



## Investigation of misconduct in research

1. The University of Stirling (“our” or “us” or “we”) has as its defining characteristic the commitment to being a research led institution. To remain research led it is imperative that we safeguard integrity in all aspects of our research activity. Good practice encompasses every aspect of a piece of research from the way it is planned to the way the results are disseminated and applied. Research should be undertaken in keeping with the principles of good research conduct; honesty, accuracy, efficiency and objectivity. The University of Stirling expects its employees, research staff and students involved in research activities to act with the highest professional standards.
2. Research misconduct will be handled very seriously by the University. It is both intrinsically undesirable and damaging to our staff, students, associates, sponsors and those taking part in research studies. This document applies to allegations of research misconduct involving a person who, at the time of the allegation, was employed by, or affiliated by contract or agreement to, the University of Stirling. The University of Stirling expects that all of our external partners and collaborators act with the highest professional standards. If allegations of research misconduct are made against an external partner it is expected that this allegation will be handled in accordance with their own procedures for allegations of research misconduct.
3. It is the responsibility of all members of the University to report observed, suspected or apparent research misconduct.
4. Research Misconduct is broadly defined as wilful behaviour that falls short of, or that seriously breaches, the principles of good practice in the conduct of academic research. It is behaviour that is characterised by culpable dishonesty, deception, negligence or recklessness. Research misconduct includes, but may not be restricted to, the following:
  - **Fraud/Fabrication** – the manipulation/falsification/fabrication/selective use of data/findings/participant consent with an intention to deceive (including the misquotation/misrepresentation of other authors).
  - **Plagiarism** – the misappropriation/use of others’ ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise) without permission or acknowledgement.
  - **Collusion** – the deliberate participation in the research misconduct of another person.
  - **Persecution** – retaliation against a person who brings charges of misconduct in good faith.
  - **Malicious accusation** – bringing a charge of misconduct against another person in bad faith.
  - **Denigration** – the deprecation of the worth of another person’s work (including failure to give fair and appropriate credit for the work done by junior staff).
  - **Interference** – damage to/removal of another person’s research-related property.
  - **Negligence** – the culpable departure from legal, administrative and ethical practices in research that involves humans or animal subjects.
  - **Non-compliance** – the failure to adhere to terms and conditions that have been entered into in order to receive funding (including failure to get ethics committee consent and disobeying the University’s, funder’s or legal requirements).

- **Mismanagement of data** – the failure to keep clear and accurate records or the failure to make relevant data/evidence accessible to others after the completion of the research.
5. Individuals external to the University, who wish to make an allegation of research misconduct against a member of the University, should make their allegation in writing to the Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Transfer). The written allegation will be formally acknowledged and investigated in accordance with the procedures below.
  6. Individuals within the University (staff, students or affiliate) who believe that they have recognised a case of research misconduct may attempt to resolve this issue informally, with the individual concerned or with the Head of School.
  7. If informal resolution is not possible or unsuccessful, a formal allegation of research misconduct should be submitted to the University Secretary. Allegations should be made in writing and where possible accompanied by supporting evidence, whereby the Principal and Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Transfer) will be informed.
  8. Action will be undertaken in line with the appropriate disciplinary procedures.