



# ہائیر ایجوکیشن کمیشن HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Office of the  
**Consultant / In-Charge**  
Quality Assurance (QAA/QAD)

No. 2-DD/QAD-GEP/HEC/12/ 697  
Dated Monday the October 29, 2024

Subject: **Awareness Campaign for GEP-2023**

My Dear Vice Chancellor/Rector/Head of Institutes,

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) released its Graduate Education Policy (GEP-2023) on July 10, 2023 (effective from Fall 2023), with aim to provide a common framework for disseminating Level 7 and 8 qualifications all across the country. However, it has been noticed that the policy's features are still not well known amongst academics and graduate students, thus necessitating an awareness campaign.

2. The main feature of this well thought policy is to respect the university's autonomy through a principle of flexibility without compromising in quality and global standards. Thus, it provides broader guidelines with MINIMUM standards for regulating doctoral supervision, thus giving freedom to HEIs to set their own standards preferably above the requirement of HEC. The policy aims to gradually reduce the practice of issuing NOCs for graduate programs by the HEC, introducing a classification-based NOC plan that encourages HEIs to attain the highest classification for self-accreditation status.

3. Reflecting upon these principles, here are some salient features introduced in the policy:

- i. HEIs now have the discretion to decide on faculty/supervisor's subject relevance, conduct admission tests, and resolve issues like CGPA, degree duration, and comprehensive exams, while following policy guidelines.
- ii. The framework requires HEIs to formulate their own policies to regulate the process of doctoral supervision and approve PhD supervisors independently; practicing academic ethics and managing grievances, while incorporating the features provided in policy guidelines.

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- iii. The policy adopts a liberal approach by allowing intra-disciplinary admissions for MS/MPhil and PhD programs.
- iv. It provides flexibility with multiple options regarding provisional admissions, credit hour and publication requirements, external evaluation of PhD dissertation, inter-university transfer of credit hours and research, and exit paths.
4. In view of the foregoing, you are kindly requested to take advantage of the policy's liberal approach and make decisions through statutory bodies contextualizing the principles and broader guidelines to the ground situations. Kindly also help us in this campaign by ensuring that faculty, especially the PhD supervisors, all graduate students (M.Phil/PhD), and the relevant administrative staff including the BASR/equivalent bodies, Quality Assurance/Enhancement Cells/Departments, and Officers of the Controller of Examination, and the Registrar have read and understood the policy.
5. After a month or so, the HEC will launch an online survey to assess the awareness and understanding of the policy among the aforementioned stakeholders, linking the results with the annual IQA assessment of the HEIs.

Looking forward to your cooperation and support.

Regards.



*Prof. Dr. Anwar-ul-Hassan Gilani*

**Copy for information to:**

- i. ES to the Chairman, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- ii. ES to Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- iii. PS to All Divisional and Regional Heads of the Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- iv. Office copy

**Note:** The Graduate Education Policy 2023 (GEP-2023) and the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) developed to date can be accessed through the following links:

- i. GEP-2023: <https://tinyurl.com/GEP-2023>
- ii. FAQs on GEP-2023: <https://tinyurl.com/FAQs-GEP-2023>

Date: 15/11/2023