



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

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TUS Research Integrity Policy 2025 - 2028



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1.0 Introduction

The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) supports the international definitions and principles set out in the revised ALLEA [‘European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity’](#) and The National Research Integrity Forums revised [‘Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland,’](#) all of which are reflected in the TUS Research Integrity policy. This policy applies to all employees of TUS, all TUS students undertaking research, and to all Adjunct, Emeritus, and visiting personnel officially engaged in research activity at the Technological University of the Shannon and/or undertaking any research activity in the Technological University of the Shannon name.

Research activity is a defining hallmark of higher education, informing teaching and learning and adding to the global body of knowledge. Research integrity relates to the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, and to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research record in publications and elsewhere. Research integrity shares many of the same principles with academic integrity. However, there are distinctions between the two. While academic integrity applies to everyone pursuing responsible scholarly activities as higher education providers and professionals, research integrity applies specifically to those in the research community (e.g. (academic staff, research staff, students, visiting and adjunct personnel, etc.)), and, as such, focuses on best practices for responsible conduct of research. The Irish research ecosystem must protect its reputation for the quality and integrity of its research activity and outputs. Therefore, research integrity is best ensured when all stakeholders in the research ecosystem work together to create effective processes.

Research integrity is crucial to preserving the trustworthiness of research and its results. It encompasses the basic responsibility of the research community to formulate the principles of research, to define the criteria for proper research behaviour, to maximise the quality, reliability, and robustness of research and its results, and to respond adequately to threats to, or violations of, good research practices. This policy recognises that research results are not confined to journal publications but include, for example, research data, metadata, protocols, code, software, and other materials, presentations, public engagement, and performance and exhibition. ‘Authors’ in this context refers to the persons generating the results in whatever form they take.

The primary purpose of this policy is to help realise this responsibility and to serve the research community as a framework for self-regulation. The revised National Policy Statement on [‘Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland.’](#) commits Irish research performing organisations to the highest standards of integrity in carrying out their research, so that partners and other stakeholders, and the international research community have full confidence in the Irish research ecosystem.

The [‘European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity’](#) specifies four basic principles of research integrity and good practice in carrying out research that all researchers must observe and promote in performing their research. These principles are:

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, methodology, analysis, and use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting, and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full, and unbiased way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, research subjects, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision, and mentoring, and for its wider societal impacts

2.0 Good Research Practice

TUS are committed to ensuring the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, based on the [‘HEA Principles of Good Practice Within Irish Higher Education Institutions,’](#) and adopted in the ‘TUS Principles of Good Research Practice.’ The nine principles that underpin good research practice are to be observed by members of the research community:

1. Excellence in Research and Academic Freedom
2. Research Integrity and Ethics
3. Open Research
4. Intellectual Property and Knowledge Transfer
5. Researcher Development
6. Research Project and Programme Management
7. Dignity and Respect
8. Gender Equality and Inclusiveness
9. Research and Sustainability

This includes conducting research in accordance with appropriate ethical, legal, regulatory, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards. The TUS Research Integrity Policy relates to each of these principles.

3.0 Training

TUS are committed to supporting a culture that embraces a positive, proactive approach to promoting research integrity. This includes developing our research community through education, promoting good research practices, and allocating resources and necessary infrastructure to support research integrity. Effective education leads to enhanced awareness of research integrity issues, a positive approach to research integrity as central to the research mission, a positive research culture that enhances the reputation and public image of research, and a proactive approach to preventing research misconduct.

All those undertaking research shall participate in appropriate training in research integrity. The Research Office in conjunction with the Graduate School and the Library will provide researchers with the opportunity to receive appropriate research integrity training. In this regard, all new researchers are required to undertake postgraduate induction training and other training programmes from time to time. Continuing education on research integrity should also be provided through mentorship by senior investigators responsible for the supervision/training of PhDs and postdoctoral researchers alike. As part of structured research programmes in TUS, completion of a research integrity module is mandatory. Staff training should be repeated every three years, to take account of changes in the research landscape and new research integrity challenges.

4.0 Intent

This policy provides mechanisms for identifying and responding to suspected research integrity breaches and to perceptions of research misconduct. They provide a single point of entry for formal allegations, a mechanism for assessing and investigating allegations and an approved pathway for managing and resolving allegations. This policy seeks to ensure that where a research integrity breach /misconduct is identified it is addressed promptly and effectively. The affected parties are treated fairly, and steps are taken to maintain public confidence in the universities' research endeavors. It must be demonstrated that the research integrity misconduct was committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly. Proof must be based on the

preponderance of evidence. Anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed innocent until proven otherwise. TUS will protect the rights of bona fide “whistle-blowers” during investigations and ensure the [TUS Protected Disclosure \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#) is adhered to.

5.0 Scope

At the outset, it should be said that research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation, or judgement in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to the research process. Similarly, it does not include poor research per se unless this encompasses an intention to deceive.

As regards the substance of research misconduct, we are guided by the ‘[European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)’ and the national ‘[Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#).’ Violations of research integrity take many forms and can be of varying seriousness along a continuum. The most serious are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Fabrication: | making up data or results and recording or reporting them as if they were real. |
| Falsification: | manipulating research data, materials, equipment, images, or processes, or changing, omitting, or suppressing data or results without justification. |
| Plagiarism: | using another person’s work or ideas without giving proper credit to the original source. |

Each one of these comprises an attack on the integrity of the research record and, as such, must be vigorously defended against. Fabrication and falsification are the most serious offences that can be committed, as the development of knowledge itself is undermined. Plagiarism may be seen as marginally less egregious since the knowledge core is not in itself damaged. However, the corrupting effect on the principle of open communication and sharing of knowledge for wider benefit means that repeated, significant plagiarism must be regarded as extremely serious.

While Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism (FFP) represent the most serious examples of research misconduct, there are other types of unacceptable research practices which, while not as serious as FFP in individual instances, are more prevalent and therefore (in the aggregate) potentially as damaging to the overall

research process, the credibility of research and the reputation of the research community. Examples of other unacceptable research practices include but are not confined to the behaviours below;

- Data-related practices: e.g. not preserving primary data, poor data management and/or storage;
- Publication-related practices: e.g. claiming undeserved authorship, denying authorship to contributors, artificially proliferating publications;
- Personal behaviours: e.g. significant deficiencies in supervision of the next generation of researchers and scholars, inappropriate personal behaviour;
- Financial and other malpractice: e.g. peer review abuse, non-disclosure of a conflict of interest, misrepresenting credentials; and/or
- Research procedures: e.g. harmful or dangerous research methods.

The national '[Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)' provides a more substantive set of examples.

Failure to conduct research ethically, lawfully or in compliance with the following TUS Research Policies, may also be regarded as research misconduct:

- a) [TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations](#);
- b) TUS Principles of Good Practice in Research;
- c) TUS Ethics Policy for Researchers;
- d) [TUS Intellectual Property Policy](#) (NDAs, Template Collaboration Agreements, Deeds of Adherence, and Invention Disclosure etc.);
- e) TUS Authorship Policy.

Deviations from the TUS Research Policies include but are not limited to:

- Non-adherence to or significant departure from the approved research programmes;
- Carrying out unapproved research programmes;
- Non-compliance with the [TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations](#);
- Conducting research without the necessary ethical approval in accordance with the TUS Ethics Policy for researchers;
- Failure to declare and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with the [TUS](#)

[Conflicts of Interest Policy](#);

- Non-compliance with health and safety policies;
- Failure to accurately maintain research laboratory notebooks or research practice notebooks;
- Failure to abide by the [TUS Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- Wilful concealment or facilitation of research misconduct and/or serious misconduct by others.

6.0 Research Integrity Officer

In line with the National Forum on Research Integrity '[Position Paper on Research Integrity Officer Role & Reporting](#),' the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) will normally be an individual within the organisation with significant knowledge and experience of research. The RIO will act as the first point of contact for receiving allegations of research misconduct in TUS. The RIO will not be involved in deciding whether individual allegations of research misconduct should be upheld. This decision will be made via the TUS process for investigating allegations of misconduct in research. The RIO will initiate and coordinate the process, but they shall not personally participate in any investigation panels/process nor seek to influence the work or findings of said panels/process.

The term of appointment of a RIO will be for a period not longer than five years and will not normally be held on a full-time basis. To allow for cases where the appointed RIO has a potential conflict of interest with the complainant or respondent or is otherwise involved in the case, the RIO should also have a formally nominated alternate to whom allegations can be brought to directly or be referred by the RIO. In addition, to facilitate a “no wrong door” approach for reporting of allegations, the organisation should inform all staff that any person who brings an allegation of misconduct in research to them should instruct the complainant, in confidence, to bring the allegations to the RIO or their alternate.

7.0 Procedures for Managing Research Integrity Misconduct

Any member of the TUS community or external party may raise a concern on Research Integrity/Misconduct by completing the 'Formal Allegation of Research Misconduct' Form (Appendix 2) and returning same along with any supporting evidence to the

designated email address ResearchIntegrity@tus.ie. Access to this mailbox is restricted to only the RIO and their formally nominated alternate.

7.1 Allegation

A TUS staff member, student or visiting researcher/scholar who is aware of any incident(s) of suspected research misconduct should in the first instance advise the RIO. If the RIO is a) the subject of the allegation or b) is conflicted in any way regarding the nature or source of the allegation, the RIO will inform the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar who will instruct a nominated alternate to fulfil the role of the RIO in the investigation of the allegation. All allegations will be treated with fairness, sensitivity, and respect. The RIO will acknowledge receipt of the allegation within five working days. While TUS will endeavor to comply with all the timelines outlined in this Procedure, these may be extended in exceptional circumstances. All investigations will be conducted in line with the TUS HR [Grievance Policy](#) & Grievance procedure and with oversight also of the [Protected Disclosure Policy](#).

7.2 Initial Review

Following receipt of an allegation, the RIO will conduct an initial review to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of research integrity misconduct to proceed with an investigation. The RIO may be assisted in the review by internal and/or external experts if required. The initial review should be complete, and a written record of findings should be prepared within fifteen working days of its initiation. If the 15-day deadline cannot be met, a report should be filed citing progress to date and the reason for the delay and the complainant should be informed. Following the initial review, the RIO will provide the complainant with a written determination summarising the reasons for the decision reached following the initial review:

- 1) If the RIO determines that the allegation does not fall within the definition of research integrity misconduct, the allegation is then dismissed. No further action is taken under this procedure.
- 2) If the RIO determines that the allegation falls within the definition of research misconduct, an investigation is warranted. The RIO will notify the Dean of Faculty/School, the associated Head of Department, and the Dean of Graduate Studies of this determination once the preliminary inquiry is complete.

7.3 Investigation

The objective of an investigation is to determine whether or not, on the balance of probabilities, the alleged research integrity misconduct occurred. Proof of research misconduct must be based on the preponderance of evidence. The RIO will set up a

panel of enquiry, comprising of appropriately trained senior managers who will investigate the allegation and report their findings in writing to RIO. A copy of this report will be made available to the person(s) against whom the allegation is made within ten working days of the conclusion of the investigation and to the Dean of Faculty/School the associated Head of Department, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. In carrying out their investigation, the panel will ensure that the person(s) against whom the allegation is made will have the opportunity to present his/her side of the case and to be represented by an appropriate person of their choice.

The report of the investigation panel may conclude:

- 1) That there is no evidence of breach/research misconduct, the matter will be considered closed, and all relevant parties will be so advised;
- 2) That there is evidence of breach/research misconduct but that measures short of disciplinary action are warranted, in which case such measures will be implemented (e.g., support, training, staff development);
- 3) That there is evidence of breach/research misconduct and that in addition to non-disciplinary measures (if any) disciplinary action may be appropriate, in which case, a recommendation will be made to initiate the [TUS Student](#) or [TUS Employee Code of Conduct](#) and [Disciplinary Procedures](#).

It is a requirement that all parties involved maintain confidentiality. Information is, however, subject to any limits or disclosure requirements imposed by law, by this procedure or by the [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#), [Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018](#) and the General [Data Protection Regulation \(EU\)2016/679](#).

A summary of the steps outlined in an investigation is outlined in [Appendix 1](#), Figure 1.

7.4 Appeal

The Institute will provide for an appeal process in respect of an investigation into alleged research integrity misconduct. The purpose of the appeal panel is to;

- a) Consider and review the internal investigation.
- b) Assess if the decisions and actions taken were reasonable in the circumstances;
- c) Aim to reach a final internal decision which is fair and just.

The appeal should be submitted to the Vice President for Research, Development

and Innovation in writing. This should normally be submitted within ten working days of receipt of the response from the investigation panel. The appeal should detail the reasons for requesting the findings of the Research Integrity Investigation Panel. The Vice President for Research, Development and Innovation will acknowledge receipt of the request for review within five working days of receipt of the appeal. The Vice President for Research, Development and Innovation, in conjunction with the RIO, shall arrange the appointment of the Appeal Panel and convene a meeting of the Panel normally within fifteen working days of receipt of the request. The appeal panel, will comprise of a minimum of three appropriately trained senior managers (not involved in the preceding stages). As part of its review, the Panel will have access to all prior records and documents arising from the initial investigation. The Panel may request to meet with all parties involved, individually or collectively as appropriate. Any additional or new information may normally only be submitted if it was reasonably not available during the investigation. However, the Appeals Panel may at its discretion accept new information if it deems it appropriate. The Panel shall endeavor to have completed its review within thirty working days of receipt of the Appeal and has the authority to take the same action as the Investigation panel. Having completed its review, the Panel will decide which may include one or more of the following:

- a) upholding the original decision of the Investigation panel;
- b) modifying the original decision of the Investigation panel;
- c) overturning the decision of the Investigation panel;

The Appeal Panel's determinations shall be sent within five working days of the conclusion of the review to the relevant party and the relevant Dean of Faculty/School, Head of Department, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The decision of the Research Integrity Appeal Panel shall be final and binding within the Institute. This outcome does not interfere with the Statutory Rights of any parties to the application.

A summary of the steps outlined in an appeal is outlined in [Appendix 1](#), Figure 2.

7.5 External Notification

Where necessary and/or appropriate the RIO will notify relevant external parties of research misconduct allegations which have been upheld after an investigation and appeal and, where it occurs, an appeal. External parties may include funding bodies and publishers, and any other stakeholders who the RIO, in consultation with the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, deems appropriate. In accordance with the

national [Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#),’ the RIO will collate the information record of the investigation and, where it occurred, the appeal, and subsequently report on the investigation and, where it occurred, the appeal with internal contacts and external organisations where appropriate.

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Appendix 1. Procedures Summary Diagram

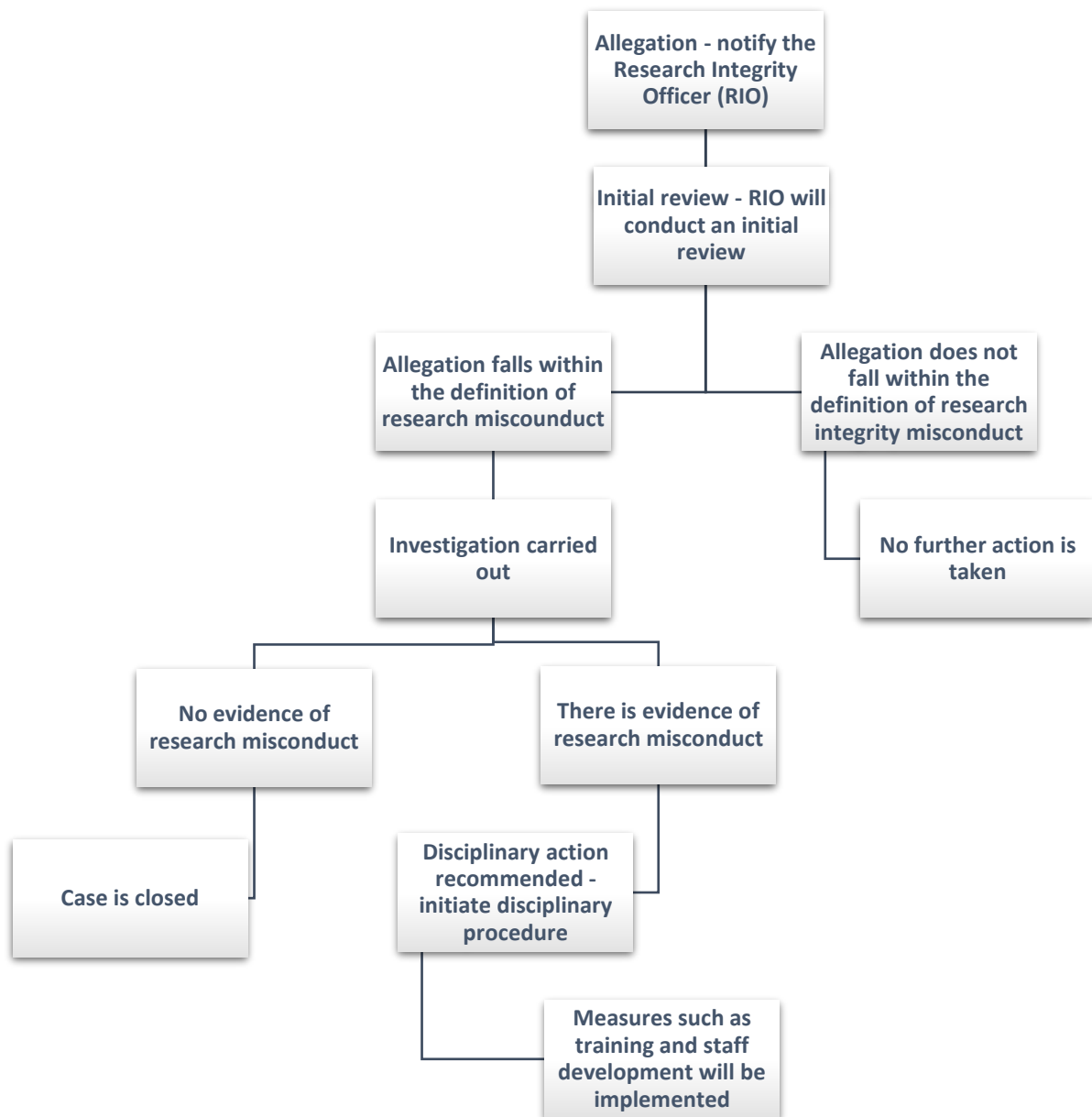


Figure 1: Allegation, Initial review & Investigation

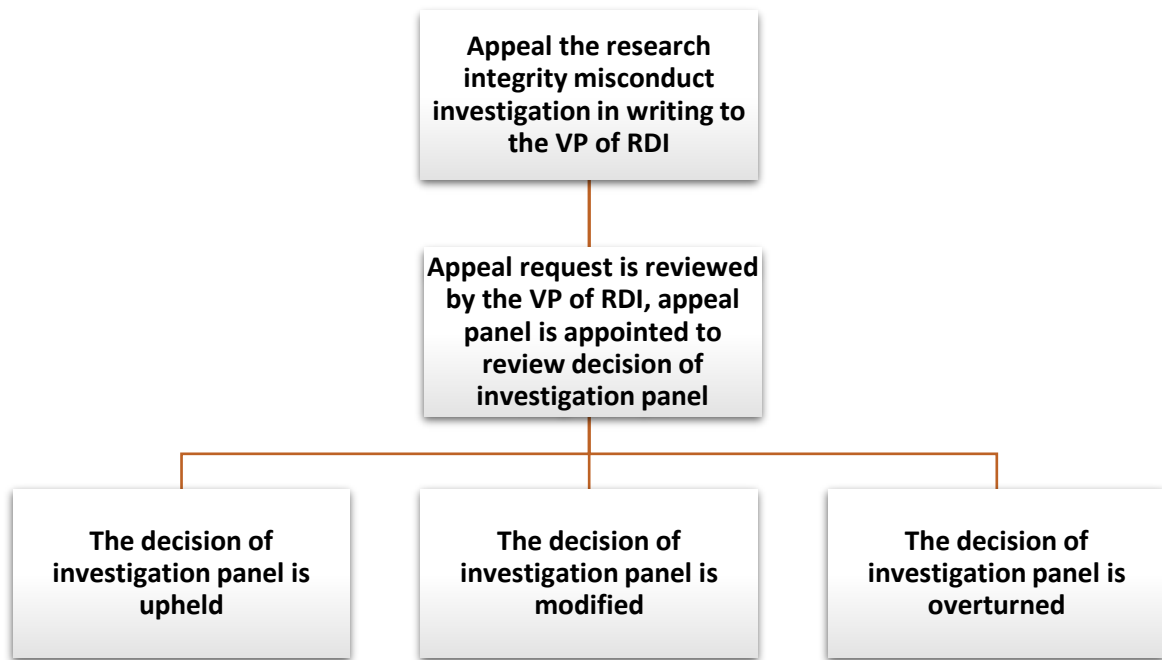


Figure 2: The Appeals Process

Appendix 2. Formal Allegation of Research Misconduct Form



FORMAL ALLEGATION OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

- This Form must be used to make a Formal Allegation of Research Misconduct under the TUS Research Integrity Policy.
- It should be completed with as much information as possible, dated, signed and emailed to ResearchIntegrity@tus.ie.
- Documentation which you are relying on, should be attached where appropriate.
- In accordance with TUS Procedures for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research an anonymised copy of this allegation will be provided to the Respondent.

1. Person making the Allegation of Research Misconduct (Complainant)

Name	
Email Address	
Faculty/Unit	

Additional Complainant (if relevant) – repeat as necessary

Name	
Email Address	
Faculty/Unit	

2. The Person against whom the Allegation is being made (Respondent) - Details (if known)

Name	
Email Address	
Faculty/Unit	

3. **Details of the allegation(s) of Research Misconduct. If the allegation involves publications, please be very specific and provide details of full publication titles and journal references, and web links if available. A continuation sheet can be used if necessary, in order to include all evidence.**

4. Please provide details of any informal steps which have been taken to resolve the matter and the outcome(s).

5. Signature and Date

Signed:

Date: