

Allegations of Research Misconduct

For Trainees

Why case studies?

A core function of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) is to provide independent, expert, and confidential advice on the conduct of research, from promoting good practice to addressing allegations of misconduct. We have been doing this since 2006.

Each request for assistance received by UKRIO increases our body of knowledge. These 'lessons learned' not only inform our response to subsequent enquiries but also underpin our other activities, especially UKRIO's education and training work.

We have found that illustrative case studies are an excellent way to raise awareness of research integrity and research culture and to illustrate the complexities and 'grey areas' that can occur.

Case studies are not literal accounts of any enquiry to UKRIO. Instead, they are scenarios, based on real-life situations, which illustrate recurring or notable issues and problems that have been brought to our attention. While some case studies may mention a particular discipline or setting, they contain themes that are relevant across subjects.

Please note that this case study is fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons, organisations or events is coincidental.

Case study 12

You are the *Named Person* in your university responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct and any other concerns about research conducted under the auspices of the university.

Ms A, a *research technician*, has raised a number of allegations about the research practices of a senior research academic, **Professor B**, at your institution. The university has initiated the first phase of its research misconduct investigation procedure, an initial assessment of the allegations to determine whether a formal investigation of the matter is warranted.

Professor B has completely denied the allegations. During the course of the initial assessment of the allegations, he also raises issues relating to the competence of Ms A, suggesting that this is behind the allegations.

The panel conducting the *initial assessment has some difficulty coming to a view on the matter*, as it has had trouble gaining the information it needed. However, the panel eventually concludes that the university should *proceed with a formal investigation*.

Professor B, concerned over his reputation, has contacted the professional body to which he belongs and it has *engaged a firm of solicitors to represent him*. *Ms A has no legal representation*, nor does she have any support from a trade union or professional body.



Please discuss and decide:

1. How do you proceed in this matter?
2. What issues does it raise?



Promoting integrity and high ethical standards in research
Providing confidential, independent, and expert support

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