

Introduction

[The draft new edition of UKRIO's *Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research*](#) has undergone a comprehensive review based on developments within the research sector and in the research integrity landscape. The extensive changes have also been informed by UKRIO's extensive experience in drafting and updating research misconduct processes at scores of research organisations and in advising on the conduct of investigations. We have also reviewed many examples of existing procedures to ensure that the review takes account of existing good practice.

Designed as a template which can be adopted by research organisations or used to inform the development of their own processes, this draft Procedure features not only updated content, but also revised format and structure to ensure clarity and ease of use.

Key changes in the draft new edition include:

- New structure:
 - Purpose, Scope and Standards
 - Receipt of Allegations stage
 - Initial Investigation stage
 - Full Investigation stage
 - Outcomes and Reporting stage
 - Appeals stage
 - Annexes: Principles, Definitions and Resolution using informal measures
- Each stage of the Procedure opens with a concise explanation of its purpose, who will carry it out, the possible outcomes and proposed timescale. Routes in and out of each stage are clearly signposted in the Procedure and will be supplemented with flowcharts/ visual guides in the final version.
- Purpose, Scope and Standards sets out the remit of the procedure, who and what it applies to, and standards to follow when using the Procedure.
- Receipt of Allegations stage contains clear guidance on how to assess the nature and status of an allegation to determine the most appropriate organisation and institutional process to address it. It also includes provisions for receiving anonymous allegations and the investigation of issues that arise other than via whistleblowing.
- Initial Investigation stage – previously called ‘Screening’ – can be now carried out by an individual investigator instead of a panel, allowing for more flexibility (the option for using a panel remains). Additional guidance is given on the process of the Initial Investigation.
- Full Investigation stage – previously called ‘Formal Investigation’ - includes additional guidance on the scope of such investigations and the issues that can be considered to reach a robust conclusion

on an allegation and the correction of the research record. Additional guidance is given on the process of the Full Investigation.

- Given that some stakeholder organisations use the term ‘formal investigation’ to refer to any use of an institutional procedure to investigate an allegation of research misconduct, this stage has been renamed ‘Full Investigation’.
- Outcomes and Reporting stage covers all outcomes of the use of the Procedure and suggested next steps in a single section – ranging from when an allegation is found to fall within the remit of another organisation to address; when allegations are dismissed; when allegations are found to relate to poor practice and could be resolved through informal measures, to when allegations are upheld and further formal action must be taken; and more.
- The new Appeals section contains guidance on how organisations can consider how they will make sure they fulfil the requirement of *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity* that investigation processes must include ‘clear routes for appeal’.
- Annexes include commentary and guidance on the use of informal measures to address allegations where it is concluded that they relate to poor practice, or are of a relatively minor nature, and can be addressed through education and training or another non-disciplinary approach.
- Text boxes throughout give reminders on important issues, set out options for certain elements of the Procedure, or discuss key topics and issues in further detail.
- As well as revising its content, the structure, format and language of the Procedure has been revised to help ensure clarity and ease of use.
- The final version of the document will also include guidance on embedding the Procedure within an organisation.

Next steps: survey on the consultation draft

- The draft revised Procedure [is available here](#).
- We would be grateful if you would complete a short survey on the consultation draft: [UKRIO revised misconduct procedure survey](#)
- We welcome responses from any stakeholder, institutional or individual.
- The survey should take c.10 minutes to complete **and we ask that survey responses be submitted by 20th May 2022**.

Research misconduct is a serious issue that can have significant consequences for public trust in research. It is vital that it is investigated thoroughly and fairly, in a timely manner with appropriate transparency and confidentiality. UKRIO's Procedure is designed to help such an approach and has been adopted by many research organisations and endorsed by funding bodies and other stakeholders.

Your contributions to our survey will be incredibly helpful in the development of this important resource for the research community.