GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
31-SHER SHAH BLOCK, NEW GARDEN TOWN, LAHORE
Dated Lahore the 25th November, 2025

NOTIFICATION

No. SO(SE)2-24/2018/81: The Special Education Department, Government of the Punjab encourages academic and professional engagement in its institutions for research, internships, Pupil teaching and voluntary service. The Department hereby notifies the following ***"Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Academic and Professional Engagements in Special Education Institutions"*** to formalize these engagements and provide clear guidelines for all including District Education Officers (Special Education), Heads of Institutions, researchers, interns, pupil teachers, and volunteers. These SOPs aim to ensure uniformity, ethical compliance, effective coordination and safeguarding of students with disabilities enrolled in Special Education Institutions.

PART–A

DATA COLLECTION FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

1. These SOPs govern engagements of students of public or private universities conducting research that requires interaction with students or staff, or the collection of academic, cognitive, behavioral, occupational, health-related or any other education and rehabilitation data.
2. Permission for data collection shall be granted only upon submission of a detailed research proposal including, the title, objectives, methodology along with undertaking that the relevant ethical standards will be strictly observed and the confidentiality of student information and privacy of the school community shall be strictly maintained.
3. Data collection is permitted only for academic purposes, and findings must be shared with the DGSE office for its utilization for institutional and policy purposes.
4. Participation of students or staff in any research shall be purely voluntary. No form of coercion (whether explicit or implied) is permissible to compel participation in research, surveys, interviews, assessments, or any related activity. Even if institutional permission is granted, students and/or their parents/guardians retain the absolute right to refuse participation in the research, either at the outset or at any stage during the research process.
5. Any procedures involving medical examination or laboratory tests such as blood sampling shall not be preceded under any circumstances; except unless

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approved by the competent health authorities with a valid NOC from the Health Department.

Researchers shall:

i. Adhere to national and international research ethics standards, including the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*, ensuring confidentiality, obtaining informed consent/assent, avoiding harm, and respecting the dignity and rights of persons with special needs.
ii. Use the data solely for the approved purposes and ensure secure handling, restrict access, and safe disposal as per data protection guidelines.
iii. Acknowledge that the Head of Institution may terminate his / her engagement in case of non-compliance with these SOPs or ethical breech.

PART–B

INTERNSHIP, PUPIL TEACHING AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

1. These SOPs regulate the engagement of:

   i. Interns (University students enrolled in any degree program seeking hands-on experience in a special education setting)
   ii. Pupil Teacher (A student of BS/B.Ed., MS/M.Ed. (Special Education) completing mandatory teaching practice requirements).
   iii. Volunteer (An individual rendering voluntary services having minimum qualification of BS, M.A or equivalent in supporting roles within Special Education Institutions. Such voluntary services may include classroom assistance and participation in recreational programs, but shall expressly exclude administrative functions or any tasks involving access to sensitive data.

2. The duration of engagement shall not be less than one month and not exceed three months. Engagements shall be limited to regular academic months, excluding examination periods and scheduled vacations.
3. The working hours and duties of Interns/Pupil Teachers/Volunteers shall be clearly specified in writing and approved by the competent authority depending on the nature of work.
4. The Head of the institution will conduct a mandatory orientation session of Interns/ Pupil Teacher/Volunteers to familiarize them with necessary information including the following:

   i. Ethical standards like ensuring confidentiality, informed consent / assent, school's policies, procedures, reporting progress and seeking assistance from designated supervisors and respect for the rights and dignity of students with disabilities and their specific needs.
   ii. Zero tolerance for exploitation or harm
   iii. Communication channels for reporting concerns or requesting guidance.
   iv. Guidelines for classroom management and behavioral intervention strategies specific to special education settings.

5. Heads of Institutions shall arrange fortnightly feedback sessions to assess the performance and address challenges of Interns/Pupil Teachers/Volunteers.
6. Heads of Institution shall maintain a record of all volunteers, interns and pupil teachers, including personal details, qualification, duration of engagement, assigned responsibilities, and performance reports.
7. Periodic assessments shall be conducted (at least once a month or at the end of engagement) to evaluate their contributions, ensure compliance with institutional policies, and provide constructive feedback.
8. Activity planning and scheduling shall be coordinated with engaged individuals to minimize disruption to students' daily routines.
9. Key findings or contributions from internships, pupil teaching, or voluntary activities shall be shared with the DGSE for institutional and policy purposes.
10. Institutional staff shall not conduct lectures or impart professional training related to formal assessment, teaching practice, or therapy delivery, as these fall under the mandate of the respective universities.

PART–C

GENERAL GUIDELINES/PROVISIONS

1. District Education Officer (Special Education) of the respective division is the competent authority to approve and supervise all engagements, with due intimation to the DGSE.
2. District Education Officers shall maintain liaison with academic institutions and communicate research needs.
3. All engagement requests shall be submitted to the District Education Officer (Special Education) of the respective division. The applications shall be forwarded through the Head of Department and must be duly endorsed by the supervisor on the official letterhead of the university. The purpose of the engagement shall be clearly stated in the reference letter issued by the referring university/college.
4. Safety and security of students shall be ensured through compliance with institutional safety protocols, background checks, supervised interaction and UNCRPD-aligned safeguarding policies.
5. Administration reserves the right to terminate any engagement in case of violation of institutional rules or breach of discipline.
6. Use of smart phones during instructional time and for capturing or sharing any student-related content without explicit authorization is prohibited.
7. Engaged individuals must carry/ display their identity cards and adhere to culturally appropriate attire.
8. Heads of Institutions shall enforce these SOPs in letter and spirit to ensure a respectful and inclusive environment.
9. The DGSE shall annually review these SOPs for alignment with prevailing policies, ethics, and best practices.
10. All engaged individuals shall:

    i. Follow the school's code of conduct and disciplinary standards

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ii. Uphold ethical standards, confidentiality, and informed consent/assent;
iii. Avoid exploitation or harm of any kind;
iv. Secure data handling and its usage only for approved purposes including proper storage and disposal.
v. Handle all data securely, ensuring proper storage and disposal.

SECRETARY
SPECIAL EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT

No. & Date Even:

A copy is forwarded for information & necessary action to: -

1. The District Education Officer (Special Education), Lahore, Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Bahawalpur, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad.
2. PSO to Secretary, Special Education Department Punjab.
3. PA to Director General, Special Education Punjab, Lahore.

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SECTION OFFICER (SE)