic or administrative grievances in accordance with the principles of natural justice, the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations & Guidelines, and other applicable University rules.

19.1 Grievance Redressal Mechanism

A Research Scholar may submit a written grievance relating to matters including, but not limited to:

- a) admission to the Ph.D. Programme;
- b) allocation or change of Research Supervisor or Joint Supervisor/Co-supervisor;
- c) coursework or research progress monitoring;
- d) synopsis approval;
- e) ethical review procedures;
- f) administrative delays;
- g) academic procedures; or
- h) any other matter relating to the implementation of the Ph.D. Ordinance or these Regulations.

The grievance shall ordinarily be submitted to the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) for consideration.

Where the matter cannot be resolved at the departmental level, it shall be forwarded to the Research Degree Committee (RDC) for review and recommendation.

Where appropriate, matters involving general administrative grievances may also be referred to the University's Grievance Redressal Committee in accordance with the applicable University rules.

19.2 Appeals Relating to Thesis Evaluation

An appeal against the evaluation of a Ph.D. thesis shall be permissible only on procedural grounds and shall not extend to the academic judgment or scholarly opinion expressed by the examiners.



Permissible grounds for appeal may include:

- a) procedural irregularity in the appointment of examiners;
- b) established conflict of interest;
- c) violation of the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance or these Regulations;
- d) evidence of bias or misconduct affecting the evaluation process; or
- e) any other substantial procedural defect that may have materially affected the outcome.

No appeal shall be entertained solely on the basis of disagreement with the academic opinion, recommendations, or conclusions of the examiners.

Where justified, the competent authority may order such action as deemed appropriate, including appointment of an additional examiner or any other academic procedure consistent with the applicable University Regulations.

19.3 Time Limit for Submission

A grievance or appeal shall ordinarily be submitted within fifteen (15) working days from the date on which the decision or action giving rise to the grievance is communicated to the Research Scholar.

Delayed submissions may be considered only where sufficient cause is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the competent authority.

The University shall make every reasonable effort to dispose of grievances and appeals in a fair and timely manner.

19.4 Confidentiality

All grievances, appeals, supporting documents, deliberations, and recommendations shall be treated as confidential.

Only those persons directly involved in the grievance redressal process shall have access to the relevant records, except where disclosure is required under law or by the competent authority.

19.5 Final Decision

The recommendations of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and the Research Degree Committee (RDC) shall be placed before the competent authority of the University for final decision, wherever required.



The decision of the competent authority shall be final and binding in matters relating to:

- a) academic procedures;
- b) continuation of registration;
- c) evaluation and examination procedures;
- d) award of the Ph.D. Degree;
- e) disciplinary matters; and
- f) interpretation of these Regulations in relation to individual cases.

No further appeal shall ordinarily lie within the University after the decision of the competent authority, without prejudice to any statutory remedies available under applicable law.



20. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

These Regulations shall come into force from the date of notification by the competent authority. Provisions contained herein shall apply to all scholars admitted thereafter. Appropriate safeguards shall be provided to scholars admitted under earlier frameworks to protect their academic interests.

20.1 Scholars Under Earlier Framework

Ph.D. scholars admitted under previous University regulations shall ordinarily continue to be governed by the regulations in force at the time of their admission. However, where provisions of these revised Regulations are beneficial to the scholar and do not conflict with UGC norms, such scholars may opt to adopt the new provisions, subject to approval of the competent authority. No scholar shall be adversely affected solely due to revision of regulations.

20.2 Migration

Migration from earlier regulations to the revised framework may be permitted under the following conditions:

- a) Submission of a written request by the scholar;
- b) Recommendation of the Supervisor;
- c) Endorsement by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC);
- d) Approval by the Research & Development Committee (RDC).

Migration shall not be automatic and shall be allowed only where academic continuity is ensured.

20.3 Protection of Academic Interests

The University shall ensure that:

- a) Coursework completed under earlier regulations remains valid;
- b) Approved synopsis and progress already recorded shall not require repetition;
- c) Duration calculations shall account for already completed period of registration;
- d) Scholars shall not be subjected to duplicate compliance requirements.

All transitional decisions shall aim to safeguard academic progress and maintain fairness.



20.4 Admission of Scholars from Other Universities

Applications from Research Scholars who have previously been registered for a Ph.D. programme at another recognized University and seek admission to Sikkim Alpine University shall be considered only in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations, the Ph.D. Ordinance, and such policies as may be approved by the University from time to time.

Each application shall be examined on its individual merits by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) and the Research Degree Committee (RDC) before being placed before the competent authority for approval.

Admission of such candidates shall not be construed as an automatic transfer or continuation of the previous Ph.D. registration unless specifically permitted under the applicable UGC Regulations and approved by the University.

The University may prescribe additional academic requirements, coursework, research review, or other conditions to ensure compliance with its academic standards.



21. REVIEW & AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS

These Ph.D. Regulations & Guidelines are dynamic in nature and shall be reviewed periodically to ensure their continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with national higher education policies, statutory requirements, and the academic objectives of Sikkim Alpine University.

21.1 Periodic Review

These Regulations shall ordinarily be reviewed at least once every **three (3) to five (5) years**, or earlier whenever considered necessary, in order to:

- a) incorporate amendments and notifications issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC);
- b) reflect changes arising from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 or any subsequent national policy reforms;
- c) strengthen research governance, academic quality, and institutional best practices;
- d) improve procedural clarity, efficiency, and transparency in the administration of the Ph.D. Programme;
- e) address operational issues identified during the implementation of these Regulations.

The University may undertake interim amendments whenever required in the interest of maintaining academic excellence, regulatory compliance, and effective research governance.

21.2 Authority for Revision

Proposals for amendment, modification, or revision of these Regulations may be initiated by:

- a) the Research Degree Committee (RDC);
- b) the Research & Development (R&D) Cell;
- c) the Academic Council;
- d) the Vice-Chancellor; or
- e) recommendations arising from statutory bodies, regulatory authorities, Government policy directives, or other competent authorities.



All amendments, modifications, or revisions to these Regulations shall require the approval of the Academic Council of Sikkim Alpine University and shall come into effect only after notification by the competent authority of the University.

21.3 Alignment with UGC Regulations

In the event of any inconsistency between these Regulations and any subsequent UGC Regulations, statutory notifications, or Government directives governing doctoral education:

- a) the applicable UGC Regulations and statutory provisions shall prevail to the extent of such inconsistency;
- b) the University shall undertake appropriate amendments to these Regulations at the earliest opportunity to ensure continued compliance;
- c) the implementation of such amendments shall, as far as practicable, safeguard the academic interests of Research Scholars and maintain continuity of the doctoral programme.

21.4 Matters Not Provided For

Any matter relating to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programme that is not specifically provided for in these Regulations shall be governed by:

- a) the provisions of the Sikkim Alpine University Ph.D. Ordinance;
- b) the applicable UGC Regulations, subsequent amendments, and other statutory provisions governing doctoral education;
- c) the Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Regulations, Notifications, Policies, and administrative orders of Sikkim Alpine University; and
- d) the decision of the Competent Authority of the University.

In the event of any doubt regarding the interpretation, implementation, or application of these Regulations, the matter shall be referred to the Competent Authority, whose decision shall be final and binding, subject to the provisions of the University Statutes, the Ph.D. Ordinance, and the applicable UGC Regulations.

The University shall prescribe standard forms, schedules, templates, certificates, checklists, committee compositions, and operational formats for the implementation of these Regulations. Such Annexures shall form an integral part of these Regulations and may be revised or updated by the Research & Development Cell with the approval of the Competent Authority, provided such revisions are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Ph.D. Ordinance, these Regulations, or the applicable UGC Regulations.

