

UCD Research Integrity Policy



Policy owner UCD Research & Innovation **Approval date and body** UMT, 16th March 2021

1. Purpose

University College Dublin is committed to the promotion of an environment which maintains the highest standards of integrity in relation to its educational mission and research activity. It is university policy that all those engaged with research in UCD, including all researchers, students, technical, administrative and research support staff:

- maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research; and
- ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards.

UCD commits to:

- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers;
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- promoting research integrity and incorporating research integrity into learning, training and mentoring opportunities which support the development of researchers; and
- working to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- set out the principles of research integrity and research misconduct; and
- outline the principles that underpin transparent, fair and effective procedures to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

It aims to ensure that all research activity in UCD aligns with the National policy statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, having regard to the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, the Universities Act, 1997, and the statutes and policies of the University. In particular, it is not the intention of the University that this policy should undermine academic freedom, as defined in the Universities Act, 1997, under Section 14.

2. Definitions

Research Integrity relates to the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour in accordance with the law and in the public interest.

UCD Community means

- all UCD employees, whether part time or full time, permanent or temporary;
- all employees of UCD's wholly owned subsidiary companies or overseas campus/offices;
- all registered students of UCD;

- non-University employees who use University funds, facilities or other resources, including the University's name and reputation, to carry out teaching and/or research, and/or participate in UCD-administered research, including retired employees, visiting faculty and researchers; consultants, contractors, affiliated hospital staff, industrial personnel and research fellows, regardless of obligations to other companies or institutions; and
- all persons conducting teaching and/or research at or under the auspices of UCD including at any of UCD's overseas campus, including visiting faculty and researchers; consultants; contractors, Emeritus or adjunct appointments; and research fellows.

3. Scope

This policy covers members of the UCD Community engaged in research activity using UCD funds, facilities or other resources or under the auspices of UCD.

4. Principles

4.1 Principles of research integrity and research misconduct

The **principles of research integrity** include, but are not restricted to, the following (as presented in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2017):

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the 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, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and environment
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

Breaches of research integrity or **Research Misconduct** take many forms and can be of varying seriousness. As outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2017 and the National policy statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, three of the most serious such breaches, which are classified as research misconduct, are:

- *Fabrication of data*: making up results and recording or reporting results that are known to be fabricated.
- *Falsification of data*: 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, including those obtained through confidential review of others' research proposals and manuscripts.

In addition to these, and drawing again from the European Code and the National policy statement, there are types of unacceptable practices which, while not as serious as the above in individual instances, may be in the aggregate potentially as damaging to the overall reputation and integrity of research and/or the researcher(s). Serious or repeated instances of such practices can constitute research misconduct. These practices include but are not confined to:

- *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.

Note that research misconduct does not include honest error.

4.2 Principles that underpin transparent, fair and effective procedures to deal with allegations of research misconduct

It is imperative that when an allegation of research misconduct arises, suitable procedures are in place to deal with it effectively and fairly. UCD has a responsibility to the researchers it employs, and there needs to be appropriate protection for the rights and interests of all parties. There must be accountability when things go wrong and, where allegations are upheld, appropriate action must be taken. The response to any incidence of misconduct must be proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct.

UCD commits to the principles for investigations as set out below.

Integrity of the process ¹

- Investigations of research misconduct allegations must be fair, comprehensive and conducted as expediently as is feasible without compromising accuracy, objectivity and thoroughness;
- Those parties involved in the procedure must ensure that any interests they have which might constitute a conflict of interest are disclosed and managed;
- Detailed and confidential records should be maintained on all aspects of the procedure; and
- Measures should be taken to ensure that investigations are carried through to a conclusion.

Fairness

- Investigation of research misconduct allegations should be conducted in a manner that is fair to all parties and in accordance with relevant laws;
- Persons accused of research misconduct must be given full details of the allegation(s) in writing and allowed a fair process for responding and to have a representative or work colleague present for any meeting or interview associated with the investigation;
- Proportionate action should be taken against persons found to have committed research misconduct; and
- Any final decision that has adverse outcomes for a person shall be subject to a right of review.

Uniformity

- Procedures for dealing with misconduct should be articulated in sufficient detail to ensure the transparency and consistency of the process.

¹ Please see the “UCD Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research” document for full procedural details of any investigation into potential research misconduct. It is expected that allegations of potential misconduct relating to minor research assignments undertaken by students on taught programmes will generally be handled in the first instance under the UCD Student Code of Conduct, unless the research appears in the published literature, is externally funded or is otherwise of a significance that merits handling through the aforementioned procedure.

Confidentiality

- The procedure should be conducted in a confidential manner, subject to certain disclosure requirements in accordance with UCD's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research;
- If the university and/or its staff have legal obligations to inform third parties of research misconduct allegations, those obligations must be fulfilled at the appropriate time and through the correct mechanisms; and
- Where possible, any disclosure to third parties should be made on a confidential basis.

No detriment

- Anyone who is the subject of a research misconduct allegation is presumed innocent;
- No person should suffer any penalty before, during or after an investigation for making an allegation of research misconduct in good faith, but action should be taken against persons found to have made allegations in bad faith; and
- Appropriate restorative action, in consultation with the respondent of the allegation, should be taken when an allegation of research misconduct is not upheld.

Equality Diversity & Inclusion

- The procedures to investigate an allegation of research misconduct shall uphold the University's strategic commitment to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and no individual under investigation shall be negatively impacted as a result of their membership of a group represented under the ten University EDI grounds.

Full procedural details for carrying out any investigation into potential research misconduct are outlined in UCD's Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

5. Related documents

This policy is underpinned by national legislation:

- Universities Act, 1997
- Standards in Public Office Act, 2001
- Freedom of Information Act, 2014
- Data Protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2016 and the Data Protection Act, 2018

In addition, this policy references the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2017 and the National policy statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, 2019 (IUA working Group), as may be amended.

This policy should adhere to and be cognisant of other relevant University policies and regulations, with which all members of UCD Community must also comply. A non-exhaustive list of relevant policies is listed below.

- UCD Authorship Policy
- UCD Code of Good Practice in Research with Humans and Animals
- UCD Code of Responsible Conduct of Research
- UCD Conflict of Interest Policy
- UCD Consultancy and External Work Policy
- UCD Data Protection Policy
- UCD Device Protection Policy
- UCD Intellectual Property Policy
- UCD IT Acceptable Use Policy

- UCD Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research
- UCD Research Data Management Policy
- UCD Research Ethics Policy
- UCD Student Code of Conduct
- UCD Student Plagiarism Policy

6. Version history

Version	Date	Approving Body	Author
1.0	15 th October 2018	RIIG	UCD Research & Innovation
2.0	23 rd October 2018	UMT	UCD Research & Innovation
2.1	22 nd November 2018	AC (Consultation)	UCD Research & Innovation
3.0	12 th December 2018	GA	UCD Research & Innovation
3.2	10 th March 2021	Editorial amendments following review by RIIG, along with alignment with the 2019 National Policy Statement	UCD Research & Innovation
3.2	16 th March 2021	UMT	UCD Research & Innovation
3.2	22 nd April 2021	Noted by AC	UCD Research & Innovation