

## Policy on Research Misconduct

### RESEARCH

**Effective Date:** June 1,  
2002

**Date Revised:**  
November 2, 2015

**Supersedes:** N/A

**Related Policies:**  
**Code of Ethical Conduct**  
**Academic Integrity**  
**Policy**

**Responsible**  
**Office/Department:**  
**Office of the Provost**

**Keywords:** fabrication;  
falsification; plagiarism

### I. Purpose and Scope

As a community of scholars, in which truthfulness and integrity are fundamental, the university must establish procedures for the inquiry and investigation of allegations of misconduct of research, with due care to protect the rights of those making the allegations, those accused and the university. Furthermore, federal regulations require the university to have explicit procedures for addressing incidences in which there are allegations of misconduct in research.

This policy and accompanying procedures apply to all university employees involved in scholarship, research, research training, or research-related activities conducted under the auspices of the university. They also apply to students, but only insofar as they are working on a project funded by an external research sponsor or otherwise engaged in performing services for the university. Principal investigators, therefore, should ensure that students working on their projects whether funded by external sponsors or not, are familiar with the policy and procedures.

This policy and the accompanying procedures apply to individuals who no longer work for the university, insofar as they may be used to determine whether the individual committed research misconduct while employed at the university, and may also be used to determine whether an individual alleged to have committed research misconduct prior to his or her employment at the university did so, and whether any sanction or alteration in the individual's status at the university is warranted.

This policy does not apply to instances of fiscal impropriety, the ethical treatment of human or animal subjects, authorship disputes, sexual harassment, or discrimination, which are covered by other university policies.

## II. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, **Research Misconduct** has the same definition as under federal regulations: “fabrication, falsification, plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.” 42 C.F.R. § 93.103. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

## III. Policy

Northeastern University promotes a research environment that discourages misconduct in all research, and will deal with possible misconduct forthrightly. Accordingly, the university requires that allegations of research misconduct be reported promptly, and will act promptly to address such allegations, according to the Northeastern University’s Procedures for Allegations of Research Misconduct.

### A. Reporting Allegations of Misconduct

All allegations of misconduct must be reported promptly in writing to the Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education.

### B. Preliminary Inquiry into the Allegations

After receiving an allegation of research misconduct, the Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education will initiate a preliminary inquiry into the allegations.

During the inquiry, the Vice Provost will, within the requirement of the appropriate federal regulations:

- protect the privacy of those who in good faith report apparent misconduct, to the maximum extent possible,
- provide confidential treatment to the affected individuals, to the maximum extent possible,
- provide the accused with a written report summarizing the inquiry (see below),
- provide the accused the opportunity to comment on the allegations, to submit documentation, and to have legal and/or other representation present,

- take precautions against real or apparent conflicts of interest on the part of those involved in the inquiry.

### C. Formal Investigation of Alleged Misconduct

To initiate a formal investigation, the Provost will appoint an Investigation Board. Faculty appointed to the Board will be expected to disclose any factors that will prevent them serving fairly, objectively, and without bias.

The Investigation Board will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and protect the privacy of all persons involved in the investigation.

### D. Reporting to the Appropriate Federal Agency

The university is responsible for notifying the appropriate federal agencies, if, at any time during the inquiry or investigation, the university determines that any of the following conditions exist:

- an immediate health hazard is involved,
- an immediate need to protect federal funds and/or equipment,
- an immediate need to protect the interests of the person(s) making the allegations or of the individual(s) who is the subject of the allegations as well as his/her co-investigators and associates, if any,
- a probability that the alleged incident is going to be reported publicly, or
- a reasonable indication of a possible criminal violation, in which case the appropriate federal agency must be informed within 24 hours of obtaining this information.

## **IV. Additional Information**

The university may, at any time, take interim administrative actions as appropriate to protect federal funds and insure that the purpose of the federal financial assistance is carried out.

The university will undertake diligent efforts, as appropriate, to restore the reputation of person alleged to have engaged in misconduct when allegations are not confirmed.

The university will take appropriate action against individuals if there is evidence of retaliation against the accuser(s) or if there is evidence that the accuser made the allegations in bad faith.

Consequences for violations of this Policy, and related laws or regulations, can include disciplinary action, up to and including termination or separation; termination of a funded project and/or loss of funding; and/or civil or criminal actions, fines, and penalties.

#### **V. Contact Information**

Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education at (617) 373-4160  
<https://provost.northeastern.edu/leadership/arthur-kramer/>