



Scientific Misconduct Policy

14 April 2018

What does the policy cover?

This scientific misconduct policy exists to set out the responsibilities of the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) and those who represent it in regards to observing and upholding our zero-tolerance position on scientific misconduct.

Policy statement

The INR is committed to conducting business in an ethical and honest manner, and is committed to implementing and enforcing systems that ensure that scientific misconduct is prevented. We are committed to acting professionally, fairly, and with integrity in all scientific work that we conduct. The INR will constantly uphold all laws, conventions and norms related to scientific conduct in all the jurisdictions in which we operate.

Who is covered by the policy?

This policy applies to all scientific staff (whether temporary, fixed-term, permanent or interns) and sub-contractors.

Definitions

Research includes all basic, applied, and demonstration research, including but not limited to all fields of science, medicine, engineering, mathematics and social sciences and encompassing research training, applications or proposals for support of research or research training regardless of whether an application or proposal resulted in a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other form of support, and related research activities.

Scientific misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification and/or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. It does not include honest error or honest differences of opinion.

Process

An individual with an allegation of research misconduct involving an INR staff member or sub-contractor may make an allegation orally or in writing, and must bring the allegation to the Executive Director or, if the Executive Director is the subject of the allegation, to the Chairman of the Board. He or she will determine whether the allegation is sufficiently credible, specific, and falls within the scope of this policy.

The INR will provide confidentiality, to the extent possible and allowed by law, to those who in good faith report apparent misconduct, to the subject of a research misconduct allegation(s), and to research subjects identifiable from research records or evidence, by limiting disclosure of their identities to those who need to know, consistent with a thorough, competent, objective, and fair research misconduct proceeding.

An allegation of research misconduct must include a detailed description of the alleged misconduct, the individual(s) who is (are) the subject(s) of the allegation, as well as supporting evidence or documentation, if available. An allegation may be made orally or in writing.

Inquiries and investigations begun in response to an allegation will continue even if the subject of the allegation leaves the INR before the process is completed. The INR has the authority to obtain all relevant documentation, data and other records in connection with the allegations of research misconduct.

The subject(s) of an allegation has (have) the duty to furnish data, records, and other documents as requested by the INR so that a thorough review can be completed. The destruction, absence of, or any failure to provide research records adequately documenting the questioned research at any point in the process is evidence of research misconduct where it is established by a preponderance of the evidence that the subject(s) of an allegation intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly had research records and destroyed them, had the opportunity to maintain the records but did not do so, or maintained the records and failed to

produce them in a timely manner, and that the subject's conduct constitutes a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community.

Should the Executive Director/ Chairman determine that an allegation falls within the scope of this policy and is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential evidence of research misconduct may be identified, he or she will institute a formal disciplinary process as outlined in the INR's policies and procedures that are described in detail elsewhere.

A finding of research misconduct requires that:

1. There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community for maintaining the integrity of the research record;
2. The misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; and
3. The allegation is proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

The nature of the disciplinary action taken will take into account the seriousness of the misconduct, including but not limited to:

1. The degree to which the misconduct was knowing, intentional, or reckless;
2. Whether the misconduct was an isolated event or part of a pattern; and/or
3. If the misconduct had a significant impact on the research record, research subjects, other researchers, institutions, or public welfare.

In all cases, the INR will undertake reasonable and appropriate efforts to seek to protect the positions and reputations of those persons who, in good faith, make allegations, submit evidence, or otherwise participate in the process. This may include communicating its determination that allegations were made in good faith to the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses who are aware of the findings. The INR will also seek to appropriately discipline any member of staff who retaliates against someone who makes allegations of research misconduct, gives evidence, or participates in the proceedings.