

Policy Name : **Research Independence and Academic Freedom Policy**

Related : MOHESR Outcome-based Evaluation Framework (OEF), ADEK Standards and Procedure for

Documents Higher Education Institutions in Abu Dhabi 2023, ESG 2015 Standards.

Section 1 : Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to protect research independence and academic freedom at ADSM in relation to research, teaching, learning-related academic discussion, curriculum-related academic work, and scholarly communication.
- 1.2 This Policy establishes the principles under which members of the academic community may pursue research, teach, discuss academic matters, develop and review curriculum, analyse evidence, and communicate scholarly views and findings without improper interference or undue influence.
- 1.3 This Policy also establishes mechanisms for reporting, reviewing, and addressing concerns relating to censorship, coercion, retaliation, or other restrictions on lawful and ethical academic activity.

Section 2 : Scope and applicability

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all ADSM faculty, staff, adjunct faculty, visiting academics, visiting researchers, and students engaged in teaching, research, supervision, curriculum development, academic publication, scholarly communication, or other academic service under the auspices of ADSM.
- 2.2 This Policy also applies to all ADSM units, committees, supervisors, and administrators involved in approving, supporting, funding, reviewing, managing, or overseeing academic activity, including teaching, research, curriculum, and academic dissemination.

Section 3 : Definitions

- 3.1 **Research Independence:** the freedom of researchers to conduct lawful and ethical research, including the selection of research topics, methods, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of findings, without improper interference, censorship, or undue influence.
- 3.2 **Academic Freedom:** the freedom of academic staff and other eligible members of the academic community to teach, discuss, supervise, develop curriculum, pursue scholarship, conduct research, publish, and communicate professional or scholarly views responsibly and in accordance with applicable laws, ethical requirements, and institutional policies.

- 3.3 **Improper Interference:** any attempt by an internal or external party to direct, suppress, alter, delay, or misrepresent teaching, academic discussion, curriculum-related work, research design, conduct, analysis, conclusions, publication, or dissemination for non-academic reasons.
- 3.4 **Academic Activity:** teaching, research, scholarly inquiry, supervision, curriculum development, academic publication, academic service, and participation in academic discussion or debate.
- 3.5 **Researcher:** any faculty member, staff member, student, adjunct faculty member, or approved visiting researcher engaged in research or scholarly activity at or on behalf of ADSM.
- 3.6 **Retaliation:** any adverse action, threat, penalty, intimidation, or disadvantage imposed on a member of the academic community for conducting, communicating, teaching, publishing, or raising concerns about lawful and ethical academic activity.

Section 4 : Policy Statement

- 4.1 ADSM is committed to maintaining an environment in which academic activity is pursued with integrity, independence, intellectual honesty, and professional responsibility.
- 4.2 ADSM shall protect research independence and academic freedom across teaching, research, supervision, curriculum-related work, scholarly communication, and academic service.
- 4.3 ADSM shall protect the right of academic community members to teach, discuss, inquire, research, and communicate views and findings accurately and responsibly, including where such views or findings may be critical, unexpected, or inconsistent with institutional, commercial, political, social, or religious expectations.
- 4.4 ADSM shall not permit improper interference, censorship, coercion, or retaliation in relation to lawful and ethical academic activity carried out under its authority.

Section 5 : Exclusions

- 5.1. None.

Section 6 : Principles

- 6.1. Research independence and academic freedom shall be protected at ADSM across the full range of academic activity.

- 6.1.1. Members of the academic community shall be free to identify research questions and topics within their approved area of work, study, and expertise.
- 6.1.2. Members of the academic community shall be free to choose and apply appropriate methodologies, analytical approaches, pedagogical approaches, and scholarly frameworks consistent with disciplinary and ethical standards.
- 6.1.3. Members of the academic community shall be free to interpret data, present evidence-based conclusions, and communicate scholarly and professional views honestly and accurately.
- 6.1.4. Academic staff shall be free to teach and discuss material relevant to their disciplines and approved courses, using appropriate academic judgement and in accordance with approved curricula, professional standards, and applicable laws.
- 6.1.5. Academic staff and researchers shall be free to participate in academic debate, supervision, curriculum development, publication, and scholarly communication without improper interference or retaliation.
- 6.1.6. Academic freedom shall apply to the whole of academic activity at ADSM and shall not be limited only to research.
- 6.2. ADSM shall not allow internal or external parties to improperly influence academic or research outcomes.
 - 6.2.1. Improper influence includes pressure arising from personal, political, ideological, commercial, reputational, socio-cultural, or religious interests.
 - 6.2.2. No member of the academic community shall be required to alter, suppress, delay, or misrepresent teaching content, scholarly views, academic discussion, research findings, or publication for reasons unrelated to academic quality, legal compliance, or ethical requirements.
- 6.3. ADSM shall protect members of the academic community from retaliation.
 - 6.3.1. No member of the academic community shall suffer penalty, intimidation, disadvantage, or adverse treatment for conducting lawful and ethical academic activity, expressing reasoned academic views in good faith, reporting findings accurately, or raising concerns under this Policy.
- 6.4. Research independence and academic freedom shall be exercised responsibly.
 - 6.4.1. All academic activity remains subject to applicable UAE laws, approved ethical standards, research integrity requirements, confidentiality obligations, data protection requirements, contractual obligations lawfully accepted by ADSM, and other applicable institutional policies.

- 6.4.2. Ethical review, quality assurance, confidentiality, and legal compliance mechanisms shall not be used as a means to suppress legitimate academic inquiry, evidence-based teaching, scholarly findings.
- 6.4.3. The exercise of academic freedom shall be consistent with professional competence, disciplinary standards, respect for the rights of others, and the responsibilities associated with academic roles at ADSM.
- 6.5. Funding, sponsorship, governance, and external relationships shall not compromise research independence or academic freedom.
 - 6.5.1. Where academic or research activities are funded or supported by external parties, the independence of teaching, inquiry, methodology, analysis, and reporting shall be preserved.
 - 6.5.2. Any lawful limitations related to confidentiality, publication timing, or intellectual property must be transparent, proportionate, formally approved, and must not require false, misleading, or manipulated academic or research reporting.
- 6.6. ADSM shall provide a fair mechanism for the reporting and review of concerns related to interference with research independence or academic freedom.
- 6.7. Academic Deans, Unit Heads, and Research Supervisors shall ensure that researchers within their areas are aware of and comply with this Policy.
- 6.8. The Research Committee shall advise, where appropriate, on matters relating to research independence, academic freedom, and good research practice.
- 6.9. Researchers shall conduct their work in accordance with this Policy and shall report concerns in good faith.

Section 7 : Procedures

- 7.1. A researcher who believes that research independence or academic freedom has been restricted, compromised, or threatened should report the matter promptly.
 - 7.1.1. Concerns may be raised with the Researcher's supervisor, Academic Dean, or the Director of Research, unless one of these parties is implicated in the matter.
- 7.2. Formal concerns shall be submitted in writing to the Director of Research, together with any available supporting information.
 - 7.2.1. Where the concern involves the Director of Research, the matter shall be referred to the President.
 - 7.2.2. Where the concern involves the President, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Committee.



- 7.3. Upon receipt of a concern, the Policy Owner shall arrange for a prompt and fair review.
- 7.3.1. The review may include consultation with the Research Committee, relevant Academic Dean, Ethics Committee, HR, Compliance, or other relevant parties, as appropriate.
- 7.3.2. The review shall consider the nature of the alleged interference, the applicable ethical and legal requirements, the research context, and the evidence provided.
- 7.4. Where necessary, interim measures may be taken to protect the researcher from retaliation or further improper interference while the matter is being reviewed.
- 7.5. If a breach of this Policy is confirmed, ADSM shall take appropriate corrective action.
- 7.5.1. Corrective action may include cessation of improper interference, clarification of responsibilities, revision of internal processes or external arrangements, and referral under applicable disciplinary or governance procedures.
- 7.6. Records of concerns raised and actions taken under this Policy shall be maintained by the Policy Owner in accordance with ADSM recordkeeping requirements.
- 7.7. This Policy shall be made publicly available through ADSM's approved policy publication channels.

Section 8 : Responsibilities

- 8.1. The President shall cause this policy to be implemented.
- 8.2. The Director of Research shall monitor implementation of this Policy and report violations.

Section 9 : Cancellations

- 9.1. None.

Section 10 : Review Statement

- 10.1. ADSM's Policy Committee shall review this Policy at least annually. This Policy may be reviewed more frequently based on a request from the President, Policy Owner or in response to changes in applicable regulations and standards. Reviewed policies shall be recommended and approved in accordance with ADSM's P 110 – Policy on Policies.



Section 11 : Approval

Authorization / Ownership	Signature and Date
Policy Owner: Director of Research	<i>Ishtiaq Khan</i>
Recommended by: Academic Council	Minutes of Meeting on 25/06/2026
Approved by: Executive Committee	Minutes of Meeting on 25/06/2026

Section 12 : Revision History

Revision No.	Effective Date	Description
0	25/06/2026	Policy First Approved

Next scheduled review: 25/06/2027

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