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## Research Integrity Risk Index as a Tool to Improve Quality of Research in Higher Education Institutions

Rabinder Henry\* and Rajan Welukar\*\*

Research Integrity Risk Index (RI<sup>2</sup>) is a composite index that has been developed by Lokman I. Meho of the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. It is intended to assess institutional research integrity and the associated risk rather than research productivity or prestige. The two measurable parameters considered through this study are journal paper retraction risk and delisted journal risk. The universities are listed and ranked according to the combination of these risk parameters. They are ranked from risk-free (white flag) to high risk (red flag). It is an individual work that does not include AUB in the analysis or ranking. It is not a critical report but rather a guide to distinguish journals based on international standards.

The Research Integrity Risk Index (RI<sup>2</sup>) uses a composite score based on two measurable indicators. The retraction risk is the measure of the number of retracted articles per thousand articles. This has been measured for a window of 2 years. The delisted journal risk measures the share of publications that have been published in journals that have been removed from Scopus or Web of Science. The one-year window for the delisted journals has been considered in the analysis. Each university's risk in both dimensions is normalised, averaged, and then converted into a score between zero and one. Institutions are ranked and categorised into five risk tiers. They are Low Risk, Normal, Watch List, High Risk, and Red Flag. The methodology focuses on systemic patterns rather than individual misconduct, aiming to flag institutional vulnerabilities in research integrity.

### Strengths and Limitations of RI<sup>2</sup>

The main strength of the analysis is that it focuses on 'Research Integrity'. This silently stresses the need for the shift towards quality rather than quantity. It raises an ethical risk signal with respect to the quality of research. The index reflects the structural vulnerabilities in academic practices based on the retractions and publications in the delisted journals. Transparency is another important aspect of the index. Since it uses data from freely available and verifiable public data sources, it minimizes the risk of manipulation in the study. The data has been obtained from Scopus, Web of Science and Retraction Watch. The RI<sup>2</sup> analysis and the index has been consistently accepted and recognised in recent times. Scientific and Academic observers, publishers including Nature, Times Higher Education Leadership, Springer have started referring to the integrity risk index as valuable

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