SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Information on Submitting an Allegation of Research Misconduct

Upholding the integrity of research is essential to the mission of research, and to the public investment and trust that supports it. Seattle University takes seriously its obligation to maintain an environment of scholarly integrity and to respond promptly to allegations of research misconduct. This document is intended to provide helpful information to individuals who are considering making an allegation of research misconduct.

What is Research Misconduct?

For the purposes of this policy **research misconduct** is defined as:

- Plagiarism, the use of another person's words, results, processes or ideas without giving appropriate credit;
- Fabrication, the making up of data or results and recording or reporting them;
- Falsification, the manipulating of research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record, or;
- Any other practice that seriously deviates from practices commonly accepted in the discipline or in the academic and research communities.

Research misconduct can occur at all stages of engaging in research, including proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting research.

What is not Research Misconduct?

- Honest errors or differences of opinion do not constitute research misconduct.
- Authorship disputes concerning whether one is first, second, or third author does not constitute research misconduct. Research misconduct may have occurred if you feel your name has been left off the paper altogether, and your ideas,

processes, results, or words have been used without appropriate credit.

- Unacceptable research practices may not rise to the level of research misconduct but do violate applicable laws, regulations, or other governmental requirements, or University rules or policies.
- Questionable research practices do not rise to the level of research misconduct or unacceptable research practices, but do require university attention because they could erode the confidence in the integrity of university research.

Harassment or relational issues do not constitute research misconduct, but are taken seriously by the university. You can discuss these types of concerns with one of the University Title IX coordinators.

Who can I ask for help on what is or is not research misconduct?

The University Research Integrity Officer (RIO).

Who can make an allegation of research misconduct?

Any person has the right to bring forward an allegation of research misconduct. That includes any member of the University (faculty, student or staff) as well as anyone from outside the university.

Who do I tell about an allegation of research misconduct?

All allegations of research misconduct need to be communicated to the RIO, whose contact information is at the end of this document. You can discuss an allegation in person, by phone, in writing, or by any other means of communication. You can also contact the RIO to have a general discussion without having to make an allegation.

Why is it important that an allegation is made in good faith?

An allegation of research misconduct is made in good faith when the person making the allegation sincerely believes in the truth of the information on which the allegation is based and at the time the allegation is made. An allegation of research misconduct can have a serious impact on the career of the person against whom the allegation is made, so it is important that a person choosing to make an allegation give the matter careful thought before proceeding.

What is an allegation made in bad faith and what are the consequences?

An allegation of research misconduct is made in bad faith if the person making the allegation knows about or recklessly disregards information that would negate the allegation. Knowingly bringing forward an allegation in bad faith could result in any of the disciplinary actions and procedures listed in applicable documents such as the *Student Code of Conduct*, the *Human Resources Policy Manual*, and the *Faculty Handbook*.

What happens when I make an allegation of research misconduct?

When the RIO receives an allegation of research misconduct, the RIO will ask you to come in and discuss the allegation. The RIO will ask you questions about information that supports the allegation, your relation (student, employee, etc.) to the individual against whom the allegation is being made, and if there are others who may know about information related to the allegation. The RIO will tell you about your rights and responsibilities, including that if you ask; the RIO must take all reasonable steps to keep your identity confidential. Once you have made an allegation, you are also obligated to keep the process confidential, and to not discuss it with anyone other than the RIO. The RIO, not you, is responsible for looking into the allegation you have made. In most cases the RIO's initial, informal review should be completed within 15 business days. The RIO will then let you know whether the allegation will be reviewed formally.

What kind of evidentiary support must there be to determine research misconduct?

At a minimum, there must be documents, records, lab notebooks, manuscripts or drafts, etc. (for details please reference the definition of Evidence in the policy) that show the alleged misconduct. You may or may not have all the records that would be reviewed; however, there must be sufficient documentation or compelling reasons for an allegation to move from a discussion with the RIO to a more formal review process. A formal review process must find sufficient documentation supporting the allegation in order for a determination of misconduct to be made.

What could happen to me if I make an allegation of research misconduct?

When a person makes an allegation of research misconduct in good faith, they are entitled to have the university take all reasonable and practical steps to protect them from adverse actions

(e.g. retaliatory actions) that can be directly linked to anyone involved in the informal or formal review of an allegation of research misconduct.

How do I contact the Seattle University RIO?

The RIO's name and contact information is:

Nalini Iyer, Ph.D.
Director – Office of Research Services and Sponsored Projects
Seattle University
901 12th Avenue
PO Box 222000
Seattle, WA 98122
Phone: 206-296-6161
Email: niyer@seattleu.edu

To view the Seattle University's current policy please click on this link. **Allegations of Research Misconduct Policy 2012**.