
UCLA Policy 993: Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

Issuing Officer: Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost

Responsible Dept: Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activities

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Supersedes: UCLA Policy 993, dated 6/17/2022

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I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

UCLA is committed to maintaining the integrity of scholarship and Research, and to fostering a climate conducive to Research integrity in accordance with the University's Policy on Integrity in Research. Such integrity includes not only the avoidance of wrongdoing but also the rigor, carefulness, and accountability that are hallmarks of good scholarship.

This Policy and UCLA Procedure 993.1 implement this commitment and outlines the procedures for reporting and responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct, and is also intended to satisfy the requirements of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and other federal agencies.

This Policy applies to:

- All academic appointees, postdoctoral scholars, and staff, who held appointments at UCLA at the time of the alleged Research Misconduct;
- Others at UCLA (including paid and unpaid students) working on externally (including federally) sponsored Research projects or being supported by externally (including federally) funded Research training grants when Research Misconduct involving their supported work was alleged to have occurred, if the external sponsor requires a process for responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct that is similar to, or based on the federal Research Misconduct regulations; and
- Allegations made on or after January 1, 2026. Allegations made prior to January 1, 2026 will follow UCLA Policy 993, effective date June 17, 2022.

This Policy does *not* apply to:

- Students (including those preparing Master's theses or Ph.D. dissertations except as included in section 1. and 2., above);
- Faculty teaching activities, such as the preparation and presentation of classroom materials, including but not limited to, lectures, examinations, or websites;

- Allegations made prior to January 1, 2026. Allegations made on or after January 1, 2026 will follow this Policy and UCLA Procedure 993.1, effective date January 1, 2026.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

See Attachment A: Definitions

Defined terms are capitalized throughout this Policy.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

All persons engaged in Research at UCLA are responsible for adhering to the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity. Those who supervise Research have a responsibility to create an environment that encourages those high standards through open publication and discussion, emphasis on Research quality, appropriate supervision, maintenance of accurate and detailed Research procedures and results, and suitable assignment of credit and responsibility for Research.

All members of the UCLA community are expected to cooperate in reporting suspected Research Misconduct in accordance with this Policy and UCLA Procedure 993.1, and in responding to Allegations by acting in Good Faith, providing Research Records, and other relevant information, and participating in Research Misconduct Proceedings.

A. Responsibilities

1. Research Integrity Officer (RIO), on behalf of UCLA, assumes primary responsibility for all administrative aspects of the Research Misconduct Proceedings, including but not limited to:
 - a. receiving Allegation(s) of Research Misconduct;
 - b. ensuring that Allegation(s) are assessed;
 - c. ensuring that Inquiries and Investigations are conducted in accordance with this Policy and UCLA Procedure 993.1;
 - d. reviewing and approving, requests for extensions of time needed to complete Inquiries and Investigations as appropriate;
 - e. providing the Inquiry and Investigation committees with logistical support;
 - f. taking reasonable steps to ensure the cooperation of Respondents and others at UCLA with Research Misconduct Proceedings;
 - g. keeping the IDO and others who need to know apprised of the progress of the response to the Allegation(s);
 - h. assisting Inquiry and Investigation committees in preparing draft reports, transmitting the final Inquiry and, as warranted, Investigation reports to the IDO;
 - i. notifying Research Sponsors of Inquiries and Investigations as required; cooperating with Research Sponsors and federal oversight agencies, such as ORI, during Research Misconduct Proceedings, and assisting in administering and enforcing any federal administrative actions imposed upon UCLA or persons at UCLA; and
 - j. taking appropriate action to correct the Research Record.
2. Institutional Deciding Official (IDO) is responsible for:
 - a. reviewing summaries of Assessments to determine whether Inquiries are warranted;
 - b. making a determination about the composition of Inquiry and Investigation committees;

- c. reviewing final Inquiry reports and determining whether Investigations are warranted;
- d. reviewing final Investigation reports and determining whether there are findings of Research Misconduct;
- e. accepting an admission of guilt and written statement of wrongdoing; and
- f. taking appropriate institutional actions including referring findings of Research Misconduct to other UCLA officials or other institutions for sanctions and discipline as appropriate [See UCLA Procedure 993.1].

B. Retaliation

All members of the UCLA community are expected to cooperate in reporting suspected Research Misconduct and in responding to Allegations by acting in Good Faith, providing Research Records and other relevant information, participating in Research Misconduct Proceedings, and refraining from Retaliation or interference with a Research Misconduct Proceeding. Retaliation is a serious violation of this Policy and other UC and UCLA policies, including but not limited to the UC Policy on Abusive Conduct in the Workplace.

IV. REFERENCES

- 1. UC Policy on Integrity in Research, June 19, 1990;
- 2. UCLA Policy 910, Management of Sponsored Projects;
- 3. UCLA Procedure 933.1, Procedures to Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct;
- 4. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 42, Part 93: Public Health Services Policies on Research Misconduct, as modified, effective June 16, 2005;
- 5. [UCLA Policy 410 – Non-Consensual Access to Electronic Communications Records](#);
- 6. UC Policy on Abusive Conduct in the Workplace effective July 10, 2025.

V. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Definitions
- B. [Other Related Policies, Procedures and Resources](#)

Issuing Officer

/s/ Darnell Hunt

Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost

Questions concerning this policy or procedure should be referred to
the Responsible Department listed at the top of this document.

Definitions

Allegation refers to any oral or written report of suspected Research Misconduct brought directly to the attention of an official at UCLA or at the federal agency that has oversight responsibility for the questioned Research.

Assessment means a consideration of whether an Allegation of Research Misconduct appears to fall within the definition of Research Misconduct and is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential Evidence of Research Misconduct may be identified. The Assessment only involves the review of readily accessible information relevant to the Allegation.

Complainant is a person who in Good Faith makes an Allegation.

Evidence means anything offered or obtained during a Research Misconduct Proceeding that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact. Evidence includes but is not limited to tangible items, testimony, information in any form and documents whether in hard copy or electronic form.

Good Faith as applied to a Complainant or witness: the Complainant or witness believes that the Allegation made or the testimony given is true based on the facts as that individual understands them at the time. As applied to a committee member and others involved in the Research Misconduct Proceeding, Good Faith means cooperating with the Research Misconduct Proceeding by carrying out duties impartially.

Inquiry refers to preliminary information-gathering and fact-finding to conclude whether an Allegation has sufficient substance to warrant an Investigation. An Inquiry does not require full review of the Evidence related to the Allegation.

Institutional Certifying Official (ICO) is the official responsible for assuring that UCLA has written policies and procedures for addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct and for complying with those policies and procedures. At UCLA, the Research Integrity Officer also serves as the ICO.

Institutional Deciding Official (IDO) means the official who makes final determinations on Allegations of Research Misconduct and any institutional actions. The same individual cannot serve as the Research Integrity Officer (RIO). At UCLA, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activities (VCR) serves as the IDO, except that the Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs and Personnel will serve instead, if in a particular Research Misconduct Proceeding, the VCR has a conflict of interest or is unavailable.

Institutional Record is comprised of the records compiled or generated during the Research Misconduct Proceeding, except records that UCLA did not consider or rely on during the Research Misconduct Proceeding. The Institutional Record includes, but is not limited to, Assessment summary, final Inquiry, and Investigation reports, but does not include drafts of the Assessment summary or Inquiry or Investigation reports. The Institutional Record also includes:

- Research Records;
- transcripts of any interviews conducted during Investigations;
- information provided by the Respondent and others;
- documentation of decisions not to continue to an Investigation; and
- IDO's written determination of Research Misconduct findings, whether UCLA found Research Misconduct and if so, who committed the Research Misconduct, and a description of relevant institutional actions taken or to be taken.

Intentionally means to act with the aim of carrying out the act.

Investigation is the formal development of a factual record and the examination and evaluation of that record to find if Research Misconduct has occurred and, if so, to determine the responsible person(s).

Knowingly means to act with awareness of the act.

Preponderance of the Evidence is the standard used in determining whether Research Misconduct occurred: i.e., proof by Evidence that, compared with Evidence opposing it, leads to the conclusion that the fact at issue is more likely true than not.

Recklessly means to propose, perform, or review Research, or report Research results, with indifference to a known risk of Fabrication, Falsification, or Plagiarism.

Research refers to, in any academic discipline, a systematic experiment, study, evaluation, demonstration or survey designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge (basic Research) or specific knowledge (applied Research) by establishing, discovering, developing, elucidating or confirming information about, or the underlying mechanism relating to, causes, functions or effects; diseases; treatments; or related matters to be studied.

Research Integrity Officer (RIO) refers to the institutional official responsible for administering UCLA's written policies and procedures for addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct. At UCLA, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activities (VCR) will appoint a member of the UCLA faculty as a Special Advisor to serve as the Research Integrity Officer (RIO). At UCLA, the Research Integrity Officer also serves as the ICO.

The Special Advisor should be qualified to handle the procedural requirements involved and will be supported by staff of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activities in fulfilling the RIO's responsibilities.

Research Misconduct is Fabrication, Falsification, or Plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing Research, or in reporting Research results. It does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

- **Fabrication** is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- **Falsification** is 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** is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, but does not include self-plagiarism or authorship or credit disputes, including disputes among former collaborators who participated jointly in the development of a Research project. It does not include the limited use of identical or nearly identical phrases that describe commonly used methodologies.

Research Misconduct Proceeding refers to any formal University action (or other action by a Research Sponsor with regulatory responsibility) related to an Allegation, including but not limited to UCLA's receipt of an Allegation, Assessment, Inquiry or Investigation determination by the IDO.

Research Record is the record of data or results that embody the facts resulting from Research, including but not limited to, Research proposals, laboratory records (both physical and electronic), progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, databases, internal reports, books, and journal articles, as well as any documents and materials provided to the Research Sponsor or to UCLA, or its employees, by a Respondent in the course of a Research Misconduct Proceeding.

Research Sponsor is a governmental or non-governmental entity that funds Research, such as the Public Health Service (PHS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), or the American Cancer Society (ACS), or that has oversight responsibility for Research Misconduct, such as the Office of Research Integrity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (ORI).

Respondent is a person against whom an Allegation of Research Misconduct is directed or who is the subject of a Research Misconduct Proceeding.

Retaliation refers to an adverse action taken against a Complainant, witness, committee member, or any individual involved in the Research Misconduct Proceeding by UCLA or one of its members in response to a) a Good Faith Allegation of Research Misconduct; or b) Good Faith cooperation with a Research Misconduct Proceeding.

Other Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

University of California

1. University of California Standards of Ethical Conduct.
2. University [of California] Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline (APM 016).
3. The Faculty Code of Conduct (APM 015).
4. Non-Senate Academic Appointees/Corrective Action & Dismissal (APM 150).
5. Appointment and Promotion - Postdoctoral Scholars, Corrective Action & Dismissal (APM 390-50).
6. Academic Senate Manual, Los Angeles Division: Appendix XII- Campus Procedures for Implementation of University Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline.
7. University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students: Section 100.00, Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline; and Section 130.00, Policies Applying to the Disclosure of Information from Student Records.
8. UCLA Student Conduct Code.
9. For exclusively represented employees, procedures of the appropriate Memorandum of Understanding, where applicable.
10. University of California Personnel Policies for Staff Members. Policy 62 - Corrective Action - Professional and Support Staff, and related campus implementing procedures.
11. University of California Policy on Settlement of Litigation, Claims, and Separation Agreements.

Other

1. Report of the Association of American Universities Committee on the Integrity of Research, 1982.
2. Framework for Institutional Policies and Procedures to Deal with Fraud in Research, issued by Association of American Universities, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and Council of Graduate Schools, November 4, 1988.