

University Policy 4110: Research Misconduct

Category: Academic Affairs

Subcategory: Research

Covered Individuals: USU Employees and Students

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research

Policy Custodian: Office of Research; Chief Research Compliance Officer

Last Revised: 2026/01/16

Previous USU Policy Number: 4102¹

4110.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Policy is to affirm Utah State University's (USU) commitment to the highest standards of integrity in research, to define [Research Misconduct](#), and to identify the processes that will be followed in the event an [Allegation](#) of Research Misconduct is made against a USU [Researcher](#). This Policy applies to any Researcher conducting research or creative endeavors on behalf of the University.

Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct provides procedural guidance on the proper implementation of this Policy.

4110.2 POLICY

2.1 Research Integrity

USU is committed to upholding the highest standards of research integrity and complying with all applicable federal regulations related to Research Misconduct, including but not limited to 42 C.F.R. Part 93. USU Researchers are required to perform research with honesty, rigor, and transparency. Allegations or evidence of possible Research Misconduct will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with promptly.

2.2 Research Misconduct

Research Misconduct is [Fabrication](#), [Falsification](#), or [Plagiarism](#) in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

Research Misconduct does not include honest error, differences of opinion, violations of confidentiality, property loss or destruction, publication disputes, submitting a Research Misconduct allegation in bad faith, or retaliation.

2.3 Research Misconduct Review Procedures

Allegations of Research Misconduct will be consistently and fairly reviewed under the processes outlined in Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct.

¹ Prior to January 2026, content about research misconduct existed within Policy 4102: Research. The policy number 4110 was originally assigned to Off Highway Vehicle Usage. The policy number 4112 is now assigned to Off Highway Vehicle Usage.

Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct adheres to the regulatory standards established by the Public Health Service (Policies on Research Misconduct, 42 C.F.R. Part 93) and the National Science Foundation (Research Misconduct Regulations, 45 C.F.R. Part 689).

To the extent a different federal agency's regulations apply to an Allegation of Research Misconduct, and are inconsistent with this Policy or its accompanying procedures, USU will comply with the applicable regulatory requirements.

This Policy and its supporting procedures apply only to Research Misconduct occurring within six years of the date USU receives the Allegation of Research Misconduct. Exceptions to the six year limitation include if the [Respondent](#) continues or renews an incident of Research Misconduct through citation or republication of the alleged research record where Research Misconduct allegedly occurred, or the [Deciding Official](#), following consultation with a federal agency, determines the alleged Research Misconduct could reasonably have a substantial adverse effect on the safety or health of the public.

2.4 Allegations

A [Complainant](#) may submit an Allegation of Research Misconduct directly to the [Research Integrity Officer](#), to their department head or dean, or anonymously through USU's compliance reporting system. Prompt reporting of Research Misconduct is critical for ensuring timely and appropriate fact gathering.

The Research Integrity Officer will consistently and fairly administer USU's Research Misconduct procedures for Allegations made against any current USU Researcher, or any former USU Researcher who was employed by USU at the time the alleged Research Misconduct occurred.

2.5 Sanctions

In the event an Allegation leads to findings of Research Misconduct, the Deciding Official will determine which, if any, sanctions or corrective actions will be taken against the Respondent.

2.6 Appeals

A Respondent has the right to appeal a Research Misconduct determination or sanction, pursuant to the policies or procedures applicable to their employment or student classification. See Policy 4006: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures (Faculty); Policy 3006: Staff Employee Grievance (Staff Employees); Article VII of the Student Code of Conduct (Students). Procedural guidance related to appeals can be found in Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Procedures.

2.7 Protecting Affected Parties

USU will take all reasonable and practical steps to protect the positions and reputations of good faith Complainants, witnesses, and inquiry or investigation committee members, and to protect these individuals from retaliation by Respondents and/or other USU personnel.

USU will maintain confidentiality for all Respondents, Complainants, and witnesses involved in a Research Misconduct proceeding, as well as to research subjects identifiable through research records or other evidence, to the extent permitted by law.

4110.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Complainant

The Complainant shall make Allegations of Research Misconduct in good faith. The Complainant is

expected to cooperate with Research Misconduct proceedings by providing information or evidence in support of the Allegation to the greatest extent possible. The Complainant will maintain confidentiality of information related to the allegation, assessment, inquiry or investigation learned through any Research Misconduct proceedings resulting from the Allegation.

3.2 Respondent

During a Research Misconduct proceeding, the Respondent's primary responsibilities include cooperating with University officials, providing any relevant research records or evidence requested, maintaining confidentiality, and refraining from retaliation. See [Policy 3011 Reporting Improper Conduct and Retaliation](#) for definitions and expectations. Respondents also have a right to assert any relevant defenses and provide any mitigating evidence.

3.3 Research Integrity Officer

The Research Integrity Officer reviews Research Misconduct Allegations and administers assessments, inquiries, and investigations, pursuant to Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct.

3.4 Deciding Official

The Deciding Official reviews the Research Misconduct findings resulting from an investigation, and provides a final written determination of whether the Respondent committed Research Misconduct, and any sanctions or corrective actions USU will take against the Respondent.

3.5 University Personnel

University personnel will conduct research that adheres to the highest standards of honesty, rigor, and transparency. University personnel will report suspected instances of Research Misconduct in a timely manner, in accordance with the methods identified in this Policy. University personnel will fully cooperate with the Research Integrity Officer and other USU officials during Research Misconduct assessments, inquiries, or investigations.

3.6 Department Heads & Deans

Department heads and deans will support their faculty in performing research with honesty, rigor, and transparency. Department heads and deans will promptly report instances of Research Misconduct they become aware of, or that are disclosed to them by University personnel they oversee, according to the methods identified in this Policy.

4110.4 REFERENCES

- [42 C.F.R. Part 93 – Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct.](#)
- [45 C.F.R. Part 689 – National Science Foundation Research Misconduct.](#)

4110.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- [Policy 3006: Staff Employee Grievance](#)
- [Policy 4002: Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility](#)
- [Policy 4006: Academic Due Process: Sanctions & Hearing Procedures](#)
- [Policy 4100: Research](#)
- [USU Student Code of Conduct: Article VII-1. Channels for Grievances](#)

4110.6 DEFINITIONS

Allegation. Disclosure of possible Research Misconduct through any means of communication and brought directly to the attention of an institutional official.

Complainant. An individual who, in good faith, makes an Allegation of Research Misconduct.

Deciding Official. Makes the final determination of Research Misconduct findings, including imposing sanctions or corrective actions against a Respondent. The Deciding Official will be the President of USU, or an appropriate designee.

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

Research Integrity Officer. Administers USU's written policies and procedures for addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct. The Research Integrity Officer will be the Vice President for Research, or an appropriate designee, and cannot also serve as the Deciding Official.

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

Researcher. Any person affiliated with USU whose role statement, job description, employment assignment, area of study, or function within the University, either in whole or in part, includes conducting research/creative endeavors or other activities overseen by the Office of Research. This includes faculty, professional research staff, research assistants, laboratory and clinical personnel, and others as may be designated by the Vice President for Research. Indicators that an individual qualifies as a Researcher include, but are not limited to, serving as an investigator or key personnel on proposals submitted to external sponsors (which can include instructional or other sponsored activities), submitting protocol applications to research oversight committees (e.g., Institutional Review Board, Institutional Biosafety Committee), and applying for or mentoring internally funded research/creative endeavors.

Respondent. The individual against whom an Allegation of Research Misconduct is directed or who is the subject of a Research Misconduct proceeding.

Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the president.

RESOURCES

Procedures

- Procedure 4110-PR1: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct

Contacts

- Chief Research Compliance Officer
Research Integrity & Compliance Office

research.usu.edu/compliance/
compliance@usu.edu

POLICY HISTORY

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