

## IMPACT

(IntegratedMentorshipProgramforAdvancingClinical&TranslationalResearch)

### *Research Mentoring Framework*

*Amala Integrated Medical Research Department (AIMRD)*

*Amala Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS)*

### **1. Objective**

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a structured mechanism for mentoring postgraduate (PG) research students at the Amala Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) by the scientific team at the Amala Integrated Medical Research Department (AIMRD). The core objective is to enhance the scientific merit, research design, innovation potential, and overall quality of PG dissertations, while also encouraging students to work toward publishable outputs. This framework ensures that the expertise of AIMRD scientists is utilized effectively to enrich PG research, without interfering with the academic independence of individual departments in selecting research topics. The mentoring is intended to support, not supervise, the research work, thereby adding a layer of scientific refinement that benefits both students and departments alike.

### **2. Scope**

This SOP applies to all eighteen PG departments currently offering postgraduate programs at AIMS and a total of sixty-two PG students enrolled across these departments. It also applies to the two scientists currently appointed under AIMRD, who will take on the role of research mentors. The implementation of this mentoring system will help standardize the quality of research and output across departments, while also providing centralized scientific guidance that is accessible to all students, regardless of their discipline. This framework promotes collaborative mentoring, interdepartmental integration, and aligns student research with institutional research goals.



### **3. Distribution and Assignment**

To ensure effective mentorship and manageable workload distribution, each of the two AIMRD scientists will be assigned to nine PG departments, thereby covering all eighteen departments. The 62 PG students will be equally divided, with 31 students assigned to each scientist based on departmental distribution. This allocation ensures equity, clarity, and ease of management. A formal list mapping each department to the respective AIMRD scientist has been prepared and circulated to all departments for reference and implementation. The distribution has been designed in such a way that the mentoring responsibilities are proportionate, and each scientist can engage meaningfully with all assigned students.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The AIMRD scientists will serve as research mentors whose role is to provide scientific guidance to the assigned PG students. Their contributions will focus on enhancing research methodology, optimizing experimental design, assisting with data analysis, offering insights into literature review and gap identification, and helping students understand the standards of scientific publishing. While they will provide feedback and recommendations, they will not interfere with topic selection or the core supervisory duties of the departmental faculty. The primary academic guidance and supervision remain with the departmental guides.

The PG department faculty will continue to play their central role in project ideation, topic selection, and overall academic supervision of the student's research work. Faculty members are expected to support the mentoring process by encouraging their students to interact with the assigned AIMRD mentor and to facilitate review meetings and discussions. PG students, on the other hand, are responsible for actively participating in the mentoring process. They are expected to take the initiative in scheduling meetings with their AIMRD mentor, sharing relevant project documents, and incorporating the suggestions received. Students must maintain clear communication with both their departmental guides and their AIMRD mentors to ensure that feedback is well-integrated into their research.

## **5. Mechanism of Implementation**

The implementation of this mentorship framework will begin with a formal mapping of departments to the two AIMRD scientists. This will be followed by an orientation program involving all PG students, their departmental guides, and the AIMRD scientists, during which the framework, expectations, and communication protocols will be explained.

Once the PG students finalize their thesis topics and receive departmental approval, they will be required to meet their assigned AIMRD scientist for an initial interaction. During this meeting, students will present their research plan, receive scientific feedback, and set expectations for quarterly progress check-ins. These review sessions will be held once a month to assess research progress, offer constructive input, and troubleshoot challenges faced by students in their experiments or data collection. Feedback from each session will be documented and shared with both the student and the departmental guide. In the final stage of the research cycle, before thesis submission, students will attend a final review meeting with their AIMRD mentor to ensure that the thesis is scientifically sound, logically presented, and aligned with publication standards.

## **6. Communication and Coordination**

Each department will have a designated coordinator (Department Secretary) who will liaise between the PG students, departmental guides, and AIMRD mentors. Monthly coordination meetings will be held to monitor progress, address any issues, and ensure alignment between all parties. This system will promote transparency, accountability, and consistent mentorship throughout the academic year.

## **7. Confidentiality and Ethics**

All interactions between AIMRD scientists and PG students will be conducted in a professional, ethical, and confidential manner. Data shared during mentoring sessions, including unpublished results and thesis drafts, will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be used or shared for any external purposes without explicit consent. The framework will operate within the existing ethical guidelines of AIMS and all students must have the necessary institutional ethical clearances for their research. Mentors will



also ensure that students are made aware of scientific integrity standards, including plagiarism checks, data authenticity, and authorship protocols.

### **8. Evaluation and Feedback**

To ensure the continuous improvement of this mentoring framework, structured feedback will be collected annually from PG students, departmental faculty, and AIMRD mentors. The feedback process will evaluate the impact of the mentoring on research quality, student satisfaction, collaboration between departments and AIMRD, and the number of publication-ready works. Based on this feedback, necessary revisions will be made to the SOP and the mentoring mechanism to better suit institutional needs and academic goals.

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