



University of South Wales

Research Misconduct Policy

Regulations on Research Conduct

These regulations apply to all members of the institution involved in research. This will include staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students. It also applies to those who are not members of the institution, but who carry out research on the institution's premises or use the institution's research facilities.

For the purposes of these regulations, the Vice-Chancellor and other officers may act through their duly appointed nominees.

Principles of good conduct in conducting research. Everyone to whom the regulations apply is expected to:

- maintain professional standards
- be familiar with guidance on best research practice, for example in relation to policy, ethics, finance and security issues
- abide by legal and ethical requirements laid down by the institution or other duly appointed bodies concerned with the field of research
- recognize the importance of good leadership and co-operation in research groups take into account the needs of young researchers in particular
- document results and keep secure underlying data
- question findings
- honestly attribute the contribution of others
- take steps to ensure the safety of everyone involved in the research
- report any conflicts of interest, actual or prospective, to the appropriate person

Definition of research misconduct

Research misconduct includes the following, whether intentional, reckless or negligent:

- failure to obtain appropriate consent to conduct research
- fraud in relation to research proposals
- unethical behavior in the conduct of research, for example in relation to research topics
- unauthorized use of information obtained in confidence
- depart from good research practice, where this leads to an unreasonable risk of harm to humans, other animals or the environment
- fabricate, falsify or corrupt research data
- distort research results, by distorting or omitting data that do not match expected results
- dishonest misinterpretation of results
- publish data that is known or believed to be false or misleading
- plagiarism, or dishonest use of unacknowledged sources
- misquoting or misrepresenting other authors

- improper attribution of authorship
- obscenity or other misuse of research funds or research equipment attempt, plan or conspiracy to be involved in research malpractice
- encouraging others to become involved in misconduct by research or misconduct by others

Fraud or other misuse of research funds or research equipment may be dealt with under separate financial regulations.

Procedure in case of suspected research misconduct

The institution has a responsibility to investigate allegations of research misconduct fully and expeditiously. It also has a responsibility to protect researchers from malicious, mischievous or frivolous allegations.

All those to whom these regulations apply should report any incident of misconduct, whether witnessed or suspected. Members of staff and students are encouraged to raise concerns about suspected research misconduct in confidence with their Dean, The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), The Head of Research and Innovation Services, or the Research Governance Manager. Those who raise concerns in good faith will not be penalised in any way for doing so. Allegations should normally be made in writing, accompanied by any available supporting evidence.

Through an informal investigation instigated by the appropriate Dean/Director utilising internal or external experts, a confidential review will consider the accusations, all available information, and the information from interviews with those accused/affected. The outcome of the informal investigation is a decision about whether there is a prima facie case. Where there are believed to be accusations worthy of following up and investigating further, the formal disciplinary procedure shall be invoked via HR.

In the event that serious allegations are made they will be referred to the Vice Chancellor through the University Secretary under the appropriate disciplinary regulations – those relating to employees or those relating to students. For the purposes of this procedure any researcher who is not registered as a student at this University will be subject to the disciplinary procedure applicable to employees.

In cases where the outcome of the implementation of disciplinary regulations is the implication of someone who is not subject to the institution's disciplinary procedures, the Vice Chancellor shall bring the information to the attention of any appropriate disciplinary or other body.

Where the research is funded in whole or part by an outside grant, the institution shall have regard to the guidance issued by the relevant funding body. The institution shall ensure that any such body is given appropriate and timely information as to the instigation and progress of an investigation and any referral under disciplinary regulations.

In the event of a finding of misconduct, where the person responsible is subject to the regulation of a professional body such as the General Medical Council, the institution shall inform the professional body of any finding.

Where the person responsible has published research, especially research to which the misconduct relates, the institution shall inform journal editors or others of any finding.