Table of Contents

1. Overview

Purpose

This document describes the procedural response of Drexel University ("the University") to allegations of research misconduct. These procedures are used for addressing allegations and conducting inquiries and investigations related to possible research misconduct at the University. These procedures comply with the requirements for reporting research misconduct investigations to the Public Health Service (PHS), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other research sponsors as required.

In some circumstances, procedural deviations may be considered when deemed in the best interests of the institution or the sponsor, while also providing for the fair treatment of the subject of the inquiry or investigation. In all phases of an investigation into an allegation of research misconduct, a third party may be utilized for a formal investigation.

2. Definitions

Research Misconduct – Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing research, or reporting research results, as defined in 42 CFR 93.

- **Fabrication** is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- **Falsification** is 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** is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit. This 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. Self-plagiarism and authorship disputes do not meet the definition of research misconduct. 42 CFR 93

Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences in opinion. A finding of research misconduct requires that 1) there be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community, 2) the misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, and 3) the allegation be proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

- ***Intentionally*** – acting with the aim of carrying out the act (a specific purpose to engage in the conduct.)
- ***Knowingly*** – acting with awareness of the act.

- ***Recklessly*** – to propose, perform, or review research, or report research results, with indifference to a known risk of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism; acting with disregard for a substantial and unjustifiable risk that misconduct may result.

In order for a lack of research records to be considered evidence of research misconduct, the respondent must have destroyed them or refused to provide them; a failure to maintain adequate records is not sufficient evidence of research misconduct.

Allegation – any written or oral statement or other indication of possible research misconduct reported to the Research Integrity Officer.

Complainant – Person who makes an allegation of research misconduct.

Conflict of interest – a personal, professional of financial consideration that may or actually compromise or bias professional judgment or objectivity.

Deciding Official – the University official who makes final determinations on allegations of research misconduct and any responsive institutional actions. The Deciding Official cannot be the same individual as the Research Integrity Officer. The Deciding Official for the University is the Executive Vice Provost for Research and Innovation.

Evidence – any document, tangible item or testimony offered or obtained during a research misconduct proceeding that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact.

Good-faith allegation – an allegation made with the honest belief that research misconduct may have occurred. An allegation is not in good faith if it is made with knowing or reckless disregard for information that would negate the allegation.

Inquiry – Preliminary information-gathering and initial fact-finding to determine whether an allegation warrants an investigation.

Investigation – Formal examination and evaluation of the allegation, including analysis of evidence and interview of relevant parties, to determine whether misconduct occurred, its severity, and any corrective actions.

Preponderance of the evidence – proof by information that, compared with that opposing it, leads to the conclusion that the fact at issue is more probably true than not.

Principal – a person with a formal role in the case such as that of supervisor of the respondent, the Provost, the General Counsel, witness to the alleged misconduct, co-investigator in the project in which the alleged misconduct took place, etc.

Research Integrity Officer (RIO) – the University official responsible for assessing allegations of research misconduct and for overseeing research misconduct proceedings. The Research Integrity Officer is identified on the University website.

Research record – any data, document, computer file, or any other written or non-written account or object that reasonably may be expected to provide evidence or information regarding the proposed,

conducted, or reported research that constitutes the subject of an allegation of research misconduct. A research record includes all digital, physical, or cloud-based data, including AI-generated images, software files, or any other medium containing research evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, grant or contract applications, whether funded or unfunded; grant or contract progress and other reports; laboratory notebooks; notes; correspondence; videos; photographs; X-ray film; slides; biological materials; computer files and printouts; manuscripts and publications; equipment use logs; laboratory procurement records; animal facility records; human and animal subject protocols; consent forms; medical charts; and patient research files.

Respondent – the person against whom an allegation of research misconduct is directed or who is the subject of a misconduct proceeding. There can be more than one respondent in any inquiry or investigation.

Retaliation – any adverse action taken against a complainant, witness, committee member or other principal by the University or one of its members in response to (i) a good faith allegation of research misconduct or (ii) good faith cooperation with a research misconduct proceeding.

Sponsor – the individual or organization providing financial or other resources to support the research activities relevant to the allegation, inquiry and/or investigation.

University – For the purposes of these procedures, University refers to Drexel University and all of its affiliates.

University personnel – any person paid by, under the control of, or affiliated with the University, such as faculty, postdoctoral trainees or fellows, technicians and other staff members, students, fellows, guest researchers, or collaborators.

Witness – an individual who may have witnessed alleged research misconduct or has information in connection with an alleged research misconduct.

3. Procedures

3.1 Reporting Suspected Research Misconduct

All personnel must report suspected, observed, or apparent research misconduct to the University's Research Integrity Officer (RIO). If an individual is unsure whether a suspected incident falls within the definition of research misconduct, she/he is encouraged to contact the RIO to discuss the suspected misconduct informally. Contact information for the University's RIO is available on the University's Research website.

Reports may also be made through Drexel's Compliance Hotline by calling 866-358-1010 or by submitting a report online. Reports may be made anonymously through the Compliance Hotline.

Within 30 calendar days, the RIO will determine whether the allegation meets the criteria for inquiry or investigation and begin sequestration of evidence.

If not pursued, the RIO documents the rationale and notifies the complainant, if known, and respondent in writing.

Note that the University can only investigate research misconduct that has occurred within six years of receiving an allegation. However, the "Subsequent Use Exception" will apply when a respondent reuses, republishes, or cites the specific portion(s) of prior work alleged to have been fabricated, falsified, or plagiarized within six years of when the allegations were received.

3.2 The Informal Phase

In the informal phase, the RIO assesses the allegation to determine whether the allegation falls within the definition of research misconduct, whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant an inquiry, and whether research sponsor funding is involved.

Immediately upon receipt of the allegation, the RIO will:

- interview the complainant, if feasible, to gather pertinent information about the allegation. The RIO will provide the complainant with a copy of these procedures at that time.
- perform an initial assessment of the allegation to determine if it falls within the definition of research misconduct.
- determine whether there is a likelihood of finding credible evidence to support the allegation.
- inform the Deciding Official and other University regulatory officials of the allegation, such as those involved in the protection of human subjects.

The RIO will, as necessary, promptly begin the sequestration of research records and evidence on or before the date on which the respondent is notified of the allegation, or the inquiry begins (whichever is earlier). Sequestration includes inventorying data, evidence and materials and sequestering them in a secure manner. In those cases where the research records or evidence encompass scientific instruments shared by a number of users, custody may the limited to copies of the data or the evidence on such instruments, so long as those copies are substantially equivalent to the evidentiary value of the instruments. The University may sequester research records and evidence at any point at which additional items become known or pertinent to the inquiry or investigation. Where appropriate, the RIO will give the respondent copies of, or as reasonable, supervised access to, the research records.

The RIO will provide the respondent with a copy of these procedures on notifying the respondent of the allegation.

After reviewing and assessing the evidence and data available, the RIO will determine whether to advance the allegation to the Inquiry Phase or to the Investigation Phase. This determination is typically made within 30 days of receipt of the allegation.

If the RIO's decision is to commence to the Inquiry or Investigation Phase, the RIO will:

- reduce the charge of research misconduct to writing. The charge will clearly describe the allegation and any related pertinent information.
- take all reasonable and practical steps to obtain custody of any additional research records and evidence needed to conduct the research misconduct proceeding, inventory those materials and sequester them in a secure manner. Where appropriate, the RIO will give the respondent copies of, or as reasonable, supervised access to, the research records.
- notify the respondent and the complainant in writing that an inquiry or investigation will begin based on the written charge.

If the decision is to close the matter, the RIO will notify the complainant and respondent in writing of the decision.

If a respondent refuses to participate in a research misconduct proceeding, the RIO and any Inquiry or Investigation Committee will use their best efforts to reach a conclusion regarding the allegations, noting in the report the respondent's failure to cooperate and its effect on the evidence.

3.3 The Inquiry Phase

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to make a preliminary evaluation of the available evidence and testimony of the respondent, complainant, and key witnesses to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of possible research misconduct to warrant an investigation. The purpose is not to determine whether research misconduct definitively occurred or who was responsible.

In this phase, the RIO will:

- tentatively identify Inquiry Committee members and the committee chair (however, the RIO, other designated official, or designated third party is also permitted to conduct the inquiry in place of the inquiry committee);
- notify the respondent in writing of the proposed committee members. If, within 5 calendar days, the respondent submits to the RIO a written objection to any proposed member of the Inquiry Committee, if used, or expert based on bias or submits to the RIO a written objection to any proposed member of the Inquiry Committee or expert based on bias or conflict of interest, the RIO will determine whether to replace the challenged member or expert with a qualified substitute;
- formally appoint the Inquiry Committee, as applicable, providing the written charge of research misconduct and copies of these procedures;
- convene the first meeting of the Inquiry Committee, as applicable, to review the charge, discuss the allegations and any related issues, assist the committee with organizing plans for conducting the inquiry, and answer any questions raised. A representative from the Office of the General Counsel will be present at this meeting.

- assist the Inquiry Committee, as applicable, and any necessary experts in the conduct of the inquiry.

The Inquiry Committee, RIO, designated official, or designated third party will normally interview the complainant, the respondent and key witnesses as well as review relevant evidence and testimony obtained prior to and during the inquiry phase. The scope of the inquiry does not include conducting exhaustive interviews and analyses.

All interviews at the investigation stage will be transcribed and provided to the interviewee with the opportunity for correction. The respondent will be provided access to all transcripts. Transcripts will be maintained in the investigation record.

The RIO and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel will be available throughout the inquiry phase to advise the committee as necessary.

The Inquiry Committee, RIO, designated official, or designated third party will document their findings in a preliminary Inquiry Report. The preliminary Inquiry Report contains the following information:

- The composition of the Inquiry Committee, as applicable
- The name and position of the respondent(s);
- A description of the written charge of research misconduct;
- A description of the analyses conducted, transcripts of any interviews that were conducted, a timeline and procedural history, an inventory of sequestered research records, and any institutional actions implemented, including communications with journals or funding agencies;
- The basis for recommending whether the alleged actions warrant or do not warrant an investigation; and,
- Recommendations on whether any other actions should be taken if an investigation is not recommended.

A copy of the preliminary Inquiry Report will be provided in writing to the respondent for comment and rebuttal no more than 60 calendar days following the formal appointment of the Inquiry Committee, as applicable. Portions of the preliminary Inquiry Report may also be provided to the complainant. In distributing the preliminary report for comment and rebuttal, the RIO will inform the recipients of the confidentiality under which the draft is made available. The RIO will establish reasonable conditions to ensure confidentiality. Disclosure of the identity of the respondents and complainants in research misconduct proceedings will be limited to those who “need to know”, which may include institutional review boards, journals, editors, publishers, co-authors, and collaborating institutions. (Note that the limitation on disclosure of the identity of respondents, complainants, and witnesses is explicitly no longer applicable once a final determination has been made.)

The respondent and the complainant, if appropriate, will have 14 calendar days to respond to the preliminary report. Based on the respondent's and/or complainant's comments, the Inquiry Committee or designee may revise the report as appropriate. Any comments that the respondent and/or complainant submit regarding the preliminary report will become part of the final Inquiry Report record.

The RIO will transmit the final Inquiry Report and any comments to the Deciding Official no more than 90 calendar days following the formal appointment of the Inquiry Committee, as applicable. The Deciding Official will make the determination of whether findings from the inquiry provide sufficient evidence of possible research misconduct to justify conducting an investigation. The Deciding Official will make this determination within 14 calendar days of receipt of the final Inquiry Report.

If the Deciding Official's decision varies from the conclusions reached by the Inquiry Committee or designee, the Deciding Official shall prepare a report explaining in detail the basis for his/her decision, stating the conclusions reached and the evidence on which the Deciding Official reached these conclusions. In this case, the Deciding Official's report will be distributed to the respondent, the complainant, and the Inquiry Committee or designee within the 14 calendar day period.

As soon as reasonably possible, the RIO will notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the Deciding Official's decision on whether an investigation will be conducted or not.

If the Deciding Official decides that the matter is not to be pursued further, the RIO will act to ensure that all references to the matter are expunged from the respondent's personnel file. A single copy of the records from the case sufficient to permit a later assessment of the reasons for the decision not to conduct an investigation shall be maintained by the RIO. Anyone known to have knowledge of the inquiry, including the respondent, complainant, and all persons interviewed or otherwise informed of the charge, will be informed that the matter has been dropped because it was determined not to warrant an investigation.

An investigation, if warranted, will begin within 30 calendar days of the Deciding Official's determination to begin an investigation.

Before the investigation phase begins, and as required by relevant federal regulations, the RIO will notify the research sponsor(s) that a research misconduct investigation will commence. The RIO will also immediately sequester any additional pertinent research records that were not previously sequestered during the inquiry phase. The need for additional sequestration of records may occur for any number of reasons, including the RIO's or Deciding Official's decision to investigate additional allegations not considered during the inquiry phase, or the identification of records during the inquiry process that had not previously been secured.

Any extension of the periods defined in this phase will be based on good cause and recorded in the inquiry file.

3.4 The Investigation Phase

The purpose of the investigation phase is to explore in detail the allegations, examine the evidence in depth, and determine whether misconduct has been committed, by whom, and to what extent. The investigation phase may also reveal whether there are additional instances of possible misconduct that would justify broadening the scope beyond the initial allegations. This is particularly important where the alleged misconduct involves clinical trials or potential harm to human subjects or the general public, or if it affects research that forms the basis for public policy, clinical practice, or public health practice.

The start of the investigation phase is marked with the notification to the respondent that an investigation will be undertaken.

In this phase, the RIO will:

- prepare a charge for the Investigation Committee that describes the allegations and related issues identified during the inquiry, identifies the name of the respondent, and includes a copy of these procedures. The charge will state that the committee is to evaluate the evidence and testimony of the respondent, complainant and key witnesses to determine whether, based on a preponderance of the evidence, research misconduct occurred, and if so, to what extent, who was responsible, and its seriousness;
- tentatively identify Investigation Committee members and committee chair;
- notify the respondent in writing of the proposed committee members. If, within 5 calendar days, the respondent submits a written objection to any proposed member of the Investigation Committee or expert based on bias or conflict of interest, the RIO will determine whether to replace the challenged member or expert with a qualified substitute;
- appoint the Investigation Committee;
- convene the first meeting of the Investigation Committee including a representative from the Office of the General Counsel, at which the Committee will review the charge, the final Inquiry Report, and the prescribed procedures and standards for the conduct of the investigation, including the necessity for confidentiality and for developing an investigation plan; and,
- assist the Investigation Committee and any necessary experts in the conduct of the investigation. The committee and the RIO will: use diligent efforts to ensure that the investigation is thorough and sufficiently documented and includes examination of all research records and evidence relevant to reaching a decision on the merits of the charge of research misconduct; interview the respondent, complainant and any other available person who has been reasonably identified as having information regarding any relevant aspects of the investigation, including witnesses identified by the respondent, and record or transcribe each interview, provide the recording or transcript to the interviewee for correction, and include the recording or transcript in the record of investigation; pursue

diligently all significant issues and leads discovered that are determined relevant to the investigation, including any evidence of additional instances of possible research misconduct; and, continue the investigation to completion.

Any materials shown to interviewees will also be numbered as exhibits and referred by exhibit number during the interview and included in the institutional record along with the exhibits.

During the investigation, if additional information becomes available that substantially changes the subject matter of the investigation or would suggest additional respondents the committee will notify the RIO, who will determine whether it is necessary to notify the respondent of the new subject matter or to provide notice to additional respondents. The University is not required to conduct a separate inquiry for each new respondent.

The RIO and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel will be available throughout the investigation phase to advise the committee as necessary.

The Investigation Committee will document their findings in a preliminary Investigation Report. The preliminary Investigation Report must:

- include the composition of the Investigation Committee;
- describe the nature of the allegations of research misconduct;
- describe the specific allegations of research misconduct considered in the investigation;
- include the institutional policies and procedures under which the investigation was conducted;
- include an inventory of sequestered materials and how sequestration was conducted, all interview transcripts, as well as any scientific or forensic analyses that were conducted;
- identify and summarize the research records and evidence reviewed and identify any evidence taken into custody but not reviewed. The report should also describe any relevant records and evidence not taken into custody and explain why;
- identification of publications, manuscripts, PHS funding applications, progress reports, presentations, research records, etc. containing materials linked to the alleged research misconduct;
- provide a finding as to whether research misconduct did or did not occur for each separate allegation of research misconduct identified during the investigation, and if misconduct was found a) identify it as falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism and whether it was intentional, knowing or in reckless disregard; b) summarize the facts and analysis supporting the conclusion and consider the merits of any reasonable explanation by the respondent and any evidence that rebuts the respondent's explanations; c) identify any publications that need correction or retraction; d) identify the respondent responsible for the misconduct; and e) list any current support or known applications or proposals for support that the respondent may have.

In addition, the preliminary Investigation Report may include the Investigation Committee's recommendations for scientific and/or administrative sanctions that the University may consider imposing consistent with its policies and procedures.

The RIO will provide the respondent with a copy of the preliminary Investigation Report for comment and rebuttal, including access to interview transcripts. The RIO may also provide portions of the preliminary report to the complainant for comment. In distributing the draft report, the RIO will inform the recipients of the confidentiality under which the draft report is made available. The RIO will establish reasonable conditions to ensure confidentiality.

The respondent and complainant will have 30 calendar days to review and comment on the report. Based on the respondent's and complainant's comments, the Investigation Committee may revise the report as appropriate.

Any comments that the respondent and complainant submit regarding the report become part of the final Investigation Report record.

The RIO will transmit the final Investigation Report, including any comments provided by the complainant and/or respondent, to the Deciding Official within 180 calendar days of the beginning of the investigation phase. A copy of the final Investigation Report will be transmitted to the respondent at the time it is transmitted to the Deciding Official.

Any extension of the periods defined in this phase will be based on good cause and recorded in the investigation file.

3.5 Institutional Review, Decision and Action

Within 14 calendar days the Deciding Official will make the final determination whether to accept the Investigation Report, its findings, and the recommended University sanctions and/or actions.

The Deciding Official may choose to return the report to the Investigation Committee with a request for further fact-finding or analysis based on substantive or procedural concerns. The committee may request from the Deciding Official time necessary to respond to the concerns noted and so agrees to prepare an amended Investigation Report in that time period. The respondent and complainant, as appropriate, will be accorded 30 calendar days to respond to the Investigation Committee's amended report.

If the Deciding Official's ultimate determination varies from that of the Investigation Committee, the Deciding Official will explain in a report the basis for rendering a decision different from that recommended by the Investigation Committee. The report must document the Deciding Official's findings, stating the conclusions reached and the evidence on which the Deciding Official reached those conclusions. The report must make explicit findings of fact with respect to the charge. The

Deciding Official's decision must be based solely on evidence elicited in the Investigation and to which the respondent has had an opportunity to respond.

The Deciding Official's determination, together with the Investigation Committee's final and, in some cases, amended, report constitutes the final finding in the case. These findings shall be conclusive and binding on any later proceeding convened for other purposes.

When a final decision on the case has been reached, the RIO will notify the respondent, the complainant and the Investigation Committee in writing of the decision.

If the Deciding Official finds no misconduct, the RIO will undertake all reasonable efforts to restore the respondent's reputation, including notifying those individuals 15 aware of or involved in the investigation of the final outcome, publicizing the final outcome in forums in which the allegation of research misconduct was previously publicized, and/or expunging all reference to the research misconduct allegation from the respondent's personnel file.

In the case of a research misconduct finding, the Deciding Official, in consultation with the Provost, and the General Counsel, will determine whether law enforcement agencies, professional societies, professional licensing boards, editors of journals in which falsified reports may have been published, collaborators of the respondent in the work, or other relevant parties should be notified of the outcome of the case. The University may be required to report allegations or findings to funders in accordance with award terms.

The Deciding Official will also determine, based on the severity of misconduct, whether to impose research sanctions such as, but not limited to, imposing certification requirements to ensure compliance with the terms of a grant, or suspension or termination of a grant.

The Provost may also assess administrative sanctions appropriate to the level of misconduct, including, but not limited to providing a letter of reprimand, termination of employment for a faculty or staff member, or expulsion of a student. The imposition of some sanctions may be subject to the procedures for approval and/or appeal prescribed by the University's Appointment and Tenure Policies or University Personnel Policies.

Any extension of the periods defined in this phase will be based on good cause and recorded in the investigation file.

3.6 Appeals Phase

The respondent may appeal a research misconduct determination or sanction. Appeals are limited to claims that the process was flawed in a way that creates a significant risk that the outcome was erroneous, or to grievances of sanctions imposed as a result of a finding of research misconduct.

The respondent must submit an appeal in writing to the Provost within 14 calendar days of receipt of notice of the Deciding Official's decision. The appeal must specify the nature of the appeal

consistent with the limits described above. The respondent must also submit a copy of the appeal to the Deciding Official. The University must notify the Office of Research Integrity promptly if a respondent appeals a research misconduct determination.

Appeals may be taken to the review body available to persons in the respondent's appointment classification for the purpose of hearing employment grievances (e.g. the Faculty Senate in the case of a faculty member, consistent with University Appointment and Tenure Policies), or the processes established by Drexel Personnel Policies relating to employee conduct. Since the factual record established during the investigation constitutes the factual record for the purposes of the appeal, such appeal bodies may not review the factual finding of misconduct.

The Provost will determine the outcome of an appeal.

Any extension of the periods defined in this phase will be based on good cause and recorded in the investigation file.

3.7 Voluntary Agreement

At any point during the informal or inquiry phases of a research misconduct proceeding, the respondent may be offered the opportunity to enter into a voluntary agreement to resolve the matter. A voluntary agreement is a written document in which the respondent acknowledges and accepts responsibility for specified acts of research misconduct, in whole or in part, without proceeding to a full investigation.

The voluntary agreement will include a description of the admitted conduct and a proposed action plan or resolution. The action plan may include, as appropriate, corrective actions, required training or education, supervision or mentoring requirements, restrictions on research activities, correction or retraction of affected research outputs or publications, and/or other administrative or disciplinary measures consistent with institutional policy.

The respondent will be given a reasonable opportunity to review the document and seek independent advice. The respondent may decline the agreement, in which case the matter will proceed in accordance with the research misconduct process.

A voluntary agreement, once signed, constitutes a final resolution of the matter with respect to the admitted conduct. The institution will implement and monitor compliance with the agreed-upon action plan. Failure to comply with the terms of the voluntary agreement may result in additional administrative action and/or reinstatement of formal proceedings, as appropriate.

Where applicable, the institution will fulfill any required reporting obligations to sponsors, regulatory agencies, or other oversight bodies in accordance with federal regulations and institutional policy.

4. Other Considerations

After completion of a case and all ensuing related actions, the RIO will prepare a complete file, including the records of any inquiry or investigation and copies of all documents and other materials furnished to the RIO or committees. The RIO will keep the file for seven years after completion of the case.

The RIO will file the entire institutional record with the Office of Research Integrity upon the conclusion of the investigation. This includes:

- Documentation of the assessment;
- The inquiry report and all records considered or relied on during the inquiry;
- The investigation report and all records considered or relied on during the investigation;
- All interview transcripts;
- Decisions by the Deciding Official;
- Records of any appeals;
- An index listing all the research records and evidence reviewed by Drexel during the research misconduct proceedings; and
- A general description of any records that were sequestered but *not* considered or relied upon.

If, as a result of the process implemented, it is determined that a complainant's allegations of research misconduct were not made in good faith, the Deciding Official, after consultation with the General Counsel and the Provost, will determine whether and what administrative action should be taken against the complainant.

The lack of a finding of research misconduct from the Office of Research Integrity will not overturn the University's determination that the actions qualified as research misconduct that warranted remediation under the policy of the institution. A finding of research misconduct from the Office of Research Integrity is not necessary for the University's decision to be considered final. The Office of Research Integrity (or other funding agencies) may also assess any allegations received, referring to the University for inquiry if applicable, or may refer to the University for initial assessment.

5. Roles, Responsibilities and Rights

5.1 Research Integrity Officer

The Research Integrity Officer (RIO) has primary responsibility for implementation of the procedures set forth in this document.

The RIO is sensitive to the varied demands made on those who conduct research, and those who are respondents, complainants and principals in research misconduct proceedings.

The RIO is identified on the University website and serves as an ex officio member of the Senate Committee on Research and Scholarly Activities.

The RIO reviews allegations of misconduct and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that research misconduct proceedings are conducted in a manner that is impartial and unbiased to the maximum extent practicable. If inquiries or investigations are deemed necessary, the RIO selects those conducting the inquiries or investigations on the basis of scientific expertise that is pertinent to the matter and, prior to selection, screens them for any unresolved conflicts of interest with the respondent, complainant, potential witnesses to the research misconduct, or other principals involved in the matter. Any such conflict, which a reasonable person would consider to demonstrate potential bias, disqualifies an individual from selection. The RIO limits disclosure of the identity of respondents and complainants, to the extent possible: (1) to only those who need to know in order to carry out a thorough, competent, objective and fair research misconduct proceeding; (2) to the research sponsor as the sponsor conducts its review of the research misconduct proceeding and any subsequent proceedings; and (3) as required by law.

The RIO undertakes all reasonable and practical efforts to take custody of research records and evidence discovered during the course of the research misconduct proceeding, including at the informal, inquiry and investigation phases, and/or if new allegations arise. The RIO is responsible for maintaining files of all documents and evidence and for the confidentiality and the security of the files.

The RIO assists the complainant, respondent, Inquiry and Investigation Committees and all University personnel in complying with these procedures as well as with applicable standards imposed by government or other sponsors. The RIO provides copies of these procedures to all relevant parties, including complainants and respondents.

The RIO monitors the treatment of complainants, members of the Inquiry and Investigation Committees, and other witnesses and principals who participate in research misconduct proceedings. The RIO will seek to prevent or mitigate retaliation against these persons in the terms and conditions of their employment or other status at the University and will review instances of alleged retaliation for appropriate action.

The RIO ensures that the University complies with the applicable requirements and regulations of its research sponsors and is responsible for complying with the procedures of those organizations for investigating allegations of research misconduct.

The RIO keeps the Deciding Official and others who need to know apprised of the progress of the review of allegations of research misconduct.

The RIO may confer, on a confidential basis, with other experienced colleagues within the University, in the Office of Research Integrity at the Department of Health and Human Services, or in the relevant sponsor organization.

The RIO ensures that the administrative actions taken by the University are enforced and takes appropriate action to notify other involved parties, such as sponsors, law enforcement agencies, professional societies and licensing boards of these actions.

The RIO maintains records of research misconduct proceedings and makes them available to relevant sponsors or governmental entities. In the event that multiple institutions are involved in a research misconduct proceeding, one will be designated as the "lead institution", which will obtain research records from the other involved institutions.

Throughout a research misconduct proceeding, the RIO is responsible for determining if there is any threat to public health, federal funds and equipment, or to the integrity of the research process. In the event of such a threat, the RIO, in consultation with the Deciding Official and other institutional officials and the sponsor (if appropriate), takes appropriate interim action to protect against any such threat. At any time during a misconduct proceeding, the RIO will notify the sponsor immediately if he/she has reason to believe that any of the following conditions apply:

- The health or safety of the public is at risk, including an immediate need to protect human or animal subjects;
- Funded resources or interests are threatened;
- Research activities should be suspended;
- There is reasonable indication of possible violations of civil or criminal law;
- Federal action is required to protect the interests of those involved in the research misconduct proceeding;
- The research misconduct proceeding may be made public prematurely and governmental action may be necessary to safeguard evidence and protect the rights of those involved; and/or,
- The research community or public should be informed.

5.2 Complainant

The complainant is responsible for making allegations in good faith, maintaining confidentiality, and cooperating with an inquiry or investigation. The complainant recognizes that if the matter is referred to an Inquiry or Investigation Committee and the complainant's testimony is required, anonymity may no longer be guaranteed.

The complainant is provided a copy of these procedures and an explanation of his/her rights and responsibilities by the RIO.

The complainant ordinarily is interviewed by the Inquiry and Investigation Committees, and has the opportunity to review portions of the inquiry and investigation reports pertinent to his or her allegations or testimony for accuracy.

If the RIO determines that the complainant may be able to provide pertinent information on any other portions of the draft inquiry or investigation reports, these portions may be given to the complainant for comment. The complainant is entitled to reasonable and practical efforts by the University to (i) protect or restore the position and reputation of the complainant and (ii) to counter potential or actual retaliation against the complainant.

5.3 Deciding Official

The Deciding Official is responsible for appointing the RIO.

The Deciding Official (or in his or her absence, a representative appointed by the Deciding Official) consults with the RIO and other appropriate officials and determines whether to conduct an investigation, whether misconduct occurred, whether to impose sanctions, and whether to recommend and/or take other appropriate administrative actions. During the conduct of an inquiry or investigation, the Deciding Official, in consultation with the RIO and the Drexel General Counsel, may recommend that the University take interim administrative actions, as appropriate, to protect, for example, research sponsor funds and human subjects.

5.4 Inquiry Committee

The Inquiry Committee consists of at least three individuals who do not have conflicts of interest in the case being considered, are unbiased, and have the necessary expertise to: evaluate the evidence and issues related to the allegation; interview the complainant, respondent, and key witnesses; and conduct the inquiry to determine if there is sufficient evidence of possible research misconduct to warrant an investigation. Members of the Inquiry Committee may be scientists, subject matter experts, administrators, lawyers, or other qualified persons, and they may be from inside or outside the University. When possible, faculty members of the committee will be at the same level or higher of the respondent and not within the same department of the complainant or respondent to mitigate undue influence.

Inquiry Committee members cooperate with the research misconduct proceeding by impartially carrying out the duties assigned. A committee member does not act in good faith if his or her acts or omissions on the committee are dishonest or influenced by conflicts of interest with those involved in the research misconduct proceeding.

5.5 Investigation Committee

The Investigation Committee consists of at least three individuals who do not have conflicts of interest in the case being considered, are unbiased, and have the expertise necessary to: explore in detail the allegations; examine the evidence in depth; and, determine specifically whether misconduct has been committed, by whom, and its severity. The Investigation Committee may include members who were part of the Inquiry Committee. The Investigation Committee also determines whether there are additional instances of possible misconduct that would justify broadening the scope beyond the initial charge of research misconduct. Members of the Investigation Committee may be scientists, subject matter experts, administrators, lawyers, or other qualified persons, and they may be from inside or outside the University. When possible, faculty members of the committee will be at the same level or higher of the respondent and not within the same department of the complainant or respondent to mitigate undue influence.

Investigation Committee members must cooperate with the research misconduct proceeding by impartially carrying out the duties assigned. A committee member does not act in good faith if his

or her acts or omissions on the committee are dishonest or influenced by conflicts of interest with those involved in the research misconduct proceeding.

5.6 Respondent

The respondent respects confidentiality and cooperates with the conduct of an inquiry or investigation. The respondent is provided a copy of these procedures and an explanation of his/her rights and responsibilities by the RIO.

The respondent is entitled to seek legal counsel or to retain an advisor. The respondent's legal counsel or advisor may not be a principal or witness in the case. The respondent's legal counsel or advisor may accompany the respondent in any appearances before the committees but may consult only with the respondent. Such individuals may not address the committees, ask questions of the committees or participate in the interviews.

The respondent is entitled to impartial and unbiased proceedings. Any concerns of bias should be reported to the Deciding Official.

The respondent is informed in writing of the formal charge of research misconduct when an inquiry is opened and is notified in writing of the final determinations and resulting actions. The respondent will also have the opportunity to be interviewed by and present evidence to the Inquiry and Investigation Committees, and to review and comment upon the draft inquiry and investigation reports. The respondent will be notified sufficiently in advance of the scheduling of interviews so that he/she may prepare for the interview.

The respondent is notified in writing of any new allegations not addressed in the inquiry or in the initial notice of investigation, within a reasonable time after the determination to pursue these new allegations.

The respondent will be interviewed by and present evidence to the Inquiry and Investigation Committees, and has the opportunity to review portions of the inquiry and investigation reports pertinent to his or her allegations or testimony for accuracy.

At any time, the respondent may admit that research misconduct occurred and that he/she committed the research misconduct. Such admittance should be made to the RIO or the Deciding Official.

The termination of the respondent's institutional employment, by resignation or otherwise, before or after an allegation of possible research misconduct has been reported, will not preclude or terminate the misconduct procedures.

If the respondent is found not to have engaged in research misconduct, they have the right to receive University assistance in restoring their reputation.

5.7 Witnesses

Witnesses cooperate with research misconduct proceedings. A witness does not act in good faith if his or her acts or omissions are dishonest or influenced by conflicts of interest with others involved in the research misconduct proceeding.

5.8 Office for Research & Innovation Responsibilities

The Office for Research & Innovation is responsible for maintaining these procedures and applicable tools. For inquiries regarding these procedures, please contact the Executive Director for Research Compliance or the Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and Regulatory Affairs, as part of the Office for Research & Innovation (ORI).

6. Resources

- Drexel Compliance Hotline
- 42 CFR 93: Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct
- Office of Research Integrity - Misconduct

7. Revision

Version 002/Effective Date: 08/03/2026 – Original Document: Managing Research Misconduct Allegations, Inquiries and Investigations

- Updated procedures to the standardized ORI template.
- Updated procedures in compliance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)/Office of Research Integrity (ORI) Final Rule (42 CFR Part 93)
- Added section on Voluntary Agreement