

Research Misconduct Policy Rewrite

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Current [policy](#) on “Ethical Conduct in Academic Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities”

Originally drafted in late 1990s or early 2000 - updated minimally and rarely since

Inconcise, broad

Incorporates research misconduct into policy with wide scope:

- Guidance on ethical and scholarly conduct
- Expectations around day-to-day conduct
- Intellectual honesty
- Merit
- Authorship and credit
- Conflicts of interest
- Maintaining research quality and rigor

Why does this policy need to change?

Adopting a research misconduct policy that uses the PHS research misconduct regulations as its foundation

As a recipient of PHS funds, Lehigh is required to comply with revised federal regulations that:

- Are effective January 1, 2026, and
- Include changes significant enough to require a rewrite of the existing policy.

Lehigh seeks to uphold the highest standards of scientific rigor in research, regardless of sponsorship status, with a clear, concise, accessible policy that:

- Reduces the risk of research misconduct,
- Supports all good-faith efforts to report suspected misconduct,
- Promptly and thoroughly addresses all allegations of research misconduct, and
- Rectifies the scientific record, as appropriate.

Scope and application

- Applied to assessment of any apparent or alleged research misconduct - regardless of source or absence of funding
- For non-PHS supported research, University may waive or deviate from specific requirements in the policy to the extent not prohibited by law and with prior notice to the respondent
- Other forms of misconduct are handled through other university policies, procedures and rules

Why use PHS regulations as the baseline for the institutional policy?

- Federal funding alignment and compatibility
 - Reduces risk of findings being overturned on review by PHS due to procedural errors
- PHS rule is viewed as the gold standard
 - Definitions are comprehensive, well-vetted, highest federal expectations - rendering the University automatically compliant with other federal sponsor research misconduct policies and regulations
- Legal and reputational protection
 - Federal standard policy and policy template used by virtually every other research university - a recognized, authoritative federal model. Aligns the University with its peers.
- Consistency across collaborations
 - Avoids confusion and procedural conflict in multi-institution cases

Research Misconduct Policy Development Process & Timeline

- **Early spring 2025:** responsibility for the University's policy on research misconduct was assigned to the Office of Research Integrity, under the VPR.
- **Late spring 2025:**
 - Faculty working group formed - policy development and providing conferral. (See next slide for members)
 - Naomi develops a first draft.
- **Summer 2025:** faculty working group iterates a final draft.
- **Early fall 2025:** OGC review the working group's draft and makes revisions. Return to working group for final review.
- **Late fall 2025:**
 - Faculty Senate conferral. Socialization of policy with Council of Deans, Department Chairs, ADRs.
 - Public comment period & incorporation of corresponding revisions as necessary
 - Final version is issued and communicated to campus.
- **January 1, 2026:** policy effective date

Research Misconduct Policy Faculty Working Group

- College of Education - Craig Hochbein
- College of Health - Michael Gusmano
- College of Arts and Sciences - Lucy Napper
- College of Business - Beibei Dong
- Rossin - James Gilchrist

Research Misconduct Process

Assessment Stage

Allegation is determined to be credible, specific and meets definition of Research Misconduct



Sequestration of research records and other relevant evidence

Note: if an allegation does not meet criteria to proceed to inquiry, it will be documented and process ends

Inquiry Stage (if warranted)

Respondent is notified of start of inquiry stage



Review of evidence / testimony



Inquiry report with comment period



Decision by RIO / inquiry committee



Notice to Respondent(s) and complainant (if necessary)

Note: if investigation is not warranted, process ends

Investigation Stage (if warranted)

Respondent is notified of start of investigation stage



Review of evidence by investigation committee



Collection / sequestration of additional evidence, including interviews



Investigation report with comment period



Decision by the Deciding Official



Notice to Respondent, Complainant, sponsors or federal agencies (if applicable)

Old policy	New policy
“Research” means research, scholarship, and creative activities that support the intellectual endeavors of the University. “Misconduct” is defined broadly	Both “research” and “research misconduct” are defined more narrowly and in accordance with PHS regulations
	Self-plagiarism & authorship disputes are specifically excluded from the definition of “plagiarism” (a form of misconduct)
Allegations are reported to the Provost. Provost determines if an allegation warrants initiation of an inquiry process	Allegations are reported to the RIO. RIO determines if an allegation warrants initiation of inquiry process
Inquiry <u>must</u> be conducted by committee of at least 3 tenured faculty members	Inquiry <u>may</u> be conducted by a committee <u>or</u> by the RIO
Investigation - committee of at least 5, with 3 tenured University faculty members and 1 member external to the University	Investigation - committee of at least 5 individuals, at least 3 of whom must be tenured faculty members
Silent on matter of external consultants	External consultants may be used as non-voting advisers to the committee

Research Misconduct

Fabrication, Falsification, or Plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing Research, or in reporting Research results. Research Misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

Fabrication: making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

Falsification: 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.

Plagiarism

The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words, without giving appropriate credit.

Includes the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences and paragraphs from another's work that materially misleads the reader regarding the contributions of the author.

Does not include the limited use of identical or nearly identical phrases that describe a commonly used methodology.

Does not include self-plagiarism or authorship or credit disputes, including disputes among former collaborators who participated jointly in the development or conduct of a Research project.

Self-plagiarism and authorship disputes do not meet the definition of Research Misconduct per this policy, but may be prohibited by other University policies, procedures, rules or regulations.

Issuance of new policy

Communicated to campus prior to January 1, 2025 effective date

Policy website will include FAQs and summary of comments received during the conferral and public comment periods, and if/how they were addressed through edits to the policy

ORI is available for training etc. by request

Office-level processes will support policy administration