

## Document 2: Research Policies and Guidelines

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### Document Overview

This document consolidates the research policies and guidelines approved or recommended by the FHS Research Committee. These policies aim to ensure research quality, ethical compliance, and alignment with international standards.

**Review Cycle:** Annual review at the start of each academic year

### BAU Institutional Policy Framework

These FHS guidelines operate within and complement the broader Beirut Arab University institutional policies:

BAU Policy Area	Relevance to FHS Research
<b>Research Ethics Policy</b>	Mandates ethical conduct in research, including protecting human/animal subjects, managing conflict of interest, and ensuring integrity
<b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>	Oversees all research to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines
<b>Anti-Bribery and Corruption</b>	Prohibits all forms of misconduct in research dealings; mandates honesty and fairness
<b>Ethical Conduct Policy</b>	Emphasizes maintaining high standards of integrity for staff and students
<b>Non-Discrimination and Diversity</b>	Ensures equal opportunities in research participation and collaboration
<b>Academic Regulations</b>	Governs credit-hour system and course registration relevant to research training

All FHS research activities must comply with these university-wide policies. In case of conflict, BAU institutional policies take precedence.

### 1. Publication Standards and Journal Selection

### 1.1 Policy Statement

All research publications affiliated with the Faculty of Health Sciences must be submitted to journals indexed in recognized international databases.

### 1.2 Indexing Requirements

Requirement	Status
Scopus indexed	Required
SCImago ranked	Required
Web of Science	Preferred
PubMed/MEDLINE	Preferred for health sciences

### 1.3 Journal Quartile Guidance

Quartile	Description	Recommendation
Q1	Top 25% of journals in category	Strongly encouraged; incentive available
Q2	25-50% of journals in category	Encouraged
Q3	50-75% of journals in category	Acceptable
Q4	Bottom 25% of journals in category	Discouraged; case-by-case review

### 1.4 Predatory Journal Avoidance

**Definition:** Predatory journals are publications that exploit the open-access model without providing legitimate peer review or editorial services.

**Red Flags:**

- Not indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or PubMed
- Aggressive email solicitation
- Unrealistic publication timelines (days instead of weeks/months)
- Lack of clear peer review process
- Hidden or excessive article processing charges
- Journal scope too broad or vague

**Resources for Verification:**

- Scopus Source List: [<https://www.scopus.com/sources>](<https://www.scopus.com/sources>)
- SCImago Journal Rank: [<https://www.scimagojr.com>](<https://www.scimagojr.com>)

- BAU journals list

### 1.5 Faculty Journal Lists

The Research Committee maintains curated lists of Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4 journals relevant to FHS research areas. These lists are available in the committee archives and updated annually.

## 2. Research Ethics Preparation Guidelines

### 2.1 Policy Statement

All research involving human subjects, biological samples, or sensitive data must obtain appropriate ethical approval before data collection begins.

**BAU Institutional Alignment:** The BAU Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversees all research to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. FHS faculty and students must submit research protocols to the BAU IRB for review and approval.

### 2.2 When Ethics Approval is Required

Research Type	IRB Required	Notes
Human subjects (surveys, interviews)	Yes	Even anonymous surveys
Clinical trials	Yes	Plus IACUC if applicable
Biological samples (blood, tissue)	Yes	Including secondary use
Medical records review	Yes	Waiver may be requested
Quality improvement projects	Maybe	Consult IRB
Systematic reviews	No	Unless accessing patient data
Cell line research	No	Unless human-derived

### 2.3 IRB Application Process

#### *Step 1: Pre-Submission Preparation*

19. Define research question and methodology
20. Identify target population and sample size
21. Prepare data collection instruments
22. Draft informed consent documents (Arabic and English)
23. Complete CITI or equivalent ethics training

### **Step 2: Application Components**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description</b>
Protocol	Full description of study design, methods, analysis
Consent Form	IRB-approved template with all required elements
Data Collection Instruments	Questionnaires, interview guides, case report forms
CV of PI and Co-Is	Current curriculum vitae
Ethics Training Certificates	CITI, ORPH, or equivalent
Site Permissions	Letters from hospitals, schools, or other sites

### **Step 3: Submission and Review**

24. Submit to BAU Institutional Review Board
25. Await initial review (typically 2-4 weeks)
26. Respond to queries or requests for modification
27. Receive approval letter with protocol number
28. Maintain approval throughout study duration

### **Step 4: Ongoing Compliance**

- Report adverse events within 48 hours
- Submit amendments for any protocol changes
- Renew approval annually if study exceeds 12 months
- Submit final report upon study completion

### **2.4 Informed Consent Elements**

All consent forms must include:

29. Study title and investigator contact information
30. Purpose of the research
31. Procedures and duration of participation
32. Risks and discomforts
33. Benefits (direct and indirect)
34. Alternatives to participation
35. Confidentiality protections
36. Voluntary nature; right to withdraw
37. Compensation (if any)

38. IRB contact for questions or complaints

## 2.5 Data Protection

- Store identifiable data securely (encrypted, password-protected)
- Limit access to authorized personnel only
- De-identify data as soon as feasible
- Retain records per BAU and regulatory requirements
- Destroy data securely after retention period

## 3. Authorship and Publication Guidelines

### 3.1 Policy Statement

Authorship of FHS research publications follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria.

### 3.2 ICMJE Authorship Criteria

To qualify as an author, an individual must meet **all four** of the following:

39. **Substantial contributions** to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
40. **Drafting** the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
41. **Final approval** of the version to be published; AND
42. **Agreement** to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

### 3.3 Authorship Order

Position	Typically Assigned To
First Author	Primary researcher who conducted the work
Co-authors	Contributors meeting ICMJE criteria, in order of contribution
Last Author	Senior researcher or principal investigator
Corresponding Author	Person handling submission and correspondence

### 3.4 Acknowledgments

Individuals who contributed but do not meet authorship criteria should be acknowledged. Examples:

- Technical assistance
- Writing assistance (e.g., language editing)
- General supervision without direct involvement
- Financial support providers (in funding section)

### 3.5 Conflict of Interest Disclosure

All authors must disclose:

- Financial relationships (grants, employment, consultancies)
- Personal relationships that could influence the work
- Patent holdings or applications
- Stock ownership in relevant companies

### 3.6 Authorship Disputes

- Discuss authorship early in the research process
- Document contributions and agreements in writing
- Consult the Research Committee Chair for mediation
- Escalate to the Dean if resolution is not achieved

### 3.7 Affiliation Requirements

All publications must include the correct institutional affiliation:  
Faculty of Health Sciences, Beirut Arab University, Beirut, Lebanon  
For multi-departmental work, specify the department(s) involved.

## 4. Grant Submission Workflow

### 4.1 Policy Statement

Faculty members are encouraged to seek external and internal funding for research. The Research Committee supports grant preparation through workshops, review, and administrative guidance.

### 4.2 Internal Grant Opportunities

Program	Eligibility	Amount	Deadline
BAU Intramural	Full-time faculty	Varies	Annual call

Grant			
Graduate Assistantship	With postgraduate student	Stipend support	Rolling
Q1/Q2 Publication Incentive	Published authors	Financial incentive	Upon publication

### 4.3 External Funding Agencies

Agency	Type	Notes
CNRS Lebanon	National	Annual calls; competitive
AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie)	International	Training and mobility grants
SSHN (France)	International	Research stays in France
Erasmus+	EU	Capacity building projects
NIH (Fogarty International)	US	Collaborative research
WHO EMRO	Regional	Public health focus

### 4.4 Grant Preparation Steps

#### *Step 1: Idea Development*

43. Identify research question aligned with funding priorities
44. Review call for proposals carefully
45. Confirm eligibility and deadlines
46. Identify collaborators and co-investigators

#### *Step 2: Proposal Writing*

47. **Title:** Clear, concise, descriptive
48. **Abstract:** Summary of aims, methods, significance
49. **Background:** Literature review and gap identification
50. **Aims/Objectives:** Specific, measurable goals
51. **Methods:** Detailed procedures, sample size, analysis plan
52. **Timeline:** Milestones and deliverables
53. **Budget:** Justified expenses; matching requirements
54. **Team:** CVs and roles of all investigators
55. **Ethics:** IRB approval or application status

#### *Step 3: Internal Review*

56. Share draft with Research Committee for feedback
57. Attend grant writing workshops if available
58. Revise based on peer and mentor input

#### **Step 4: Institutional Approval**

59. Obtain department head endorsement
60. Secure Dean's signature on institutional forms
61. Coordinate with BAU Research Office for submission

#### **Step 5: Submission**

62. Submit before deadline (allow buffer for technical issues)
63. Retain confirmation of submission
64. Archive all submitted documents

#### **Step 6: Post-Submission**

65. Respond to reviewer queries promptly
66. Accept or decline award per institutional policy
67. Report progress and outcomes as required

#### **4.5 Budget Guidelines**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Allowable</b>	<b>Not Allowable</b>
Personnel	Salaries, stipends, benefits	General faculty salaries (unless buy-out)
Equipment	Research-specific equipment	General office equipment
Supplies	Consumables, reagents, materials	Office supplies
Travel	Conference, collaboration travel	Personal travel
Publication	Article processing charges	Subscription fees
Other	Participant incentives, ethics fees	Entertainment

### **5. Student Research Supervision Guidelines**

#### **5.1 Policy Statement**

Faculty members supervising postgraduate research are responsible for ensuring academic quality, ethical compliance, and timely completion of student projects.

#### **5.2 Supervisor Responsibilities**

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Description</b>
Topic Selection	Guide student to feasible, relevant research question
Methodology	Ensure appropriate design and methods
Ethics	Oversee IRB application and compliance
Regular Meetings	Meet at least bi-weekly during active

	phases
Feedback	Provide timely, constructive feedback on drafts
Publication	Support student in publishing thesis work
Defense Preparation	Prepare student for oral defense

### 5.3 Student Responsibilities

Responsibility	Description
Initiative	Propose research ideas and take ownership
Communication	Maintain regular contact with supervisor
Deadlines	Respect institutional and agreed timelines
Ethics Training	Complete required ethics certification
Documentation	Keep records of data, consent forms, approvals
Academic Integrity	Avoid plagiarism and data fabrication

### 5.4 Supervision Load

Level	Recommended Maximum
Masters thesis	3-5 students per supervisor
Doctoral dissertation	2-3 students per supervisor
Undergraduate senior project	5-8 students per supervisor

### 5.5 Co-Supervision

- Co-supervisors share responsibilities and must be identified in advance
- One primary supervisor is designated for administrative purposes
- Co-supervisors from external institutions must be approved by the Dean

### 5.6 Progress Monitoring

Milestone	Expected Timeline
Proposal approval	Within first semester
IRB approval	Before data collection
Data collection completion	Per approved timeline
First draft	3-6 months before defense
Final draft	1 month before defense
Defense	Per academic calendar

### 5.7 Publication of Student Work

- Students should be included as authors if they meet ICMJE criteria
- Typically, students are first authors on work from their thesis
- Supervisors provide guidance on journal selection and submission
- Publication is encouraged before or soon after graduation