

## RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY

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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 Graduate Studies and Sponsored Research.

### 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. If such cases also involve external funding, then the procedures described in this document 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

The Federal Register of July 1, 1987 (Vol. 52, p. 24468) defines misconduct as meaning "(1) fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing, carrying out, or reporting results from research; (2) material failure to comply with Federal requirements for protection of researchers, human subjects, or the public or for ensuring the welfare of laboratory animals; or (3) failure to meet other material legal requirements governing research." This definition does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

### C. Allegations and Investigations

If it should appear that an incident of academic dishonesty may have occurred in the University community, USI will act with dispatch and according to Federal regulations and will adhere to the following procedure:

1. The matter should be reported immediately to the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs who will be responsible for informing the Chairperson of the Department and Dean of the College concerned. The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs shall appoint a Research Integrity Officer who will coordinate all activities of inquiries/investigations under the supervision of the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.
2. The Research Integrity Officer will conduct a confidential internal inquiry sufficient to conclude whether there are reasonable grounds to believe the allegations may be true. The alleged offender shall in all cases be informed of the nature of the charges. At the discretion of the Research Integrity Officer, the alleged offender shall also be informed of the source of the charges. During this inquiry, every reasonable effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and appropriate efforts shall be made to protect the rights and identities of all parties.

3. The Research Integrity Officer will present to the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs the results of the inquiry into the charges. If the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs finds that there are no reasonable grounds to believe the allegations may be true, or if true, judges there is no need for further actions, he or she will terminate the inquiry into the matter.
4. If the allegations are admitted to be true by the accused, then the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall make recommendations in the case to the President and will also notify any external agencies requiring notification.
5. If the inquiry by the Research Integrity Officer finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe the allegations may be true, but the accused does not admit to the allegations, then the Research Integrity Officer will initiate a formal investigation. The provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will share the results of the investigation with the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Faculty Senate and assist in the preparation of a detailed investigative report. In preparing its report, the Committee will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated and will recommend possible sanctions. The provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will use the report as a basis for making recommendations to the President, whose decision is final.
6. If the research was supported by an external agency, the inquiry results in a formal investigation or indicates possible criminal violation, and notification is required by agency or contract, the University will immediately and confidentially notify the appropriate agency.
7. None of the procedures described in this document are meant as a substitute for the Grievance Procedures contained in the Faculty Handbook, or those operated through the Human Resources Department, the Dean of the College, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Student Life, or the University Student and Academic Affairs Committee. A person in the USI community is not barred from pursuing a complaint through any other appropriate grievance procedure while involved in an investigation of research misconduct as prescribed in this document.