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## CONFERENCE COLLABORATION PROGRAMME

### *Collaboration Agreement*

Academic Memorandum of Understanding

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The Criterion: An International Journal in English | Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

This Collaboration Agreement is entered into between:

**Party A (the Journal):** Research Centre for English Language and Literature (RCELL), publisher of [*insert: The Criterion / Galaxy*], hereinafter referred to as "the Journal".

**Party B (the Organiser):** [*insert: full name of organising institution or body*], hereinafter referred to as "the Organiser".

**In respect of:** [*insert: full conference name*], hereinafter referred to as "the Conference".

Agreement Reference Number: [*for editorial office use*]

Date of Agreement: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Recitals.**

WHEREAS the Journal is a peer-reviewed open-access academic journal published by the Research Centre for English Language and Literature (RCELL), India, and is committed to the highest standards of editorial independence, scholarly integrity, and ethical publishing practice;

WHEREAS the Organiser is an academic institution, department, research centre, or scholarly society that proposes to convene the Conference as a scholarly academic event;

WHEREAS the Journal has evaluated the Organiser's collaboration proposal and determined that the Conference meets the criteria for participation in the RCELL Conference Collaboration Programme;

WHEREAS both parties wish to establish a formal framework governing their collaboration, including the production of a curated special issue of the Journal arising from scholarly work presented at the Conference;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual commitments set out herein, the parties agree as follows.

## 1. Definitions

In this Agreement, the following terms have the meanings assigned below. Where a term appears in quotation marks and initial capitals in this Agreement, it carries the meaning defined here.

Term	Definition
<b>"Agreement"</b>	This Collaboration Agreement, including all Schedules attached hereto.
<b>"Conference"</b>	The academic conference identified in the header of this Agreement, as further detailed in Schedule 1.
<b>"Special Issue"</b>	The themed issue of the Journal to be produced under the terms of this Agreement, comprising manuscripts arising from scholarly work presented at the Conference and accepted for publication following full peer review.
<b>"Invited Author"</b>	A conference presenter formally invited by the Journal or, under instruction from the Journal, by the Guest Editor, to submit an Extended Paper for consideration for the Special Issue.
<b>"Extended Paper"</b>	A manuscript submitted by an Invited Author that meets the standards defined in the RCELL Extended Paper Requirements document, which forms part of the Programme Documents.
<b>"Guest Editor"</b>	An academic appointed by the Journal, following nomination by the Organiser, to fulfil the advisory role defined in the Guest Editor Guidelines.
<b>"Editor-in-Chief"</b>	The Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, who holds final and binding decision authority on all editorial matters.
<b>"Programme Documents"</b>	The suite of governing documents of the RCELL Conference Collaboration Programme, including: the Guest Editor Guidelines, the Special Issue Review Protocol, the Extended Paper Requirements, and the Manuscript Submission Standards. These documents are incorporated into this Agreement by reference.
<b>"Publication Ethics Framework"</b>	The RCELL Publication Ethics and Peer Review Framework, aligned with COPE guidelines, which governs the ethical conduct of all parties involved in the Special Issue process.
<b>"Acceptance"</b>	A formal written confirmation from the Editor-in-Chief that a manuscript has been accepted for publication in the Special

	Issue. Acceptance is not granted until this formal confirmation is issued.
<b>"Scholarly Curator Model"</b>	The model of conference-journal collaboration in which the Journal acts as an independent scholarly curator of research arising from the Conference, rather than as a publisher of conference proceedings. Conference participation does not imply or entitle publication.

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## 2. Nature and Purpose of the Collaboration

### 2.1 Scholarly Curator Model

This Agreement establishes a collaboration between the Journal and the Organiser on the basis of the Scholarly Curator Model. The Journal is not, under this Agreement or at any stage of the collaboration, a provider of conference publication services. The Special Issue is an independent scholarly publication of the Journal, produced through the Journal's standard editorial and peer review processes.

### 2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this collaboration is to extend and develop scholarly research presented at the Conference into a curated, peer-reviewed Special Issue that makes a lasting contribution to the relevant field of academic inquiry. The collaboration is not intended to publish conference proceedings, to guarantee publication to conference participants, or to serve as a continuation of the conference programme.

### 2.3 Independence of the Conference

The Conference is organised and conducted independently by the Organiser. The Journal has no role in the organisation, management, or academic programme of the Conference beyond the specific responsibilities set out in this Agreement. The Journal's involvement commences at the point of invitation to selected presenters and concludes upon publication of the Special Issue.

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## 3. Editorial Independence

### 3.1 Absolute Editorial Authority

The Editor-in-Chief of the Journal holds final and binding authority over all editorial decisions relating to the Special Issue. This authority is not shared with, delegated to, or subject to override by the Organiser, the Guest Editor, the conference organising committee, or any other party. No provision of this Agreement shall be construed as limiting or qualifying this authority.

### 3.2 Acceptance Decisions

The decision to accept, request revision of, or reject any manuscript submitted to the Special Issue rests exclusively with the Editor-in-Chief, informed by the reports of independent peer reviewers. Neither the Organiser nor the Guest Editor may influence, direct, or seek to influence any acceptance decision.

### 3.3 No Obligation to Publish

This Agreement does not constitute a commitment by the Journal to publish any particular manuscript, or any particular number of manuscripts, or a Special Issue of any particular size. The Journal is obliged only to conduct a fair, rigorous, and timely peer review process for all eligible submissions received by the agreed submission deadline.

*The Journal's obligation under this Agreement is to conduct a rigorous and independent peer review process — not to produce a publication of a given size. If the number of manuscripts meeting publication standards is smaller than anticipated, the Journal will manage the outcome transparently and in good faith, as provided in Clause 8.*

### 3.4 No Influence on Review Assignments

The Organiser shall have no role in the selection or assignment of peer reviewers. Reviewer identities shall not be disclosed to the Organiser or to the Guest Editor at any stage. The Organiser shall not contact, solicit, or attempt to influence any peer reviewer in connection with any submission to the Special Issue.

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## 4. Obligations of the Organiser

### 4.1 Conference Conduct

The Organiser shall organise and conduct the Conference as a genuine academic event with a clearly stated scholarly purpose. The Organiser shall maintain the academic standards and governance arrangements described in the collaboration proposal submitted to the Journal.

### 4.2 Communication with Conference Participants

The Organiser shall not, at any point or in any medium, communicate or imply to conference participants, invited authors, or any other party that participation in the Conference, receipt of an invitation to submit, or submission of a manuscript constitutes or entitles a guarantee of publication in the Special Issue or in any publication of the Journal.

*Any communication to conference participants regarding the journal collaboration must state explicitly that submitted papers are subject to full independent peer review and that acceptance is not guaranteed. Draft communications intended for participants should be shared with the Journal's editorial office for review before dissemination, unless the Journal confirms in writing that pre-approval is not required.*

### 4.3 Use of Journal Branding

The Organiser may refer to the journal collaboration in conference communications using the following approved formulation or its equivalent: "Selected papers from this conference may be invited for submission to [Journal Name], subject to full independent peer review." The Organiser shall not use the Journal's name, logo, or branding in a manner that implies endorsement of the Conference, guaranteed publication, or a commercial service relationship. Any use of Journal branding beyond the approved formulation requires prior written consent from the editorial office.

#### **4.4 Nomination and Support of Guest Editor**

The Organiser shall nominate a Guest Editor meeting the eligibility criteria defined in the Guest Editor Guidelines and shall provide reasonable support to the Guest Editor in the discharge of the advisory responsibilities defined in that document. The Organiser shall not direct, instruct, or seek to influence the Guest Editor in the exercise of their editorial advisory function.

#### **4.5 Supporting Documentation**

The Organiser shall provide the Journal's editorial office with such documentation as is reasonably requested to facilitate the Special Issue process, including: a final list of conference presentations, confirmation of invited authors, and any other information relevant to the management of the submission and review process.

#### **4.6 Ethical Compliance**

The Organiser shall conduct all activities related to this collaboration in accordance with the Publication Ethics Framework and with COPE guidelines. The Organiser shall promptly disclose to the editorial office any matter arising during the collaboration that may have ethical implications for the Special Issue or for the Journal.

#### **4.7 No Article Processing Charges**

The Organiser shall not impose, collect, or represent to authors that any article processing charge, submission fee, publication fee, or other financial levy is payable in connection with submission to or publication in the Special Issue. Authors are not charged for publication in RCELL journals. Any representation to the contrary constitutes a material breach of this Agreement.

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## **5. Obligations of the Journal**

### **5.1 Editorial Process**

The Journal shall conduct the peer review and editorial process for the Special Issue in accordance with the Special Issue Review Protocol and the Publication Ethics Framework. All eligible manuscripts received by the agreed submission deadline shall be assessed through the Journal's standard double-blind peer review process.

### **5.2 Communication**

The Journal shall communicate editorial decisions to authors in a timely manner and shall keep the Guest Editor informed of the overall progress of the Special Issue at reasonable intervals. The Journal shall acknowledge receipt of the collaboration proposal, confirm the approval of the collaboration, and notify the Organiser of the publication of the Special Issue upon its completion.

### **5.3 Guest Editor Appointment**

The Journal shall assess the Organiser's Guest Editor nomination in a timely manner and shall notify the Organiser of its decision. Where a nomination is declined, the Journal shall communicate the basis for its decision and shall invite an alternative nomination. The Journal shall issue a formal appointment letter to approved Guest Editors and provide them with the Guest Editor Guidelines and other relevant Programme Documents.

### **5.4 Publication**

Where a sufficient number of manuscripts have been accepted to constitute a Special Issue, the Journal shall publish the Special Issue within the timeline agreed in Schedule 1, subject to the completion of copy-editing, proofing, and production processes. Each published article shall be assigned a DOI and shall be made available on an open-access basis under the Journal's standard Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. Publication timelines remain subject to normal editorial and production contingencies.

### **5.5 Attribution**

The Journal shall acknowledge the Guest Editor(s) of the Special Issue in the published issue and in the associated issue metadata. The Journal shall acknowledge the conference collaboration in the published issue in a form to be agreed with the Organiser prior to publication. Such acknowledgement shall not constitute endorsement of the Conference and shall not imply any guarantee of publication was made.

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## **6. The Guest Editor**

### **6.1 Appointment and Role**

The Guest Editor is appointed by the Journal following nomination by the Organiser and is subject to the terms of the Guest Editor Guidelines in their entirety. The Guest Editor's role is advisory. The Guest Editor does not hold editorial decision authority and may not accept, reject, or provisionally commit to publishing any manuscript.

### **6.2 Relationship to This Agreement**

The Guest Editor is not a party to this Agreement. The Guest Editor's obligations are governed by the Guest Editor Guidelines, which the Guest Editor acknowledges and accepts separately as a condition of appointment. The Organiser shall ensure that the nominated Guest Editor is made aware of and agrees to the Guest Editor Guidelines before the nomination is submitted to the Journal.

### **6.3 Conflict of Interest**

The Organiser shall ensure that nominated Guest Editors have no undisclosed conflict of interest with anticipated submitting authors. Any conflict of interest identified after appointment shall be disclosed to the Journal immediately. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in the withdrawal of the Guest Editor appointment and, where the conflict has affected the integrity of the review process, in the suspension of the collaboration.

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## **7. Authors and Manuscripts**

### **7.1 Invitation Process**

The Journal, or the Guest Editor acting under instruction from the Journal using a Journal-approved invitation template, shall invite selected conference presenters to submit Extended Papers for consideration. An invitation to submit is not a commitment to publish. All invited authors shall be clearly informed of this at the point of invitation.

### **7.2 Author Responsibilities**

Invited authors are responsible for ensuring that their manuscripts comply with the Extended Paper Requirements and the Manuscript Submission Standards. Authors shall declare any prior publication of the conference paper, any concurrent submission elsewhere, and any conflicts of interest at the point of submission. The Organiser shall ensure that invited authors are directed to the relevant Programme Documents before submitting.

### **7.3 Copyright and Licensing**

Authors of manuscripts accepted for publication in the Special Issue retain copyright in their work. Upon acceptance, authors grant the Journal a licence to publish, distribute, and archive the article under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence, consistent with the Journal's open-access publication model. The Organiser shall not make any representation to authors regarding copyright or licensing arrangements that is inconsistent with this clause.

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## **8. Insufficient Submissions or Acceptances**

Where the number of manuscripts submitted or accepted for the Special Issue is insufficient to constitute a standalone special issue, the parties shall consult in good faith on the most appropriate course of action. Options available to the Journal include, at the Journal's discretion:

- Publishing the accepted manuscripts as a themed cluster within a forthcoming regular issue of the Journal.
- Extending the invitation to submit to additional conference presenters not included in the initial invitation, subject to a revised submission deadline.
- Postponing the Special Issue pending additional submissions, where the timeline permits.

- Concluding the collaboration without a Special Issue publication, where none of the above options is practicable.

The decision on which option to pursue rests with the Editor-in-Chief. The Organiser shall cooperate reasonably with any course of action chosen. The occurrence of this situation shall not constitute a breach of this Agreement by either party.

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## 9. Ethical Breaches and Termination

### 9.1 Grounds for Suspension or Termination

The Journal reserves the right to suspend or terminate this Agreement with immediate effect in the event of any of the following:

- The Organiser communicates or implies a guarantee of publication to conference participants in breach of Clause 4.2.
- The Organiser imposes or represents that article processing charges or other fees are payable in breach of Clause 4.7.
- The Organiser uses the Journal's name or branding in a manner not permitted under Clause 4.3.
- Confirmed research misconduct — including plagiarism, data fabrication, or undisclosed duplicate submission — is identified in connection with the Special Issue in circumstances where the Organiser's conduct contributed to or failed to prevent the misconduct.
- The Organiser materially misrepresented any aspect of the Conference or the collaboration in the proposal submitted to the Journal.
- The Organiser fails to cooperate with the editorial office in the management of the Special Issue process to a degree that materially impairs the Journal's ability to fulfil its obligations under this Agreement.

### 9.2 Consequences of Termination

Where this Agreement is terminated under Clause 9.1, manuscripts already under peer review may continue through the review process at the Journal's discretion, and accepted manuscripts may be published in a regular issue of the Journal rather than in a Special Issue. The Journal shall not be obliged to publish any manuscript, or to produce a Special Issue, following termination of this Agreement.

### 9.3 Termination by Mutual Agreement

This Agreement may be terminated by mutual written agreement of the parties at any time. Where termination occurs by mutual agreement after manuscripts have been submitted, the parties shall agree in writing on the treatment of submissions already under review.

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## 10. Confidentiality

The Organiser shall maintain the confidentiality of all information relating to the peer review process, including reviewer identities, the content of reviewer reports, editorial deliberations, and individual manuscript decisions. This obligation survives the termination of this Agreement.

The Journal shall treat information provided by the Organiser in the course of the collaboration proposal and the Special Issue process with reasonable confidentiality, save where disclosure is required by applicable law, by the Journal's ethical obligations, or where information is already in the public domain.

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## **11. Financial Arrangements**

This Agreement does not involve any financial payment between the parties. The Journal does not receive payment from the Organiser for the production of the Special Issue, and the Organiser does not receive payment from the Journal for facilitating the submission process. Guest Editors are not remunerated for their advisory role. Authors are not charged for submission or publication.

This collaboration is established on the basis of shared scholarly purpose and mutual benefit to the academic community, consistent with the Journal's open-access and non-commercial publishing model.

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## **12. Governing Documents and Order of Precedence**

This Agreement is to be read in conjunction with the Programme Documents, which are incorporated by reference. In the event of any inconsistency between this Agreement and a Programme Document, this Agreement shall take precedence. The Programme Documents take precedence over any communication, representation, or informal understanding between the parties not recorded in writing.

The Programme Documents in force at the date of this Agreement are as follows:

- Guest Editor Guidelines
  - Special Issue Review Protocol
  - Extended Paper Requirements
  - Manuscript Submission Standards
  - Publication Ethics and Peer Review Framework
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## **13. Amendments**

This Agreement may be amended only by written instrument signed by an authorised representative of each party. No informal communication — including email exchanges, meeting notes, or verbal representations — shall constitute an amendment to this Agreement.

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## 14. Entire Agreement

This Agreement, together with its Schedules and the incorporated Programme Documents, constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the collaboration and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, proposals, and understandings between them relating to the same subject matter. Nothing in this Agreement creates a partnership, agency, or employment relationship between the parties.

## Signatures.

The parties confirm that they have read, understood, and agree to be bound by the terms of this Agreement and the incorporated Programme Documents.

Party A — The Journal	Party B — The Organiser
Signed for and on behalf of the Journal (RCEL)	Signed for and on behalf of the Organiser
Full Name:	Full Name:
Academic Title and Position:	Academic Title and Position:
Institution / Organisation:	Institution / Organisation:
Date (DD/MM/YYYY):	Date (DD/MM/YYYY):
Signature:	Signature:

## SCHEDULE 1 — Conference and Special Issue Details

This Schedule forms part of the Agreement and must be completed in full before the Agreement takes effect. It may be updated by written agreement of the parties where circumstances change.

Part A — Conference Details	
Full Title of Conference	<i>[to be completed]</i>
Conference Theme	<i>[to be completed]</i>
Conference Dates	<i>[to be completed]</i>
Conference Venue / Platform	<i>[to be completed]</i>
Lead Organising Institution	<i>[to be completed]</i>
Primary Convenor — Name and Contact	<i>[to be completed]</i>

<b>Part B — Special Issue Details</b>	
<b>Journal Title</b>	<i>[The Criterion / Galaxy — delete as applicable]</i>
<b>Proposed Special Issue Theme / Title</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Guest Editor(s) — Name(s) and Institution(s)</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Submission Opening Date</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Target Date for Completion of Peer Review</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Target Publication Date / Issue</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Estimated Number of Invited Authors</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Estimated Number of Submissions Expected</b>	<i>[to be completed]</i>
<b>Part C — Branding and Communication Approvals</b>	
<b>Approved conference announcement text (if pre-approved)</b>	<i>[insert approved text, or note: to be submitted for approval before use]</i>
<b>Special notes or agreed modifications to standard terms</b>	<i>[insert, or note: none]</i>

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