

Fakeeh College for Medical Sciences	Policy Number: RAI-28	
Policy Title: Research Independence Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised
	Version-1 was Prepared on: 08-09-2024	
Applicable to: FCMS faculty, students, and researchers	Version-1 is Approved on: 15-09-2024	
	To be Reviewed on: 15-09-2029	

1. Statement of the purpose:

- 1.1** To promote research independence of Fakeeh College for Medical Sciences (FCMS) researchers, including staff and students.
- 1.2** This policy aligns with FCMS's strategic goals to strengthen scientific research, maintain academic integrity, and ensure credibility, transparency and trust in research outcomes.

2. Definitions:

- 2.1 Research independence:** The ability of researchers to ask research questions, adopt methodologies, conduct analyses, and disseminate results based on scientific and ethical standards, free from inappropriate influence or pressure.
- 2.2 Undue influence:** Any action or attempt, direct or indirect, that affects a researcher's professional judgement, objectivity, or ability to report results. This may include, but is not limited to, political, religious, financial, institutional, or personal pressures.
- 2.3 Researcher:** Any FCMS faculty member, student, staff, or affiliated individual engaged in scholarly activity.
- 2.4 Conflict of interest (COI):** A situation in which personal, financial, or institutional interests may compromise, or appear to compromise, a researcher's independence or objectivity.

3. Policy:

- 3.1** FCMS affirms that research independence is a fundamental principle of academic freedom and scientific integrity.
- 3.2** All researchers at FCMS have the right to:

- 3.2.1** Select research topics and questions based on scientific relevance and societal need.
- 3.2.2** Choose appropriate methodologies and analytical approaches that are scientifically appropriate.
- 3.2.3** Interpret and analyze data objectively, ensuring accurate reporting of findings, including negative or inconclusive results, provided the project has ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- 3.2.4** Present and publish research outcomes without censorship or suppression as per IRB and the National Committee of Bioethics (NCBE).
- 3.2.5** FCMS researchers should not be penalized or disadvantaged for conducting or reporting research in good faith, provided that the research complies with ethical, legal, and institutional requirements.
- 3.2.6** FCMS strictly prohibits any form of coercion, intimidation, or interference intended to influence:
- Research design, objectives, and budget
 - Data collection, analysis, and interpretation
 - Final conclusions or recommendations generated from the project
- 3.2.7** Socio-political, religious, cultural, or ideological considerations shall not be used to alter, suppress, or misrepresent scientific evidence or research conclusions.
- 3.2.8** Research independence does not exempt researchers from compliance with IRB requirements, national laws and regulations, and international ethical guidelines for research.

4. Procedure:

Procedure steps	Responsibility
<p>4.1 The FCMS researchers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research in accordance with recognized ethical standards and institutional policies. 	FCMS faculty, staff, students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare actual or potential COI • Maintain scientific integrity and transparency • Submit 'Research Independence Compliance Checklist (RICC)' (see Annex-1) 	
<p>4.2 Academic departments and Scientific Research Unit (SRU) should foster a supportive environment of independent inquiry and open scholarly debate. In addition, they must protect researchers from influence or retaliation. Importantly, they should report COI and scientific unethical misconduct to the Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research (VDPGSSR).</p>	<p>Head of Department SRU manager</p>
<p>4.3 College leadership shall ensure institutional structures and decisions respect research independence, refrain from influencing research outcomes for non- scientific reasons, and act promptly on reported violations.</p>	<p>VDPGSSR FCMS Dean</p>
<p>4.4 FCMS staff and students may confidentially report to their academic departments or the SRU. All reports should be reviewed objectively, transparently, and within 24 hours.</p>	<p>FCMS staff and students HODs SRU manager</p>
<p>4.5 VDPGSSR will review the submitted report, meet with the concerned individual, and report to the College Dean.</p>	<p>VDPGSSR FCMS Dean</p>
<p>4.6 FCMS Dean will take the needed action in reporting to the IRB and related committees. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with FCMS regulations, depending on the severity and nature of the breach.</p>	<p>FCMS Dean</p>





5. Forms/Attachments:

5.1 Research Independence Compliance Checklist

6. References:

- <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/science-policy.html>
- <https://ncbe.kacst.gov.sa/en/standards-and-regulations/?page=2&size=9&term=&category=all>

7. Approval:

	Name	Job title	Signature	Date
Prepared by	Dr. Safaa Turkistani	Vice Dean- Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research		08-09-2024
Reviewed by	Dr. Jolly Jimmichan	Consultant-Quality		12-09-2024
Reviewed by	Dr. Enas Gouda	Executive Director- Quality and Accreditation Unit		12-09-2024
Approved by	Prof. MSM Ardawi	FCMS Dean		15-09-2024