

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT

Policy Number: 602GS

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Scope

This Policy on Scientific Misconduct applies to faculty, staff, predoctoral researchers, summer scholars and applicants ("Covered Individuals") of The Graduate School of the Stowers Institute for Medical Research ("The School").

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the procedures for addressing any misconduct or fraud in the conduct of research. Protections for Covered Individuals reporting misconduct/fraud in research are set forth in the Policy on Whistleblowers and Other Reporting of Misconduct (136).

The School is included in the Stowers Group of Companies ("SGC") Organizations and has adopted the following policy as its own.

Policy

As set forth in the Code of Conduct for Research (611R) the Institute strives to create a research climate that promotes faithful adherence to rigorous ethical principles in the conduct of research without inhibiting the productivity and creativity of individuals involved in research. Misconduct or fraud in research is an offense that damages not only the reputation of those involved but also that of the entire research community.

Misconduct/fraud in research means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other practices that materially deviate from those commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

Misconduct/fraud in research is a major breach of the relationship between a Covered Individual and the Institute. In order to maintain the integrity of research projects, every individual engaged in research must keep a permanent auditable record of all experimental protocols, data and findings. Co-authors on research reports of any type, including publications, must have had a bona fide role in the research and must accept responsibility for the quality of the work reported.

Research that involves scientist/student collaboration is encouraged. Issues related to scientist/student collaboration may include matters such as expected contributions of each party, order of authorship, and/or type of citation to be given, and must be addressed early in any research project. Decisions must be congruent with the ethics and scholarly customs of each

discipline involved. Specific recognition of the nature and scope of individual student contributions must be made in all published materials.

Any inquiry or investigation of allegations of misconduct/fraud in research must proceed promptly and with due regard for the reputation and rights of all individuals involved.

The Institute will take all reasonable steps to assure that (1) the individuals involved in the evaluation of the allegations and evidence have appropriate expertise, (2) no individual involved in the procedures is either biased against the accused individual(s) or has a conflict of interest, and (3) affected individuals must have an opportunity to comment on the allegations and findings of the inquiry or investigation.

Procedures for Addressing Misconduct/Fraud in Research

Allegations of misconduct/fraud in research should be brought to the attention of the Scientific Director of the Institute or, if they involve the Scientific Director, to the attention of the President and CEO of the Institute. The Scientific Director will inform the President and CEO of the allegations and will bring the allegations to the attention of the principal investigator directing the affected research program and any researchers affected by the allegations. The Scientific Director, with due regard for the reputations of all parties involved, will immediately conduct an inquiry into the allegations. The inquiry must be completed within sixty (60) calendar days unless circumstances clearly warrant a longer period, in which case the inquiry record must include documentation of the reasons for exceeding the period of sixty (60) days.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, a written report shall be prepared by the Scientific Director and delivered to the President and CEO of the Institute. The report will include a description of the evidence reviewed, a summary of the relevant interviews, and a statement of the conclusion(s) reached together with the rationale for such conclusion(s). The report shall be accompanied by all written statements, data or other evidence considered during the inquiry. The President and CEO shall provide the individual(s) against whom the allegations have been made with a copy of the report and an opportunity to comment on allegations and findings of the inquiry and request that any comment in response be made within ten (10) days.

The President and CEO of the Institute, with such advice or consultation as may be deemed appropriate, shall review the inquiry report, the inquiry record, and the comments (if any) of the individual(s) accused of misconduct/fraud and determine either:

- That the allegations are unfounded and that no further proceedings are warranted; or
- That findings from the inquiry provide sufficient basis for conducting an investigation. The investigation normally will include examination of all documentation, including but not necessarily limited to relevant research data and proposals, publications, correspondence, and memoranda of telephone calls. Whenever possible, interviews should be conducted with all individuals involved either in making the allegations or against whom the allegation is made, as well as other individuals who might have information regarding key aspects of the allegations; complete summaries of these

interviews should be prepared, provided to the interviewed party for comment or revision, and included as part of the investigation file. The investigation must begin within 30 days of completion of the inquiry, and must ordinarily be finished within 120 days of its initiation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, a written report shall be prepared and delivered to the President and CEO of the Institute. The report will include a description of the evidence reviewed, a summary of relevant interviews, and a statement of the conclusion(s) reached together with the rationale for such conclusion(s). The report shall be accompanied by all written statements, data or other evidence considered during the investigation. The President and CEO shall provide the individual(s) against whom the allegations have been made with a copy of the report and an opportunity to comment on allegations and findings of the investigation and request that any comment in response be made within ten (10) days.

The President and CEO of the Institute, with such advice or consultation as may be deemed appropriate, shall review the investigation report, the investigation record, and the comments (if any) of the individual(s) accused of misconduct/fraud and determine either:

- That the allegations are unfounded and that no further proceedings are warranted; or
- That there is substantial evidence to support the truth of the allegations and that hearing procedures to discipline or terminate the accused individual(s) should be commenced pursuant to the established due process procedures of the Board of the Institute. The hearing procedures must begin within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the investigation. Institute counsel will be available to represent the Institute in the hearing.

If it is determined that the alleged misconduct/fraud is not substantiated, diligent efforts will be undertaken by the Institute to restore the reputation of the accused individual(s). Diligent efforts will also be taken to protect the position and reputation of the individual(s) who, in good faith, made the allegations ("whistleblowers"). The Institute provides procedural protections to whistleblowers, detailed in Policy on Whistleblower and Other Reporting of Misconduct.

In the event that the allegations are admitted by the accused individual(s) or the investigation results in a determination that the allegations of misconduct/fraud are true, the Institute will notify the sponsoring agency of the facts related to the allegations, the conclusions reached, and the consequence penalty imposed by the Institute. In addition, notice will be given to the editors of all journals to which articles related to the affected research have been submitted.

Documentation substantiating the findings of inquiries and investigations will be maintained and provided to authorized sponsoring agency personnel upon request.

Additional Procedures for Allegations of Scientific Misconduct/Fraud in Research Funded by Public Health Service (PHS) or National Science Foundation (NSF)

If an allegation of misconduct/fraud pertains to research funded by, or a proposal for research funded by, the PHS (including the National Institutes of Health) or the NSF, the Institute will follow the Federal Policy on Research Misconduct issued by the Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology Policy, 65 FR 76260-76264 (Dec. 6, 2000) (“Federal Policy”). In addition, the Institute will follow the PHS policies on research misconduct at 42 CFR parts 50 and 93 (“PHS Rules”) for PHS-funded projects and the NSF’s policies on research misconduct at 45 CFR part 689 (“NSF Rules”) for NSF-funded projects. Therefore, this policy shall include, and hereby incorporates by reference, all of the requirements of or guidelines under the Federal Policy, the PHS Rules and the NSF Rules, including, without limitation, those related to scope, determination, notification, reporting, investigation, confidentiality, administrative action, whistleblower protection and recordkeeping in connection with scientific misconduct proceedings where PHS or NSF funds have been provided or a proposal has been submitted. In the event of a conflict between this policy and those requirements or guidelines, the latter will govern.

This policy was approved by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on September 5, 2018.
This policy was last updated by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on November 09, 2020.
This policy will be reviewed by the GSSIMR Board of Directors in 2022.