

Summary of Process for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct

- I. Allegations are received by the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) and presented to the chair of the Standing Committee on Research Misconduct (SCRM). The SCRM Chair, consulting with the RIO and University Legal Counsel or the full committee as needed, determines whether the allegations fall within the purview of the SCRM.
- II. An **inquiry** to determine if the allegations warrant further investigation
 - The Standing Committee designates an Inquiry Committee to conduct a preliminary inquiry. The purpose of the inquiry is to separate allegations deserving further investigation from frivolous, unjustified, or clearly mistaken allegations.
 - The Inquiry Committee may interview the Complainant to determine whether further inquiry is warranted.
 - The RIO notifies the Respondent in writing that an inquiry is to be conducted, outlines potential consequences of misconduct, and informs the Respondent of the procedures to be followed.
 - The Inquiry Committee then conducts a preliminary fact-finding inquiry and determines within 60 calendar days whether or not a full investigation is warranted.
 - During the preliminary inquiry the Inquiry Committee may choose to interview or obtain written statements from relevant parties and examine documents or other exhibits, as necessary.
 - The Inquiry Committee prepares a written report summarizing their procedures and conclusions. The Respondent and Complainant have an opportunity to make comments on the report before it is submitted to the SCRM for their approval and action.
- III. When warranted, an **investigation** to gather and examine evidence
 - If the SCRM determines that a full investigation is warranted, it names an independent Investigative Committee.
 - If the research is funded by NIH or NSF, the NIH Office of Research Integrity or the NSF Office of the Inspector General is informed of the decision to initiate an investigation (and subsequently informed of the findings of the investigation).

- The Investigative Committee is charged with conducting a thorough review, normally to be completed within 120 calendar days. The Investigative Committee must determine whether, based on a preponderance of the evidence, the allegation represents a significant departure from standard practice and whether the Respondent committed the research misconduct intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.
- At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigative Committee may reach one of the following decisions:
 - A finding of misconduct
 - A finding of no culpable conduct, but serious research error
 - A finding of no misconduct and no serious research error
- The Investigative Committee reports its findings to the SCRM. The Complainant and Respondent may make comments on the report, which are included in the final report.

IV. A formal **finding** regarding the allegations.

- The SCRM reviews the report of the Investigative Committee and provides recommendations to the Deciding Official (typically, the Provost).
- If research misconduct is found, the SCRM may recommend corrective and disciplinary actions, as well as actions designed to prevent similar misconduct in the future. The SCRM may also make recommendations to protect or restore the reputation of the Complainant or witnesses in the case.
- If research misconduct is not found, the SCRM may determine whether the Respondent's reputation has been unjustly damaged by the investigation and, if so, recommend to the Deciding Official actions to repair that damage.

V. Actions subsequent to the SCRM's report

- The Deciding Official will respond to the SCRM recommendations with his/her decisions regarding corrective, disciplinary, or preventive actions.

Summarized from: <http://www.colorado.edu/vcr/sites/default/files/attached-files/SCRM%20Procedures.pdf>