

# ASU System Policy

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**Effective Date: June 23, 2009**

**Subject: Misconduct in Research**

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## 1. Purpose

In recent years, well-publicized cases of misconduct in university research, including fabrication of results, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of findings have aroused concern among research institutions, individual investigators, sponsors of research, professional societies, and the general public. Although verified instances of such dishonest behavior are relatively rare, they raise serious questions about the integrity of the research process and the stewardship of public and private research funds. Institutions of higher education, in particular, enjoy a centuries-old tradition of integrity and objectivity, and cases of dishonesty in research by members of the university community must be dealt with carefully and thoroughly if the institution is to merit continued public confidence and trust.

The National Science Foundation and the Public Health Services have issued directives requiring awarding institutions to establish procedures for inquiry into, and investigation of, alleged or apparent misconduct in scientific research conducted, funded, or regulated by these agencies. Accordingly, the following policy is established to apply to all instances of alleged or apparent misconduct in research conducted at any campus of the Arkansas State University System.

The policy applies to all research conducted by faculty, staff members, or students of Arkansas State University System.

## 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will be employed:

**Misconduct.** Misconduct is defined as: (1) fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing, conducting, or reporting the results of research, (2) material failure to comply with university or sponsoring agency requirements affecting the conduct of research, including the protection of human subjects and the care of laboratory animals, or (3) failure to meet other material legal requirements governing research activities.

**Inquiry.** An inquiry is an informal review of an allegation of misconduct in research for the purpose of determining whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a university employee or student has engaged in such misconduct.

**Investigation.** An investigation is an in-depth review of an allegation of misconduct in research for the purpose of determining whether or not a university employee or student has engaged in such misconduct.

### **3. Arkansas State University System Misconduct in Research Policy**

The Arkansas State University System will act vigorously to discourage and detect misconduct in research; will take appropriate disciplinary action against any of its employees or students who engage in such misconduct, as revealed by a careful investigation; and will inform and cooperate with those agencies sponsoring research that appear likely to have been affected by such misconduct.

Any individual who believes that he or she has knowledge of an act of misconduct in research by an Arkansas State University employee or student is responsible for communicating this information to the coordinator of organized research for that campus. The coordinator of organized research will conduct a timely inquiry to determine whether or not there is reasonable cause to believe that the alleged act(s) of misconduct in research did, indeed, occur. This inquiry will be conducted with the assistance of a panel of at least five (5) full-time university employees, including at least three (3) members having appropriate knowledge in the type of research under investigation. Every effort will be made to conduct the inquiry in confidence, within the legal requirements to which the university is subject. The complete results of the inquiry will be reported to the vice chancellor responsible for research.

If, as a result of the inquiry, it appears that there is reasonable cause to believe that an act of misconduct in research took place, the university will promptly notify the agency sponsoring the research in question, if applicable, and will conduct a full investigation. The full investigation will afford the rights of due process and appeal for the individual believed to have engaged in the act of misconduct. The full investigation will be initiated by the vice chancellor responsible for research.

If, as a result of the investigation, it is concluded that the allegation of misconduct in research is unfounded, the university will take reasonable steps to restore the reputation(s) of individual(s) under investigation. It also will take all appropriate actions to protect the individual(s) reporting the alleged misconduct from reprisal. If the investigation shows that these allegations were frivolous or malicious, the individual reporting the alleged misconduct will be subject to appropriate discipline.

(Adopted by the Arkansas State University Board of Trustees on June 23, 2009, Resolution 09-26, supercedes the Misconduct in Research Policy of October 11, 1990, and revisions of December 16, 1992.)