



## IU-ORIC

### Policy on IU Research Journals

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Iqra University (IU) gives paramount importance to both academic and applied research. To develop a healthy research eco-system in the different academic faculties, Iqra University is regularly publishing peer-reviewed research from national and international authors in its journals since 2013. The following policy is to augment the existing practices for streamlining journal publication process, ensuring continuity of journal publishing process, increasing journal visibility and quality of research leading to progressively better abstracting/indexing of IU journals at national/international forums, assigning job roles and emoluments to journal publication teams and other financial matters related to journal publication process. Together the guidelines discussed in this policy will ensure long term, progressive sustainability of IU journals and increasing the research footprint of IQRA university. These policies are in line with HEC JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS POLICY 2024

#### 2. STATUS OF CURRENTLY PUBLISHED/PLANNED IU JOURNALS

A total of **eight** research journals are currently being planned by different faculties of Iqra University. However, of these five are being already published regularly to-date and four are currently recognized by HEC in Y category and one journal's HEC recognition is in progress after meeting HEC criteria. 3 New Journals are planned. Table 1 gives the status of these eight journals.

*Table 1 Status of Currently Published and Planned IU journals*

J. No.	Journal Title	Frequency	Responsible Faculty	Remarks
J1	Journal of Management Sciences (JMS)	Bi-annually	FoBA	HEC Recognized (Category Y)
J2	Journal of Finance & Economics Research (JFER)	Bi-annually	FoBA	HEC Recognized (Category Y)
J3	Journal of Education and Social Sciences (JESS)	Bi-annually	FADESS	HEC Recognized (Category Y)
J4	South Asian Journal of Management Sciences (SAJMS)	Bi-annually	FoBA	HEC Recognized (Category Y)
J5	Iqra Journal of Engineering and Computing (IJEC)	Bi-annually	FEST	NEW JOURNAL <u>to be launched</u>
J6	Iqra Journal of Health Sciences (IJHS)	Bi-annually	FoHS	NEW JOURNAL <u>to be launched</u>

J7	Iqra Journal of Pharmacy (IJP)	Bi-annually	<i>FoP</i>	<i>NEW JOURNAL to be launched</i>
J8	Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Journal (AIBD)	Bi-annually	<i>FEST</i>	<i>Not HEC Recognized</i>

### 3. MANAGEMENT TEAM OF IU JOURNALS

The administrative management of IU journals will be managed by a dedicated editorial team and support staff. However, it is recommended that few positions are rotated like the role of the Associate Editors after fixed terms so that more faculty can be trained in the journal administration process. The EIC will regularly update ORIC about journal performance parameters and any new recommendations to improve the journal ranking. The EIC will also inform ORIC about budgetary requirements of the journal.

#### 3.1 Editor-in-Chief (EIC)

The Editor-in-Chief will be the Dean of the respective faculty having ex officio status. The Editor-in-Chief (EIC) is responsible for the overall administrative management of the journal in terms of constitution of editorial/advisory/reviewer boards, management of editorial policies to ensure the high ethical standards, effective peer-review process, transparent decision making, obtaining ISSN for new journals, abstracting and indexing in relevant national / international journal publication databases and regularity of vol/issue publication. EIC will also be responsible for timely submission of correspondence records/audit reports to HEC and other relevant agencies. Similarly, the performance report of journal should be submitted to ORIC office on six monthly basis. EIC should also arrange strategic meetings with editorial/advisory boards to enhance the journal prestige For funding, in-house options as well as the relevant agencies/societies/industrial-partners/HEC shall be explored.

#### 3.2 Associate Editors (AE)

Under the guidance of the Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editors (AEs) will be responsible for the overall execution cycle of next journal issue publication starting from launching of Call for Papers to actual publishing of the issue. The Associate Editors will be assisted by his team and will be responsible for initial screening of submitted articles through plagiarism detection tools including advanced plagiarism detection tools to detect AI based content in submitted articles and ensuring the transparency of the review process. The Associate Editors will also responsible to maintain auditable proofs of article submission, review, article revision and acceptance/rejection decision in electronic journal management system for inspection by any national / international regulatory body. The Associate Editors position may be term-based and may be rotated, to train more faculty in the journal publication management process.

#### 3.3 Editorial, Advisory & Reviewers' boards

These boards should be comprehensive and diverse. HEC JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS POLICY 2024 for constitution of these boards must be strictly adhered to. Editorial board should contain the hierarchy of editor in chief, Associate Editors, and single/multiple associate editors from IU faculty members. The advisory board should contain at least 50% PhD members of relevant field from technologically advanced countries, while the reviewer board should contain the pool of researchers of relevant fields. Ideally, all reviewers must be PhD qualified. An exception could be made in cases where it is difficult to find a PhD qualified reviewer in the relevant field and other research credentials e.g. research output (h-index, citations) can be used to establish the merit of reviewer. The research profile

of the board members shall be considered while formalizing their membership. These should be publicized on the journal web-page as well as front matter of all published journal issues. Written consent from all board members with auditable proof must be obtained as per current mandatory requirement of HEC.

### **3.4 Role of Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)**

- a) The administrative staff affiliated with ORIC will be completely responsible for administrative process starting from issuing Call for papers up to the publication of the issue,
- b) The administrative staff will be responsible for:
  - I. Wide dissemination of Call for papers nationally and internationally
  - II. Carrying out mandatory plagiarism checks on received papers
  - III. Assigning Reviewers to submitted articles and oversee the entire review process through approved journal management system for auditable proofs
  - IV. Keep the Associate Editors and Editor in Chief informed about the stages of review process
  - V. Consult the Associate Editors and Editor in Chief about finalized papers which will be published in next issue
  - VI. Typesetting / editing coordination with publisher
  - VII. Oversee the payment to the publisher and any approved honorariums for reviewers
  - VIII. Distribution of current issue of published journal nationally and internationally as physical copies / online version
  - IX. Submission of journal data regularly to HEC and other national bodies for its recognition and indexing according to guidance of Editor in Chief
- c) In addition to the above roles, the ORIC office will play the facilitation role for editorial board via interacting with EIC in the context of journal operation/launching, quality management, new tool usage for citation enhancement, engagement of in-house resources (journal management software, ICT, website/database, servers, staff etc.), budgeting, honorariums, and approval of key recommendations in the light of feedbacks from editorial office.
- d) The yearly assessment report of each journal will be prepared by research section of ORIC office, which will be discussed with EIC for improvements. Resource person(s), from the ORIC office, will be assigned to provide support to editorial board of journals with regard to policy implementation, review-process, software usage etc.
- e) Any research misconduct matter pertaining to any published article in any IU journal shall be immediately reported to ORIC. ORIC will report this matter to its Ethical Review Board for official intervention and resolution of dispute in this matter.

## **4 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR IU JOURNAL PUBLISHING**

All existing and new IU journals must ensure that all mandatory requirements as specified by HEC JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS POLICY 2024 as well as international laws pertaining to academic publishing are strictly being adhered to. These requirements are summarized below.

#### **4.1 ISSN Number**

The journal should contain a valid 8-digit international standard serial number (ISSN) as per international regulation. The ISSN comes in two formats: print and electronic. In case of a new registration, the guidelines of ISSN can be viewed to request for an ISSN no. through the ISSN International Centre website.

#### **4.2 Abstracting and indexing from HEC recognized agencies**

The journal should have abstracting /indexing in at least two or more HEC recognized international agencies (EbscoHost, ProQuest, Gale, DOAJ etc.). Minimum HEC ‘Y’ recognition must be obtained by meeting mandatory HEC publication criteria.

#### **4.3 Web based publication process and webhosting**

Effective management of website/webhosting for appropriate visibility of “Call for Papers”, published content in volume/issues, and archive searching should be ensured. To ensure data security and protection, server/cloud hosting may be used. The IU Department of Digital Transformation will provide support in this regard.

#### **4.4 Widespread dissemination for Call for papers and frequency of publications**

The “Call for Papers” for issue under concern should be advertised on website and broadcasted nationally and internationally in an effective manner ensuring sufficient time frame for article submission and review process. The expected submission dates and deadlines should be clearly mentioned on the website. The regularity and consistency in the frequency of publication of each volume/ issue must be ensured.

#### **4.5 Peer-review process**

A double-blind peer-review process should be adopted where each manuscript should be reviewed by at least two external experts of relevant field. The reviewers should not be selected from editorial/advisory boards and in this sense the vast and diverse reviewers’ board should be formed. In selection of reviewers, the assigning associate editor must ensure that any potential conflict of interest is avoided. The reviewer should ideally sign a disclaimer form declaring this. The reviewer should be assigned ample deadline for a thorough review process. The reviewer feedback form must be designed to obtain a mix of subjective and quantitative feedback over a variety of publication parameters such as innovation, flow of ideas, contribution to existing body of knowledge, topic within scope of journal, inclusion of latest references, credibility of research work carried out and comparison with state-of-the-art (SOTA) techniques to ensure a thorough and credible feedback from the reviewer.

#### **4.6 Licensing & Copyrights**

The journal should be licensed through some licensing agency such as Creative Commons Attribution – Non-commercial 4.0 International License. The editorial board may explore the other licensing agencies of similar nature. The copyrights of published articles should be mentioned from the perspective of authors rights and journal role. The rights of copyright will rest with IU.

#### **4.7 Software system & support staff**

For the smooth operation and auditable proof of journal peer-review process and publishing, an open-source or proprietary software for manuscript submission system will be employed, which will be customized as per requirement of the journal. The IU Digital Transformation Department will provide the technical assistance in this regard.

## 5 IU JOURNAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

All existing IU journals must undergo rigorous Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) by their respective editorial teams. All matters related to compliance and future recommendations to uplift the ranking of the journal must be conveyed to the EIC of the journal who must then present these in their six-monthly progress report to ORIC.

### 5.1 Launching new journals

IU may consider launching of new journal keeping in view the field gap from already operational journals, coverage, multidisciplinary aspect, and journal proposal and requirement of program accreditation body. The aims, objectives, and scope of newly proposed journals should be well-defined. The journal proposal will be evaluated by expert committee constituted by Vice Chancellor / President and on the recommendation of which, the decision will be taken. The limit of a single journal per faculty will be imposed to ensure the quality of research, continuity of publications with at least 2 issues per year, progressive improvement in journal Abstracting / Indexing and to avoid any conflicts of interest.

### 5.2 Authorships and number of papers per issue

To qualify for lowest HEC category 'Y', the journal should contain minimum 5 articles per issue and minimum 2 issues per year. There should be not be any gaps in the publication of at least 6 journal issues before journal becomes eligible for application to be recognized as HEC Y-category. Self-institutional publications should not exceed 20%. To qualify for next higher HEC category 'X' the scholarly articles from international authors should be at least one-fourth and the review board should comprise of international academics only and there can be no self-institutional publications. For latest policy, the **HEC Journals & Publication Policy 2024** should be consulted.

### 5.3 Citations and collaboration with top publishers

Effective measures and modern tool usage should be used to enhance the citation index of journal. Moreover, with the growing quality of journal, the partnership with top publishers such as IEEE, Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Springer, Emerald Publishing, Cambridge/Oxford University Press, SAGE etc. should be explored to enhance the journal prestige and metrics.

### 5.4 Compliance with most recent HEC Journals & Publication Policy

IU journals should comply the requirements mentioned in the latest "**HEC Journals & Publication Policy 2024**". The EIC/Editorial board must ensure strict policy implementation in their respective journals. The journal must continuously strive for improved HEC ranking and international recognition as per applicable criteria.

### 5.5 Improvement in Journal Ranking

New IU journals should initially strive for achieving HEC 'Y' category status after meeting required quality audits by HEC. After achieving 'Y' category journals should gradually tighten their paper acceptance criteria to achieve HEC 'X' category status. Finally, journals which have met the requirement for indexing in internationally recognized databases such as JCR, Web of Science (WoS)-Master Journal List (MJL), Scopus etc. should be considered for the global recognition of journal as well as to strive for highest HEC ranking of 'W' after receiving an impact factor.

### **5.6 Call for Special Issues in addition to Regular Issues**

The editorial team of IU journals must with a progressive mindset should advertise calls for special issues in addition to the regular issues. The special issues include focused topics of current interest to the research community. Special issues could also invite extended versions of best papers accepted at IU conferences,

### **5.7 Journal policy on Publication Ethics**

IU journals should comply with internationally acceptable standards on Publication Ethics such as Multiple paper submission, Plagiarism and Retraction of published articles not meeting Research Ethics. These policies should be in line with current HEC and internationally adopted policies and widely publicized on journal website. Any case of research misconduct for published articles should be directed to ORIC office. ORIC office will refer this matter to its Ethical Review Board (ERB) for a impartial investigation of the matter. The decision of the ERB will be binding upon the authors.

## **6 BRANDING & MARKETING OF IU JOURNALS**

### **6.1 Title of Journals**

While all IU journals are expected to maintain their individuality according to their respective subject / thematic area, the title of all IU journals should ideally be prefixed as “Iqra Journal of ...” for institutional recognition at national and international level and building the research footprint of IU. Existing journals must gradually meet these conformity requirements at gradual pace.

### **6.2 Article Templates and Art work of IU Journals**

The article templates for manuscript submission must be mentioned on the journal website. The templates should be in popular text editor format such as Word/Latex. The art work used for cover pages must follow uniform practices/ themes as much as possible for uniform branding of IU journals. Authors should be given clear instructions on article templates (including formatting and font) and minimum DPI resolution for images. Existing journals must gradually meet these conformity requirements at gradual pace.

## **7 FINANCIAL POLICIES GOVERNING IU JOURNAL PUBLICATION PROCESS**

### **7.1 Incentives for journals’ publishing team**

The honorarium award per year for editorial board/support staff will be Rs. 100,000 /issue. This amount may be increased if any journal achieves a progressively higher HEC ranking as below:

Table 2 Remuneration for Journal Publication Team (Ranking as per HEC Journals and Publication Policy 2024-25)

HEC Ranking	Remuneration for Journal Publication Team
W (indexing in WoS: SCIE/SSCI/AHCI)	250,000/- PKR per issue
X (Scopus indexed/ WoS: ESCI)	150,000/- PKR per issue
Y (HEC local recognition and for newly launched IU journals)	100,000/- PKR per issue

The following weightages shall be adopted for the distribution of incentives:  
 EIC & Associate Editors - 70% (Equally distributed with EIC is equivalent to two editors)  
 Support staff excluding EIC/Editors - 30%

## 7.2 Exploring HEC and other funding options

The journal editorial team should be aware of current policies on HEC funding options to support national journals. For example, as per latest HEC journal and publications policy 2024-25.

- 7.2.1 **Seed Funding:** HEC provides Seed Funding options for journals ranked in HEC category Y, X and W. It is the responsibility of the journal management team to apply for seed funding within the stipulated deadlines.
- 7.2.2 **Performance Based Funding:** To be eligible for performance-based funding, the journal must show an appreciation in abstracting / indexing and improvement in HEC ranking. The journal management team should strive to gradually elevate the status of the journal to be eligible for performance-based funding options.

## 7.3 Self Generation of Income through Open-Access option, article processing charges and subscription fees model

Once IU journals have consolidated their status as established research journals of good repute, the Journal management team can consider alternative publishing models to cover reviewing and publishing costs. These models can range from open-access or subscription-based models. The article processing charges should be mentioned, if applicable on the journal website. Finally, the membership or subscription fee with regard to printed hardcopy or electronic softcopy of journal issues should be well-defined.

## 7.4 Financial Budget planning

Each faculty must submit an annual budget to ORIC for calculation of next year fiscal budget as well as a strategic plan as per calculations below.

Table 3 Annual Budget for IU Journals

	<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Total Quantity</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost per annum</b>
1	Publishing and circulation cost for hard copies (remaining circulation to be through soft copies)	PKR. 1000 per hard copy (approx..) including circulation through courier	50 hard copies/journal/six months (8 journals)	PKR 800,000 /- per year
2	Journal management software – License fee, customized development & database cost	Open source	8 journals	(None for open source like OJS)
3	*Remuneration of Editorial and Support Staff	PKR 100,000/- per journal per issue (@ 2 issues/year)	8 journals	PKR 1,600,000/- per year (details as per para 7.1)
	<b>Total:</b>			<b>2,400,000/- (approx..)</b>

In the longer time frame, it is envisaged that the IU journals could become financially independent through open access, subscription-based or hybrid model to cover its publication and HR costs fully or partially.

#### 7.4 IU Journal Calendar planning

Each faculty must plan their journal issues publishing dates as per a strictly time table. For each journal published biannually either the journal editorial team must opt for journal print issues in regular slots in Q1 and Q3 or opt for regular slots of Q2 and Q4. The resulting IU journal calendar should be planned as per table 3.

Table 4 IU Quarterly IU Journal Calendar and Fiscal Budget per quarter

	<b>Q1 (Jul-Sep)</b>	<b>Q2 (Oct-Dec)</b>	<b>Q3 (Jan-Mar)</b>	<b>Q4 (Apr-Jun)</b>
	IJHS(2) IJP(2) IJEC(2) AIBD (2) JMS (2)	SAJMS(2) JFER(2) JESS(2)	IJHS(1) IJP(1) IJEC(1) AIBD (1) JMS (1)	SAJMS(1) JFER(1) JESS(1)
<b>Total Budget (2.4 million PKR)</b>	<b>0.75 million (PKR)</b>	<b>0.45 million (PKR)</b>	<b>0.75 million (PKR)</b>	<b>0.45 million (PKR)</b>