Research Integrity Policy

Introduction

Dublin City University is committed to enabling and supporting the highest standards of practice in the conduct of research. As a member institution of the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the University aligns research activity with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, which sets out agreed good practice in promoting and ensuring research integrity. The Research Integrity Policy is a companion document to the Dublin City University Code of Good Research Practice, Code of Practice on Authorship, and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct, and should be read in conjunction with these three documents.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of Dublin City University and its research community with regard to research integrity. Through clarifying what is meant by research integrity and research misconduct, and defining the responsibilities of those involved in research to report and deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise, it is intended that this policy will help to prevent research misconduct from occurring.

Scope

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all staff members, students and all those officially engaged in research work at Dublin City University and/or undertaking any research activity in Dublin City University's name (including visiting researchers).

Definitions

Research integrity
Research integrity relates to the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, and to the accuracy and integrity of the research record in publications and elsewhere.

Research Integrity Officer
The Research Integrity Officer (RIO) (or nominated alternate) is the person nominated by Dublin City University to promote adherence to the principles of research integrity. They (or nominated alternate) will also assist in the processing of any instances of allegations of research misconduct. This compliance aspect of the RIO role will be assisted by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer.

Research Misconduct
Research misconduct relates to breaches of research integrity. Where the principles and good practice underpinning research integrity are not followed, issues of research misconduct may arise. The most serious research integrity breaches that are classified as research misconduct are fabrication of data, falsification of data, and plagiarism of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. However, there are also other unacceptable research practices1 that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research, and serious or repeated examples of such practices can constitute research misconduct. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

Policy Statement

1) **Principles of Research Integrity**
   The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2024) specify four fundamental principles of research integrity, which Dublin City University endorses. These principles are:

   - *Reliability* in ensuring that the research is conducted to the highest standards of integrity and that it is founded on basic principles of good research practice.
   - *Honesty* in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
   - *Respect* for colleagues, research participants and subjects, be they human or animal, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
   - *Accountability* for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

   In addition, these principles are well aligned with the seven areas of good research practice and associated supports and activities outlined in the DCU Code of Good Research Practice:

   1. Research environment
   2. Training, supervision and mentoring
   3. Research procedures
   4. Safeguards
   5. Data practices and management
   6. Collaborative working

---

[1] As outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2024).

7. Publication and dissemination.

2) **Breaches of Research Integrity**
Breaches of research integrity may take many forms and can be of varying seriousness[2]. Drawing on OECD definitions of research misconduct and unacceptable practices in research, the most serious breaches of research integrity are:

- *Fabrication of data* i.e. making up results and recording or reporting them.
- *Falsification of data*, i.e. 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*, i.e. the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of other's research proposals and manuscripts. Non-disclosure of AI text generating tools used could also leave researchers open to accusations of plagiarism[3] .

In addition to these, there are also additional types of unacceptable practices, which, may be present and in the aggregate potentially be as damaging to the overall reputation of research and the research community's integrity. These practices include, but are not confined to:

- *Data-related misconduct*, for example not preserving primary data where appropriate; poor data management and storage; withholding data from the scientific community;
- *Publication-related misconduct*, for example claiming undeserved authorship; denying authorship to contributors; artificially proliferating publications ("self-plagiarism"); failure to correct the publication record; including authors without permission; selective citing to enhance importance of finding; establishing or supporting journals that undermine the quality control of research ('predatory journals'); grossly exaggerating the importance and practical applicability of findings;
- *Research practice misconduct*, for example using inappropriate (e.g., harmful or dangerous) research methods; poor research design; experimental, analytical, computational errors; violation of human subject protocols; abuse of laboratory animals; concealment of research misconduct;
- *Personal misconduct in the research setting*, for example inappropriate personal behaviour; harassment, bullying; inadequate supervision, mentoring, counselling of researchers; insensitivity to social or cultural norms; misusing seniority to encourage violations of research integrity; delaying or inappropriately hampering the work of other researchers;

---

[2] OECD, Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct: based on a workshop held on 22-23 February 2007, in Tokyo, Japan, submitted to the first World Conference on Research Integrity, Lisbon, September 2007; http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/40188303.pdf
[3] COPE Position Statement on Authorship and AI Tools (February 2023), https://publicationethics.org/cope-position-statements/ai-author

- *Financial, and other misconduct,* for example peer review abuse e.g., non-disclosure of conflict of interest, unfairly holding up a rival's publication; misrepresenting credentials or publication record; misuse of research funds for unauthorised purchases or for personal gain; making an unsubstantiated or malicious misconduct allegation.

3) **Addressing Research Misconduct**
Dublin City University will take all reasonable steps to adhere to the principles that underpin transparent, fair and effective procedures to deal with allegations of research misconduct, in line with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland. These principles include:

- *Integrity of the process*
  - Investigations into research misconduct allegations must be fair, comprehensive and conducted expediently but without compromising accuracy, objectivity and thoroughness.
  - Those parties involved in the procedure must ensure that any interests they have that might constitute a conflict of interest are disclosed and managed.
  - Detailed and confidential records should be maintained on all aspects of the procedure.
  - 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 or disciplinary hearing.
  - Proportionate action should be taken against persons found to have committed research misconduct.
  - Any action(s) taken should be subject to right of appeal.

- *Uniformity*
  - Procedures for dealing with misconduct should be spelled out in sufficient detail so that the transparency and consistency of the process is ensured.

- *Confidentiality*
  - The procedure should be conducted in a confidential manner subject to certain disclosure requirements in accordance with DCU's Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct. Such confidentiality should be maintained provided this does not

compromise the investigation of the allegation, health and safety and the safety of participants in research.

- Where possible, any disclosure to third parties should be made on a confidential basis.
- If the organisation and/or its staff have legal obligations to inform third parties of research misconduct allegations, those obligations must be fulfilled at the appropriate time through the correct mechanisms.

- *No detriment*
  - Anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed innocent.
  - No person should suffer any unnecessary penalty when accused of research misconduct before the allegation is proven.
  - 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.
  - Appropriate restorative action should be taken, in consultation with the respondent of the allegation, when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld.

Full procedural details for carrying out any investigation into potential research misconduct and details on the relevant disciplinary processes and procedures in case if allegations of research misconduct have been substantiated, are provided in the DCU Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct.

Roles & Responsibilities

1) **Researcher**
It is first and foremost the responsibility of all staff members, students and all those officially engaged in research work at DCU and/or undertaking any research activity in DCU's name (including visiting researchers) to maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research and to ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards. Where students are undertaking research on behalf of DCU, their Principal Investigator/Supervisor have responsibility for ensuring students undertake appropriate training in research integrity. All staff members are expected to report research misconduct.

2) **University**
It is the responsibility of the University and its Leadership (President, Vice-President for Research; Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Deans of Faculties, Heads of School, Institute/Centre leadership) to support a research environment in the University that is underpinned by a culture of research integrity and is based on good governance, good research practice and support for the development of researchers.

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that transparent, robust and fair processes are in place to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise, and that the review of these processes takes place regularly in accordance with best national and international practice. Dublin City University will protect the confidentiality of those making allegations as far as is reasonably possible under these procedures and the associated DCU Research Integrity Policy, the DCU Protected Disclosure Policy; and in the context of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 and the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

3) **Research Integrity Officer**
The Research Integrity Officer (RIO) has overall responsibility for the management and oversight of this Policy and associated Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct and is also responsible for the oversight of established inquiry and investigation committees as cases of potential research misconduct are considered. Further details as to the RIO's responsibilities are described in the DCU Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct.

Related Documentation

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

1) [DCU Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)

2) [DCU Code of Good Research Practice](#)

3) [DCU Code of Practice on Authorship](#)

4) [University Statute No. 5 of 2010: 'Suspension and Dismissal of Employees'](#)

5) [DCU Anti-Fraud Policy](#)

6) [DCU Protected Disclosures Policy](#)

7) [DCU Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

8) [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (National Research Integrity Forum)](#)

9) [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

10) [Framework to Enhance Research Integrity in Research Collaborations (National Research Integrity Forum)](#)

11) [COPE Position Statement on Authorship and AI Tools](#)

Contacts

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of the Vice President for Research, research@dcu.ie, 01-7008000.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as and when changes are required to ensure its continuing relevance. Such review will be based on analysis and experiential learning arising from cases covered by the policy in the intervening period, as well as the relevant external policy environment.

Version Control

Document Name	Research Integrity Policy		
Unit Owner	Office of the Vice President for Research		
Version Reference	**Original Version – 3.0**	**Reviewed Version – 3.1**	
Approved by	Executive	RSS	
Effective Date	30th May 2023	5th November 2024	

End.