# SRI VENKATESWARAA UNIVERSITY

*(Established under Tamil Nadu Private Universities Act, 2019)*

## SRI VENKATESWARAA UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY, 2026

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY, 2026

### 1. Preamble

Academic Integrity means the commitment to honesty, originality, transparency, accountability and ethical conduct in all academic, teaching, learning, assessment, research and scholarly activities. Academic integrity is fundamental to the credibility of a University. Students, faculty members, and researchers are expected to conduct themselves honestly, responsibly and transparently and to acknowledge the contributions and intellectual property of others.

Sri Venkateswaraa University is committed to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity, intellectual honesty, ethical conduct and responsible scholarship in all its academic, teaching, learning, assessment, research and publication activities.

The University recognises that academic misconduct may take several forms, including plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, impersonation, unauthorised collaboration, manipulation of academic records, unethical authorship, duplicate publication, misuse of artificial intelligence and other practices that compromise the integrity of academic work.

This Policy establishes a University-wide framework for promoting academic integrity, preventing academic misconduct, investigating allegations and ensuring fair and proportionate action where misconduct is established.

The Policy is framed with due regard to applicable UGC Regulations and other statutory, professional and regulatory requirements. The UGC's 2018 regulations define academic integrity in terms of intellectual honesty in proposing, performing and reporting activities leading to creation of intellectual property and specifically provide for institutional mechanisms to deal with plagiarism.

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## 2. Short Title

This Policy shall be called, "Sri Venkateswaraa University Academic Integrity Policy, 2026."

It may be referred to as the SVU Academic Integrity Policy, 2026 or SVU-AIP 2026.

## 3. Scope

This Policy shall apply to:

1. All undergraduate, postgraduate students, doctoral scholars, and postdoctoral researchers, faculty members, academic and research staff of the University and its constituent institutions;
2. Visiting, adjunct, guest and temporary faculty, where applicable;
3. Any academic work submitted to or produced under the University's authority.

The Policy shall apply to academic activities conducted physically, digitally, online or through any other mode.

## 4. Objectives

The main objective of this Policy is to promote a culture of academic honesty, intellectual integrity, establish clear standards of academic conduct and strengthen the academic credibility and reputation of SVU.

Besides it also aimed to prevent plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, promote responsible conduct of research, protect the intellectual contributions and rights of students, faculty and researchers, establish transparent procedures for reporting and investigating alleged misconduct;

Other objectives include to ensure natural justice and confidentiality in proceedings, provide proportionate corrective and disciplinary measures, and promote responsible use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies;



## 5. Fundamental Principles

All academic activities of the University shall be guided by honesty, integrity, originality, fairness, transparency, professional responsibility and accountability, respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, academic freedom, objectivity, and respect for human dignity

Academic integrity shall be promoted primarily through education, awareness and prevention, and disciplinary action shall be taken where misconduct is established.

## 6. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct means any act or omission that violates the principles of academic integrity or gives an individual an unfair academic or scholarly advantage.

Academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

### 6.1 Plagiarism

Presenting another person's words, ideas, data, figures, images, methodology or intellectual contribution as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement. The UGC defines plagiarism as taking someone else's work or idea and passing it off as one's own.

### 6.2 Self-Plagiarism

Reusing one's own previously submitted or published work without appropriate disclosure or acknowledgement where such reuse is not permitted.

### 6.3 Fabrication

Making up data, observations, results, references, participants, experiments or other information and presenting them as genuine.

### 6.4 Falsification

Manipulating, altering, omitting or misrepresenting data, methods, results, images, records or other research material so that the research is inaccurately represented.

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UGC academic research guidance recognises fabrication, falsification and plagiarism as core forms of research misconduct.

### 6.5 Cheating

Using unauthorised assistance, materials, devices, information or communication during an examination, test, assignment or other academic assessment.

### 6.6 Impersonation

Impersonating another student or allowing another person to impersonate oneself in an academic or assessment activity.

### 6.7 Unauthorised Collaboration

Collaborating with others when individual work is required, or submitting collaborative work as one's individual work without permission.

### 6.8 Contract Cheating

Obtaining academic work from another person, commercial service, website, agency or other third party and submitting it as one's own.

### 6.9 Misrepresentation

Providing false, misleading or fabricated information concerning qualifications, academic achievements, attendance, research activities, publications or other academic matters.

### 6.10 Manipulation of Academic Records

Unauthorised alteration, destruction, fabrication or manipulation of attendance records, marks, certificates, research data or other academic documents.

### 6.11 Unethical Authorship

Including individuals, who have not made a substantial contribution as authors, excluding legitimate contributors, inappropriate alteration of authorship, gift authorship, ghost authorship or other unethical authorship practices.

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### 6.12 Duplicate or Redundant Publication

Publishing substantially overlapping academic or research work without appropriate disclosure.

### 6.13 Citation Manipulation

Manipulating citations, including excessive self-citation, coercive citation, irrelevant citation or artificial citation practices intended to influence academic metrics.

### 6.14 Manipulation of Images or Data

Improper alteration, enhancement, deletion or selective presentation of research images, clinical photographs, radiographs, graphs, figures or datasets in a manner that misrepresents the underlying evidence.

### 6.15 Misuse of Artificial Intelligence

Unauthorised or inappropriate use of generative AI or other automated systems where such use:

- is prohibited by the assessment or research requirements;
- misrepresents AI-generated work as entirely one's own where disclosure is required;
- generates or fabricates references, data or results;
- compromises confidentiality or personal information;
- violates copyright or intellectual property;
- is used to circumvent assessment requirements.

Use of AI shall not, by itself, be considered academic misconduct. The determination shall depend upon the nature of the assignment, applicable instructions, disclosure requirements and manner of use.

## 7. Responsibilities of the University

Sri Venkateswaraa University shall promote a culture of academic integrity across the University through appropriate orientation, awareness and training programmes for students, faculty members, and researchers atleast once in a year. The University shall provide clear



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and accessible guidelines on academic integrity and responsible academic conduct and shall facilitate access to appropriate plagiarism and similarity checking tools for the prevention and identification of academic misconduct.

The University shall establish and maintain appropriate Academic Integrity Panels and related mechanisms for the effective implementation of this Policy. It shall maintain proper and confidential records relating to academic integrity matters and provide accessible mechanisms for reporting suspected academic misconduct and acknowledge complaints within seven working days of receipt. All reported cases shall be dealt with through fair, transparent and impartial procedures, consistent with the principles of natural justice.

The University shall protect the confidentiality of complaints, proceedings and records to the extent reasonably possible, while providing the concerned individuals with an appropriate opportunity to present their case and exercise their right of appeal in accordance with the applicable University regulations.

The University shall periodically review and update this Policy at least once every two years or as required by applicable statutory, regulatory and academic standards, to ensure its continued effectiveness and alignment with applicable statutory, regulatory and academic standards.

## 8. Academic Integrity Awareness

The University shall create awareness among students, faculty members, researchers and other academic personnel regarding the principles, standards and requirements of academic integrity. The University and its constituent institutions shall organise appropriate student induction and orientation programmes, research integrity workshops, training programmes on referencing and citation practices, plagiarism-awareness programmes, research ethics programmes, responsible use of artificial intelligence and other emerging digital technologies, and faculty development programmes relating to academic integrity. Academic integrity principles shall, wherever appropriate, be incorporated into relevant academic activities and courses, including research methodology, professional ethics, dissertation and thesis preparation, scientific writing and related areas, so as to foster a culture of honesty, originality, responsible scholarship and ethical academic practice throughout the University.

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## 9. Institutional Academic Integrity Panel

The University shall constitute a University Academic Integrity Panel (UAIP) as a statutory institutional body under this Policy, with the approval of the competent authority, to oversee the implementation of academic integrity provisions and examine matters relating to academic misconduct.

**Composition**

1. Pro Vice-Chancellor – Chairperson
2. Dean – Academic Affairs – Member
3. Dean – Research – Member
4. Controller of Examinations – Member
5. Director – IQAC – Member
6. University Librarian – Member
7. One Senior Professor from each major academic/constituent institution, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor – Member(s)
8. One External Academic Expert in Academic Integrity/Research Ethics – Member
9. Legal Officer/Legal Advisor– Member, where required
10. Registrar – Member Secretary

The University may constitute additional members or invite subject experts depending on the nature of the matter under consideration.

The tenure of nominated members shall ordinarily be three years, unless otherwise specified by the competent authority. A member may be re-nominated. The UAIP shall function in accordance with the provisions of this Policy, applicable University Statutes, Regulations, Ordinances and other relevant guidelines. The UAIP shall submit its recommendations to the competent authority for appropriate action, wherever required.

## 10.. Functions of the Academic Integrity Panel

The UAIP shall:

1. Develop and periodically review academic-integrity standards;
2. Advise the University on prevention of academic misconduct;

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3. Examine reports received from Departments/Institutions;
4. Consider serious or complex cases of alleged academic misconduct;
5. Constitute Inquiry Committees where necessary;
6. Recommend appropriate corrective or disciplinary action;
7. Monitor implementation of academic-integrity procedures;
8. Maintain a confidential register of cases;
9. Recommend training and preventive measures;
10. Advise on responsible use of AI and digital technologies;
11. Coordinate with relevant statutory/academic bodies wherever necessary.

## 11. Departmental/Institutional Academic Integrity Mechanism

Each constituent institution/department shall designate an Academic Integrity Coordinator responsible for implementing the University's academic integrity guidelines, promoting awareness, and facilitating the reporting and handling of academic misconduct.

Where required, the University shall constitute a Departmental Academic Integrity Panel (DAIP).

A DAIP may consist of Head of the Department as Chairperson, a Senior Academician from another Department/Institution and a Faculty member familiar with plagiarism/similarity-detection systems as members.

## 12. Plagiarism and Similarity Checking

Academic and research documents shall be subjected to similarity checking or text matching, wherever required by University regulations or academic practice.

Similarity reports shall be interpreted by a qualified academic, and the similarity percentage shall not by itself be treated as conclusive proof of plagiarism.

Appropriate exclusions may include, properly quoted material, references/bibliography, table of contents, acknowledgements, standard terminology, common knowledge and standard equations and symbols.

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The UGC framework specifically identifies such categories for exclusion when calculating similarity.

## 13. Levels of Plagiarism

For academic and research submissions where the UGC plagiarism framework applies, the University shall follow the applicable similarity thresholds, classification and consequences prescribed under the relevant UGC regulations.

The UGC 2018 framework provides the following similarity levels:

| Level | Similarity |
|---|---|
| Level 0 | Up to 10% |
| Level 1 | Above 10%–40% |
| Level 2 | Above 40%–60% |
| Level 3 | Above 60% |

These thresholds appear in the UGC's published regulations.

However, similarity percentage shall not be treated as the sole determinant of plagiarism. Intent, nature of material, source attribution, extent of copying, academic level, recurrence and other circumstances shall be considered.

Where subsequent UGC regulations prescribe different thresholds or procedures, the latest applicable statutory/regulatory requirements shall prevail.

## 14. Detection and Reporting

Any member of the University community who has reasonable grounds and supporting evidence to suspect academic misconduct may submit a written complaint to the Head of Department, head of Institution, or University Academic Integrity Panel. Complaints shall be acknowledged by the receiving authority within 5 working days of receipt and forwarded to the competent authority for preliminary scrutiny within 3 working days thereafter.

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The University may also initiate *suo moto* proceedings where credible evidence comes to its notice. The identity of the complainant shall be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where accompanied by credible, specific and verifiable evidence.

**15. Preliminary Scrutiny**

The Head of the Department, Head of the Institution, or other designated authority shall conduct a preliminary scrutiny of the complaint within 10 working days of its receipt.

On receipt of a complaint, the designated authority shall undertake a preliminary assessment to determine:

1. Whether the matter falls within the scope of this Policy;
2. Whether there is prima facie evidence;
3. Whether the matter should be dealt with departmentally;
4. Whether it should be referred directly to the UAIP;

Frivolous, malicious or unsupported complaints need not proceed to a formal inquiry.

**16. Inquiry Committee**

For serious or disputed cases, the UAIP may constitute an Inquiry Committee within 7 working days of the decision to proceed.

The Committee shall ordinarily comprise:

1. A senior academician – Chairperson;
2. A subject expert in the relevant academic discipline – Member;
3. An academician experienced in academic integrity/research ethics– Member.

Where appropriate, an external expert may be included. No person having a conflict of interest shall serve on the Inquiry Committee.

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## 17. Principles of Natural Justice

All proceedings under this Policy shall follow the principles of natural justice fairness, impartiality, and confidentiality, including:

1. The person against whom an allegation is made shall be informed of the substance of the allegation;
2. Relevant evidence shall be made available to the extent appropriate;
3. The person shall be given reasonable opportunity to submit an explanation;
4. The person shall be given reasonable opportunity to present relevant evidence;
5. The decision shall be based on evidence;
6. The decision-making process shall be impartial;
7. Reasons shall be recorded for findings and recommendations.

## 18. Standard of Determination

A finding of academic misconduct shall be based on credible, relevant, and sufficient evidence assessed on the balance of probabilities, subject to applicable University regulations and statutory requirements. The Inquiry Committee shall distinguish between:

- Similarity and plagiarism;
- Error and deliberate misconduct;
- Poor academic practice and intentional deception;
- Genuine mistakes and fabrication/falsification;
- Permitted and prohibited use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The burden shall be on the allegation to be supported by evidence, while the concerned individual shall have a fair opportunity to respond.

## 19. Report of the Inquiry Committee

The Inquiry Committee shall submit a written report containing background and particulars of the case, Nature of the allegation(s), evidence considered Evidence and documents examined, explanation and submissions of the respondent, summary of hearings or clarifications, wherever conducted; analysis and assessment of evidence; findings on each



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allegation, reasons supporting the findings, whether academic misconduct is established, nature and severity/category of misconduct, and recommended corrective, academic, or disciplinary action, any other relevant observations or recommendations.

The report shall be submitted to the UAIP or competent authority within 10 working days of the date of receipt as prescribed by the University,

**20. Corrective and Disciplinary Measures**

Where academic misconduct is established, the University may impose one or more proportionate measures, depending on the nature and severity of the violation:

For faculty members the corrective actions include written warning, mandatory academic-integrity training, correction or withdrawal of affected academic work, retraction/correction of publications where appropriate, withdrawal of academic privileges, temporary restriction on supervision, suspension of specified academic responsibilities, disciplinary proceedings under applicable University service rules, other action permitted under applicable regulations.

For students the corrective measures include counselling/advisory instruction, mandatory academic-integrity training, warning, resubmission/revision, reassessment, cancellation or withdrawal of the assessment and academic credit. He/she may be suspended from an academic activity.

No penalty shall be imposed without following due process.

**21. Research Misconduct**

Research misconduct includes, but is not limited to fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, manipulation of research images/data, unethical research practices, unauthorised use of confidential research material, improper authorship, manipulation of peer review, misrepresentation of research findings, failure to disclose relevant conflicts of interest and deliberate destruction or concealment of research records.

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Research involving human participants, animals or sensitive data shall additionally comply with the applicable Institutional Ethics Committee, regulatory authority and statutory requirements.

The Academic Integrity Panel shall not replace or duplicate the functions of an Ethics Committee.

## 22. Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

The University recognises the legitimate educational and research applications of artificial intelligence. Students, faculty and researchers may use AI tools where permitted, provided that:

1. Their use complies with the requirements of the assignment or research activity;
2. AI-generated content is not knowingly presented as independently produced work where disclosure is required;
3. AI is not used to fabricate data, references, citations or research findings;
4. Confidential, personal or sensitive information is not entered into AI systems without appropriate authorisation;
5. Intellectual property and copyright are respected;
6. The human author/researcher retains responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the submitted work.

Individual courses, examinations, assignments and research activities may specify whether and how AI tools may be used.

## 23. Academic Integrity in Assessment

The University shall establish and maintain appropriate procedures to safeguard the integrity of assessments and to prevent the submission of another person's work, cheating, and unauthorised access to assessment materials, impersonation, and manipulation or falsification of marks and other assessment records.



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Examination malpractice shall ordinarily be dealt with under the University's Examination Regulations/Examination Malpractice Committee, while matters having broader academic-integrity implications may also be referred to the UAIP.

**24. Authorship and Publication Integrity**

All University-affiliated publications shall follow accepted principles of responsible authorship.

Authors shall make genuine intellectual contributions, approve the final manuscript, take responsibility for their contributions, disclose relevant conflicts of interest, properly acknowledge contributors, avoid gift, honorary and ghost authorship, avoid duplicate publication and correct significant errors after publication where necessary.

Where misconduct concerns a published paper, the University may communicate with the relevant journal, publisher or institution, as appropriate.

**25. Confidentiality**

All complaints, evidence, inquiry proceedings and reports shall be treated as confidential.

Information shall be disclosed only to persons who require it for legitimate institutional, legal, regulatory or academic purposes. The confidentiality obligation shall continue after disposal of the case.

**26. Conflict of Interest**

Any member of a Panel or Inquiry Committee who has a personal, professional, academic, and financial or other conflict of interest shall disclose it and recuse themselves from the proceedings. The University may appoint a replacement member where necessary.

**27. Appeal**

A person aggrieved by a decision under this Policy shall have the right to appeal to the designated Appellate Authority within **30 days** of receipt of the decision.

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The Appellate Authority shall be constituted by the University and shall ordinarily comprise senior University authorities not involved in the original decision.

The appeal shall be considered on grounds such as procedural irregularity, new and material evidence, disproportionate penalty, failure to observe natural justice, or error in application of the applicable rules.

The decision of the Appellate Authority shall be final within the University, subject to applicable statutory and legal remedies.

**28. Malicious or Frivolous Complaints**

A complaint shall not be considered malicious merely because the allegation is not established.

However, where it is established that a complaint was deliberately fabricated or maliciously made with the intention of causing harm, the University may take appropriate action against the complainant in accordance with applicable rules.

**29. Record Keeping**

The University shall maintain a confidential record of complaints received, similarity reports, inquiry proceedings and supporting evidence, findings, recommendations, and final decisions, corrective/disciplinary actions taken, appeals. Records shall be maintained securely for the period prescribed by the University or applicable regulations.

The University Academic Integrity Panel (UAIP) shall submit an Annual Academic Integrity report to the University.

The report may include number of academic integrity awareness programmes conducted, number of students/faculty number of similarity checks done, number of thesis, dissertations, manuscripts, and project reports checked; number and nature of complaints, number of cases investigated, categories of misconduct, corrective measures done, details of appeals, and preventive measures undertaken.

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Personal identities and confidential case details shall not be disclosed in the public version of the report.

## 30. Monitoring and Review

The University shall periodically review the effectiveness of this Policy.

The Policy shall be reviewed at least once every **three years**, or earlier if required by:

- Amendments to UGC regulations;
- Government notifications and statutory requirements;
- Directions and guidelines issued by Professional and research regulatory bodies;
- Changes in technology;
- Changes in academic practices;
- Recommendations arising from implementation.

The current UGC regulations portal should be monitored for subsequent amendments or new requirements.

## 31. Relationship with Other University Policies

This Policy shall operate in coordination with, but shall not ordinarily replace:

- SVU Research Policy;
- SVU Publication Policy;
- Research Ethics Policy;
- Examination Regulations;
- Student Discipline Regulations;
- Student Grievance Redressal mechanisms;
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment/ICC regulations;
- Intellectual Property Rights Policy;
- Data Protection/Privacy Policy;
- Service Rules;
- Professional regulatory requirements.

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Where a matter falls primarily under another statutory or University mechanism, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate authority.

**32. Overriding Effect of Statutory Regulations**

Where any provision of this Policy is inconsistent with a binding provision of an Act, Government notification, UGC regulation, statutory regulatory authority or court order, the applicable statutory or regulatory provision shall prevail.

The University shall amend this Policy as necessary to maintain regulatory compliance.

The University may amend, modify, add to or repeal any provision of this Policy in accordance with the University's academic governance procedures.

Major amendments shall ordinarily be placed before the appropriate academic authority of the University for approval.

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# ANNEXURE I

**Suggested Reporting Flow**

Allegation/Complaint

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Preliminary Scrutiny

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Department/Institutional Academic Integrity Coordinator

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DAIP, where applicable

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University Academic Integrity Panel

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Inquiry Committee, where required

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Report & Findings

↓

UAIP Recommendation

↓

Competent Authority

↓

Decision

↓

Appeal, where applicable

