



WHITMAN COLLEGE

Procedure for Handling Cases of Research Misconduct

Whitman College is committed to maintaining high standards of integrity in research and scholarship, whether funded by external grants or not. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires that institutions have a written policy on research misconduct in order to be eligible for research funding. While there is less than total unanimity on what constitutes misconduct in research, the categories of fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and “other serious deviations” that appear in the annual HHS questionnaire are sufficient to cover the full range.

Anyone who suspects possible research misconduct should report it to his/her supervisor. Supervisors should transmit the allegation to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (who is the College’s Research Integrity Officer), who will then conduct an informal inquiry. If the supervisor is the one suspected of research misconduct, the employee should report directly to the Associate Dean. The allegations and the results of the inquiry will be submitted in writing to the Provost/Dean of the Faculty, who shall determine whether a formal investigation is warranted. If an investigation is deemed necessary, the Provost shall form a panel of three (chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs). The panel must complete its work within 120 days unless there are unusual and extenuating circumstances, and will submit its conclusions in writing to the Provost. The Provost will review the case, and on the merits of the findings, recommend appropriate action to the President of the College. The person against whom the allegations were lodged shall receive copies of the written reports of the inquiry and investigation and shall have the right to appeal the decision to the president. Following any appeal, the President’s decision is final.

In all cases regarding possible misconduct of researchers holding federal, state, or private grants, the College will follow the guidelines issued by the respective agencies or foundations and will submit written notification, etc., as required.

The College will furnish copies of this policy to each faculty member who receives a research grant at the same time the faculty member receives instruction on the College’s Responsible Conduct of Research training policy. The Research Misconduct policy will be published in Whitman’s Faculty Handbook, the Grants & Foundation Relations website, and the Whitman College Grants Manual. Students involved in research will also receive a copy. Faculty or staff who direct research projects will be responsible for monitoring and assuring the integrity of the research conducted under their direction and will set high standards in this regard.

The College encourages anyone who observes research misconduct to come forward with his or her concerns. In the initial phases of inquiry, the responsible official will maintain confidentiality of an individual who comes forward with allegations. Once a formal investigation is conducted, however, such confidentiality may not be guaranteed. The institution will seek to protect the complainant against retribution but is also committed to due process and fairness toward the accused.

For further detail, please consult the Department of Health & Human Services Office of Research Integrity’s [Guidelines on Handling Research Misconduct](#).