

Ethical Conduct of Research

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Research at Mississippi State

- Excellent researchers who produce scholarly works that enhance the reputation of our institution
 - Human subject research
 - Animal-related research
 - Research using hazardous materials
- Very few cases of research misconduct that require a formal process

Codes & Policies for Research Ethics

(Resnik - www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resouces/bioethics/whatis.cfm)

Summary of codes & policies from government agencies & professional organizations:

- Honesty
- Objectivity
- Integrity
- Carefulness

Codes & Policies for Research Ethics

(Resnik - www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resouces/bioethics/whatis.cfm)

- Openness
- Respect for Intellectual Property
- Confidentiality
- Responsible Publication
- Responsible Mentoring
- Respect for Colleagues

Codes & Policies for Research Ethics

(Resnik - www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resouces/bioethics/whatis.cfm)

- Social Responsibility
- Non-Discrimination
- Competence
- Legality
- Animal Care
- Human Subject Protection

Misconduct (MSU OP 80.02)

- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Plagiarism
- Other serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing, carrying out, or reporting results from research or other scholarly activities

What are the implications?

- Damage to the reputation of the institution and to individuals
- Cessation of research at the institution
- Fines to the institution
- Legal issues

What are our responsibilities as administrators?

- Know MSU policies on conducting research
- Be proactive in communicating our ethical standards
- Foster open communication
- Develop a reputation for fairness

What are our responsibilities as administrators?

- Incorporate research ethics in seminars for faculty/graduate and undergraduate students
- Respond to concerns/allegations from faculty/students/staff
- Know when to ask for help and appropriate offices to contact

Requirement of RCR & Ethics Training

- Training in responsible conduct of research, survival skills, and research ethics required for institutions receiving awards from NSF
 - America Competes Act
 - Sections 7008 and 7009 of Title VII (See <http://science.house.gov>)
 - Covers postdocs and students

Situations with which we may be confronted

- Falsification or fabrication of data
- Inappropriate use/misuse of public funds
- Questions about authorship and assigning of credit
- Failure to follow rules for use of animals in research
- Failure to follow rules in human subject research

How should we handle situations of miscount?

- Learn to recognize when problems are serious
- Get the facts
- Do not focus on personalities
- Know the procedures to follow
- Seek help from appropriate entities on campus

MSU Procedures

- Consult informally with Research Ethics Review Officer
- Confirmation of seriousness of allegation
 - Research Ethics Review Officer reports, in writing, to Department Head, Dean(s), appropriate VP(s) and VP of Research & Economic Development

Procedures

- Identity remains confidential
- If person alleging misconduct does not wish to pursue allegation,
 - Matter will be pursued if Research Ethics Review Officer believes there is sufficient cause to pursue

Procedures

- Dean(s) convenes a Board of Inquiry
 - Dean or his/her designee
 - Department head
 - Research Ethics Review Officer - Secretary
- Time frame – 60 days from receipt of letter by dean
- If allegation is supported, respondent must be given opportunity to respond.

Procedures

- If charge does not warrant investigation
 - Investigation closed
 - Appropriate individuals notified

Procedures

- Misconduct charge warrants investigation
 - Respondent notified; sent copy of inquiry report
 - VP for Research & Economic Development notified

Procedures

- Miscount charge warrants investigation
 - VP Research & Economic Development (in consultation with VP Academic Affairs)
 - Appoints investigating committee
 - At least five full professors
 - May include external members
 - Research Ethics Review Officer - Secretary
 - Refers charge to the committee

Procedures

- Miscount charge warrants investigation
 - VP Research & Economic Development (in consultation with VP Academic Affairs)
 - Instructs Research Ethics Review Officer to provide the inquiry report to the committee
 - Take such action as may be necessary to ensure the integrity of research or other scholarly work, the rights and interests of research subjects and the public, and the observance of the legal requirements or responsibility.

Procedures

- Miscount charge warrants investigation
 - Committee conducts investigation
 - Respondent can present statements and documents, call witnesses, and cross-examine witnesses called by committee
 - Committee prepares preliminary report
 - Respondent has opportunity to present written response

Procedures

- Miscount charge warrants investigation
 - Committee prepares final report
 - Final report forwarded to VP for Research and Economic Development with recommendations (if majority of committee finds violation of policy)
 - The VP makes a decision

Procedures

- Appeal process
- Procedure for reporting to Sponsor

Ethical Conduct of Research

- The responsibility of all of us
- Requires education and training
- Misconduct is not always clear-cut
- Policies protect individuals and the institution

Sources of Information

- American Association for the Advancement of Science, *Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct: Inquiry, Investigation and Outcomes, A Practicum* (AAAS, 2000)
- Gunsalus, C. K., *The College Administrator's Survival Guide* (Harvard University Press, 2006)

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- Gunsalus, C. K., “Preventing the Need for Whistleblowing: Practical Advice for University Administrators,” *Science and Engineering Ethics* (1998) 4, 75-94
- Resnik, J. D., “What is Ethics in Research & Why is it Important?”, <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis.cfm>