

Research Integrity Policy

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Item
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Policy and procedures to be followed in cases of allegations of dishonesty or misconduct in research are coordinated through the office of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration.

A. Introduction

The basic principle in the conduct of research rests on objective inquiry and the pursuit of truth. Integrity in the conduct of research is essential and must be maintained. Although instances of misconduct are rare, it is acknowledged that they do occur. Once they do occur, they present a serious threat to continued public confidence in the integrity of the investigative process and the stewardship of funds which support the research.

This policy provides the basis for uniform procedures for dealing with instances of alleged or apparent misconduct, as the term is defined herein, and the responsibilities for such actions. These procedures will apply to all scholarly activities involving faculty, students and staff at the University of Southern Indiana. In case of plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of dishonesty by students in classes, the procedures for dealing with these forms of dishonesty are covered in the Student Rights and Responsibilities and Code of Student Behavior. If such cases also involve external funding, then the procedures described in the USI Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct will also apply. Those instances of alleged misconduct pertaining to the treatment of human subjects or laboratory animals, or to laboratory safety or biohazards, will be reviewed by the appropriate University committees according to their charges and established procedures.

B. Definitions

Terms used have the same meaning as given them in the Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct, 42 CFR Part 93.

Deciding Official (DO) means the institutional official who makes final determinations on allegations of research misconduct and any institutional administrative actions. The Deciding Official at the University of Southern Indiana will be the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The Deciding Official will not be the same individual as the Research Integrity Officer and should have no direct prior involvement in the institution's inquiry, investigation, or allegation assessment. A DO's appointment of an individual to assess allegations of research misconduct, or to serve on an inquiry or investigation committee, is not considered to be direct prior involvement.

Research Integrity Officer (RIO) means the institutional official responsible for: (1) assessing allegations of research misconduct to determine if they fall within the definition of research misconduct, are covered by 42 CFR Part 93, and warrant an inquiry on the basis that the allegation is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential evidence of research misconduct may be identified; (2) overseeing inquires and investigations; and (3) the other responsibilities described in this policy.

Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

- a. Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- b. 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.
- c. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

- d. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

C. Responsibility to Report Misconduct

All institutional members will report observed, suspected, or apparent research misconduct to the USI RIO—the Executive Director of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration. If an individual is unsure whether a suspected incident falls within the definition of research misconduct, the individual may meet with or contact the RIO at Sponsored Projects and Research Administration, 812-465-7000 to discuss the suspected research misconduct informally, which may include discussing it anonymously and/or hypothetically. If the circumstances described by the individual do not meet the definition of research misconduct, the RIO will refer the individual or allegation to other offices or officials with responsibility for resolving the problem. At any time, an institutional member may have confidential discussions and consultations about concerns of possible misconduct with the RIO and will be counseled about appropriate procedures for reporting allegations.

D. Allegations and Investigations

If it should appear that an incident of research misconduct may have occurred in the University community, USI will act with dispatch and according to Federal regulations and will adhere to the USI Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct. This policy can be found on the USI Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration webpage under research policies: www.usi.edu/ospra/research-policies.