

13.13 Policy on Research Misconduct

Purpose

To provide guidance in addressing alleged research misconduct by faculty, staff, and students affiliated with the University of Northern Iowa.

Policy Statement

Research integrity is basic to the research enterprise. It is the responsibility of all scholars to model integrity in all of their research endeavors throughout their professional careers. Therefore, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research, are prohibited in all activities associated with the University of Northern Iowa.

1. This policy applies to anyone engaged in systematic research activities that are intended to produce generalizable or transferable results (typically indicated by the intent to disseminate results), including all faculty, staff, and students affiliated with the institution. This policy is not intended to apply to student class projects that are not designed for public dissemination, but it does apply to all culminating student research projects such as theses and dissertations.
2. When federal funding or an application for funding is involved, notification of the sponsor may be required, such as when a research misconduct allegation moves beyond an inquiry into a formal investigation by the institution, or in special circumstances at any point following an allegation.
3. Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data. Research misconduct is committed intentionally, or knowingly, or recklessly and represents a flagrant disregard of commonly accepted research or ethical practices. Honest error does not include ignorance of standards for systematic patterns of misconduct when someone should, by virtue of their training and position, be aware. Examples of research misconduct include, but are not limited to:
 1. Fabrication
Fabrication is making up of data or results and/or recording or reporting them.
 2. Falsification
Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
 3. Plagiarism
Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly representing the works of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work. The theft or misappropriation of intellectual property includes the unauthorized use of ideas or unique methods obtained by a privileged communication, such as a grant, manuscript review or intellectual property disclosure. Substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work means the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences and paragraphs, which materially mislead an ordinary reader regarding the contributions of the author.
 4. Actions to "hide" academic dishonesty, such as removing or destroying records relevant to an investigation in a manner at odds with documentation retention guidelines defined by the IRB, funding organization or other contractual party.
4. All employees or individuals associated with the University of Northern Iowa should report observed, suspected, or apparent research misconduct to the Research Integrity Officer (see <https://rsp.uni.edu/research-misconduct>). If an individual is unsure whether a suspected incident falls within the definition of research misconduct, he or she may call the Research Integrity Officer to discuss the suspected misconduct informally.

Summary of Procedures

1. Upon receiving an allegation of research misconduct, the Research Integrity Officer will immediately assess the allegation to determine whether the allegation falls under the definition of research misconduct, whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant an inquiry, and whether any federal support or federal application for funding is involved. If the allegation is not research misconduct as defined in this policy, the matter will be referred back to the individual faculty member, Department Head, Dean, or Divisional Vice President, as appropriate to the circumstances. If the allegation appears to involve research misconduct, this policy will apply and the results of any inquiry, investigation, and recommendations will be provided to the Deciding Official, who will involve the senior university official or unit that oversees the individual faculty member, as appropriate. In the case of non-credit-bearing research misconduct however (e.g., student hourly employees), the allegation will be referred to the Dean of Students for inquiry and adjudication.
2. After determining that an allegation falls within the definition of research misconduct, the Research Integrity Officer shall have all original research records and materials relevant to the allegation immediately secured.
3. If the Research Integrity Officer determines that the allegation provides sufficient information to warrant specific follow-up, s/he will initiate the inquiry process, including the appointment of an inquiry committee. The purpose of the inquiry committee is to make a preliminary evaluation of the available evidence and testimony of the respondent, complainant, and key witnesses to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of possible research misconduct to warrant an investigation. Upon completion of the inquiry committee's report, the Deciding Official will determine whether or not an investigation should be conducted. If so, an investigation committee will explore the allegations and the evidence in depth, and to determine specifically whether misconduct has been committed, by whom, and to what extent.
4. The inquiry and investigative committees, when dealing with faculty misconduct, shall consist of tenured faculty, whether internal or external to the University, and such tenured faculty shall not have an administrative role in the University.
5. In the event the investigation determines that misconduct has occurred, the Deciding Official will determine whether law enforcement agencies, professional societies, professional licensing boards, editors of journals in which research reports have been published, collaborators of the respondent in the work, or other relevant parties should be notified of the outcome of the case. The Research Integrity Officer is responsible for the University's compliance with all notification requirements of funding or sponsoring agencies.
6. Each inquiry and investigation will be conducted in a manner that will provide fair treatment to the respondent(s), protection for the complainant, and confidentiality for all involved parties to the extent possible without compromising public health and safety, or the inquiry or investigation.

Definitions

- The University's **Deciding Official** in regard to research misconduct is the institutional official who oversees the process described in this policy and makes the final determination on allegations of research misconduct and any responsive institutional actions, except on those delegated to other institutional officials. The Deciding Official at the University of Northern Iowa is the Executive Vice President and Provost or the Provost's designee.
- The **Research Integrity Officer** (RIO) is the institutional official responsible for assessing allegations of research misconduct and determining when such allegations warrant inquiries and for overseeing inquiries and investigations. The RIO is appointed by the Provost and is responsible for maintaining and disseminating detailed procedures necessary to effectively administer this policy. The RIO will receive allegations and facilitate the inquiry, investigation, and administrative processes, and will attempt to ensure that appropriate documentation and communications take place.

Further Information

For additional information on the policies and procedures pertaining to research integrity and misconduct, refer to <http://rsp.uni.edu/research-compliance> and <https://rsp.uni.edu/research-misconduct>.

