

DHANALAKSHMI SRINIVASAN
INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956.)
PERAMBALUR – 621 212, TAMIL NADU, INDIA.

Academic Research Integrity Policy

Centre of Research & Innovation

1.0 Introduction

Misconduct in research tarnishes the integrity of the profession and diminishes the credibility of scholars. It also goes against the values that Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Institute of Research and Technology (DSIRT) ('the University or 'DSIRT' hereinafter) strives to maintain and promote.

The University has established policies that outline procedures for conducting high-quality research. All individuals engaged in research activities at Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Institute of Research and Technology (DSIRT) must familiarise themselves with the relevant policies and guidelines. The following sections outline these points clearly.

The foundation of the University's research activities lies in integrity and responsible conduct of research. Establishing a relationship of trust among researchers, funders, and research collaborators is essential. Establishing a reliable relationship between the researchers at DSIRT and the broader society is essential.

It is essential for everyone involved in DSIRT's research community—be they undergraduate or postgraduate students, employees, visiting researchers, or collaborators—to uphold the highest standards of integrity in their actions, thereby safeguarding the institution's reputation.

All individuals involved in research at DSIRT are required to acknowledge this responsibility. Upon appointment, all individuals engaged in research at DSIRT will be required to sign a declaration affirming their commitment to maintaining the highest standards of research integrity. All researchers, regardless of their level, are required to adhere to the standards set forth in the Research Integrity policies of Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Institute of Research and Technology

The Policy begins by delineating research misconduct to assist Institute members in their research practices and to facilitate the identification of instances of such misconduct.

2.0 RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Research Misconduct represents a significant departure from established norms in the proposal, execution, and/or evaluation of research, as well as in the dissemination of research findings. It encompasses, but is not restricted to, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and intentional interference in doing or reviewing research, among other actions. This policy does not address misconduct in the research environment that does not compromise the integrity of the research record. Allegations relating to financial impropriety, sexual harassment, or gender discrimination shall be addressed in accordance with the University's Financial Regulations, Sexual Harassment Policy, and applicable statutory provisions.

Briefly, the terms that define Research Misconduct are elucidated here.

- a) **Fabrication** involves the creation of false data or outcomes and the subsequent documentation or presentation of them as if they were authentic.
- b) **Falsification** involves the manipulation of research materials, equipment, or methods, or the alteration or omission of data or results without scientific explanation, resulting in an inaccurate representation of the research in the record. It will also encompass the unauthorised reproduction of copyrighted content instead of obtaining it from an official source, such as utilising illegally acquired or downloaded e-books and e-chapters.
- c) **Plagiarism** refers to the use of ideas, figures, codes, data, and textual content without appropriate acknowledgement or authorisation from the original source. Instances of plagiarism encompass:
 - (i) Appropriating entire sentences or segments of sentences from a book or thesis. This may also entail an online resource.
 - (ii) Previously published data from one's own records may also be referred to as self-plagiarism.
 - (iii) Incorporating content from class notes, downloadable resources in reports, presentations, and papers also constitutes plagiarism.

It will also encompass 'self-plagiarism,' defined as the republication of significant portions of one's prior work as if they were original content, including translations, without proper acknowledgement or citation of the original source. Plagiarism can manifest not just in published works but also in research presentations and funding bids.

- d) Deliberate interference refers to the purposeful infliction of substantial damage to the study or intellectual endeavours of others. Instances of purposeful interference encompass harm or the deliberate or negligent unauthorised utilisation of another's research-related property. Research about the property of another includes the apparatus, materials, documents, hardware, software, or any other substances or derivatives utilised in or generated by the execution of research. It may also encompass intentional or reckless unauthorised use or removal of substances or devices utilised in research, disruption of ongoing experiments, alteration or deletion of research outputs, including data, instigation or encouragement of others to engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism, or maliciously accusing a researcher of misconduct or other violations.
- e) Cheating encompasses several categories:
 - (i) Copying the data during examinations or in other contexts, as well as encouraging another individual to copy, is classified as cheating.
 - (ii) Unauthorised collaboration and the utilisation of unapproved materials from sources constitute cheating.
 - (iii) Falsifying and fabricating data from unreliable sources for use in theses and publications is academic dishonesty.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- a) A **complainant** refers to an individual who submits a formal written complaint regarding research misconduct.
- b) The **Board of Academic Integrity in Research**, referred to as BAIR, is a committee established by members chosen by the Vice-Chancellor/Registrar, including individuals selected by the Dean (Research), to conduct a preliminary investigation into the veracity of a complaint.

- c) **Complaint** refers to a written grievance presented by the Complainant.
- d) The Investigation, referred to as the Fact Finding Inquiry, entails assessing the authenticity of the Complaint. This procedure will invariably be executed by the BAIR and will encompass the following steps:
 - (i) Examination and evaluation of the complaint.
 - (ii) Enumerating the facts requiring verification and the corresponding supporting documentation.
 - (iii) Enumerating the documents and individuals capable of supplying information on the issues, obtaining their statements, and, if required, soliciting the complaint for any further information or proof.
- e) Analysing the gathered information to see if there is justification for a comprehensive inquiry.
- f) **Research**: For this policy, it means and includes the basic, applied and demonstration research in all fields of knowledge
- g) **Research Record** refers to the compilation of data or findings that represent the outcomes of scientific or scholarly investigation, encompassing, but not limited to, research proposals, laboratory records (both physical and electronic), progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, journal articles, and articles in conference proceedings.
- h) **Respondent** means a person, including an Employee, Student or third party against whom the Complainant has made a complaint of Research Misconduct.
- i) Student encompasses students affiliated with the Institute, whether engaged in employment or academic pursuits (part-time or full-time), including but not limited to research fellows and exchange students.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The University's administrative processes mandated by this Policy must, in all instances, comply with legal obligations. The Institute shall adhere to all relevant central and state laws, rules, and policies concerning research misconduct.

4.0 THE BOARD ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH

The Dean (Research) formulates a specialised Board on Academic Integrity in Research (BAIR), in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor/Registrar, tasked with conducting preliminary enquiries into complaints upon receiving directives from the respective Dean. The respective Dean / Dean Research may seek help from the Board to determine if the submitted complaint warrants inquiry. The Board may also be tasked with establishing and disseminating standards pertaining to academic integrity in research conduct, as well

as overseeing the administrative processes related to the review of any allegations of Research Misconduct. Members of BAIR shall serve a three-year term, subject to renewal by the Vice-Chancellor/Registrar and reconstituted every three years.

5.0 INQUIRY

An investigation of a complaint must have three stages:

- a) Preliminary Inquiry (conducted by BAIR): the collection of initial information and fact-finding to evaluate the validity of the Complaint and determine if an inquiry is justified. The preliminary inquiry must be executed promptly and should typically be concluded within 45 days from the date the Board receives the complaint and all pertinent facts.
- b) Detailed Inquiry: This phase commences upon the Inquiry Authority's receipt of the preliminary inquiry report completed by BAIR, accompanied by recommendations from the Dean of Research and the subsequent approval from the Vice-Chancellor/Registrar.
- c) Decision and Corrective Action: the official process for assessing and appraising the Inquiry Report, followed by appropriate subsequent actions, which include providing the Report to the Respondent, analysing the Respondent's response, and ultimately administering a punishment.

6.0 SAFE GUARDS IN DEALING WITH RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

6.1. Guidelines

- (i) **Confidentiality:** To the maximum extent possible, in accordance with a just and comprehensive investigation and as permitted by law, information regarding the identity of the Complainant, Respondent, and Witnesses shall be restricted to individuals specified in this Policy and others with a legitimate need to know. All written documents and information about any proceedings shall be maintained in confidence.
- (ii) **Conflict of Interest:** A conflict of interest may arise when personal or private interests interfere with professional activity, including several domains such as teaching, research, publication, committee work, research funding, and consultancy. The institution's policy is to safeguard professional independence while steadfastly upholding objectivity and dedication. The institution must guarantee that no impropriety resulting from conflicts of interest manifests in any way. This need not be confined to personal financial benefit; it may encompass a broad spectrum of academic endeavours, including grant allocation, article authorship, acknowledgement for some achievements (while disregarding others), and even the influence of public policy. Maintaining integrity and openness in the Institute is vital, and any possible conflicts must be documented and submitted to higher authorities. This will facilitate a determination about disciplinary action on an individual basis.
- (iii) **Equity for the Respondent:** Individuals accused of research misconduct get comprehensive information on the charges and are afforded a just opportunity to respond and submit proof.

6.2. Safeguards

For Complainant

In all instances of complaint, the Institute shall guarantee that:

- a. The Complainant is treated equitably and justly;
- b. all feasible and pragmatic measures are undertaken to shield the Complainant from potential or actual persecution; and
- c. thorough efforts are made to safeguard or restore the position and reputation of the Complainant.

If the Inquiry Authority concludes that a Complainant has filed a Complaint with malicious intent or was not operating in good faith, the Committee may suggest that suitable measures be taken against that Complainant.

For Respondent

- (i) The respondent is presumed innocent of Research Misconduct until a determination is reached in line with this Policy and should be safeguarded from penalties and public disclosure until found guilty. The Respondent shall cooperate with the administrative processes outlined in this Policy by supplying information, research documents, and proof to the designated Institute representatives upon request.

The Institute shall not obstruct a Respondent's capacity to continue their work and shall guarantee that no additional corrective or adverse measures are implemented during the Investigation, unless the competent authority ascertains that compelling reasons exist to suspend the Respondent's work or to undertake such measures for all or part of that period.

- (ii) In the course of a Preliminary Inquiry, the Respondent shall possess the right to confer with the Board of Academic Integrity in Research and to articulate a response to the Complaint both orally and in writing.
- (iii) The Institute must exert all reasonable efforts, upon request and as appropriate, to safeguard or rehabilitate the reputation of any Respondent against whom no determination of Research Misconduct is rendered.

7.0 Penalties

If the respondent is a faculty member or employee, whether permanent, tenure-track, or on contract, the disciplinary authority may

- a. Issue a written warning.
- b. Delay career development (e.g., promotion) for 2 years.
- c. Make the respondent ineligible for any awards for 2 years.
- d. Notify funding agencies and relevant national/international academies about the Respondent's study.
- e. Remove the Respondent's earlier recognitions
- f. Make the Respondent ineligible for research funding from the Institute for 2 years
- g. Prohibit the Respondent from accepting new PhD/UG students for 2 years.
- h. Recommend against contract extension or tenure.
- i. Terminate employment.

If the Respondent is a Doctoral Scholar, the Disciplinary Authority may

- a. Issue a written warning
- b. Stop the teaching assistant fellowship
- c. Increasing the number of coursework or to pursue two mandatory MOOC/NPTEL courses in addition to the PhD coursework and Compulsory coursework
- d. Cancel the registration for PhD.

*Penalties for Plagiarism will be imposed as per the UGC guidelines.

----- End of Document -----

