Research Integrity Policy

Office of the Vice President for Research

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Adopted by the Board of Regents:

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Policy Purpose: This policy is meant to support and ensure the integrity of all research conducted at New Mexico Tech, and to assure federal agencies that New Mexico Tech complies with requirements for institutional oversight and response to scientific research misconduct. This policy establishes the responsibilities of New Mexico Tech in responding to allegations of misconduct in research.

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POLICY STATEMENT

New Mexico Tech (NMT) is committed to maintaining the integrity, trust, and respect of its academic community and research activities.

New Mexico Tech aspires to be an inclusive, distinguished, and vibrant community of scholars dedicated to education, research, and innovation. We aim to address the challenges of tomorrow in science, technology, engineering, entrepreneurship, and mathematics, while upholding the highest standards of honesty and integrity in our academic and professional pursuits.

This policy ensures compliance with laws and regulations[1] while guiding researchers in ethical and responsible research practices and providing for reporting of misconduct without fear of retaliation. New Mexico Tech faculty, staff and students have a duty to report and respond to suspected misconduct in research, in order to protect the research enterprise and the reputation of the institution.

Faculty, staff, students and collaborators who are unsure of the policy's application should seek guidance from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

GENERAL POLICY

Misconduct in research is prohibited at New Mexico Tech, and allegation(s) of research misconduct will be assessed and investigated using the associated procedures for this policy. Research Misconduct is defined as: fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences of opinion.

Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with disciplinary policies of this institution, up to and including termination or dismissal.

This policy requires full cooperation with the procedures for handling allegations of research misconduct, including production of complete pertinent records, the sequestration of those records, and protection from retaliation.

Failure to cooperate with proceedings pursuant to this policy will be considered a violation of the Honesty and Integrity provision of the New Mexico Tech Employee Handbook (Section 6.4). Violations will be handled through separate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

As outlined in Section 36 of the New Mexico Tech Employee Handbook, retaliation of any kind is strictly prohibited.

Any findings of research misconduct will be reported to the respondent's supervisor, cognizant

[1] 42 C.F.R. Pt. 93 (2024), 45 C.F.R Pt. 689 (2025), 2 C.F.R. § 200.303 (2025)

funding agency, journals containing related published works, and any other entities and executive leadership as advised by legal counsel.

Institutional sanctions for findings of research misconduct will be assigned by the Research Integrity Officer, in consultation with the Vice President for Research. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Mandatory training and/or coaching.
- Requirement for institutional review of any funding proposals and/ or publications utilizing NMT resources, or listing NMT as an affiliation.
- Prohibition or suspension from submitting new NMT research funding proposals.
- Prohibition or removal from serving as a principal investigator (PI) on NMT research.
- Retraction of proposals.
- Loss of supervising or mentoring privileges.
- Loss of research privileges (e.g., research space).
- Disciplinary action following due process as outlined in University policy (e.g., Section 32 of the New Mexico Tech Employee Handbook, Disciplinary Action due to Complaints Directed at Instructional Staff, Regulations Governing Academic Freedom and Tenure).

Sanctions imposed by funding agencies are separate and independent from institutional sanctions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The process for responding to allegations of research misconduct at New Mexico Tech is supported by distinct but interdependent roles that ensure fairness, objectivity, and compliance with federal regulations. The Complainant initiates the process by submitting an allegation in good faith, while the Respondent is entitled to due process, confidentiality, and an opportunity to respond to the claims. The Inquiry Committee evaluates whether the allegation has sufficient merit to warrant an investigation, with its Chair coordinating the committee's meetings and communication with the Research Integrity Officer (RIO), and ensuring the inquiry is conducted impartially and in alignment with institutional standards.

If an investigation is warranted, the Investigation Committee conducts a thorough review of the evidence, including interviews with the Complainant, Respondent, and relevant witnesses. Its Chair manages procedural oversight and ensures that the final report is well-documented and submitted for review. Throughout this process, the RIO oversees compliance and record-keeping, while the Vice President for Research (VPR) ensures that institutional responsibilities are met, appoints the RIO, and serves as the final authority for accepting the findings and

assigning institutional sanctions. The collaboration of these roles ensures that research misconduct allegations are addressed with integrity, rigor, and transparency.

SCOPE

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all faculty, staff, students and individuals with University appointments at New Mexico Tech who are engaged in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results, whether their work is supported by external or internal funding.

Allegation against external collaborators shall be referred to the collaborator's institution. NMT will fully cooperate with any external inquiry or investigation proceedings.

DEFINITIONS

Allegation: A disclosure of possible research misconduct by any means of communication, including oral, written, or electronic, to a Research Integrity Officer (RIO).
Complainant: Someone who makes an allegation of research misconduct.
Evidence: Any document, tangible item, or testimony offered or obtained during a misconduct proceeding that tends to support a claim or to prove/disprove the allegation(s).
Fabrication: Making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that research is not accurately represented in the research record.
Inquiry: Preliminary information gathering and preliminary fact finding to determine whether an investigation is warranted.
Investigation: The formal development of a factual record and the examination of that record to render a decision or finding of either research misconduct or the decision or finding that research misconduct was not found.
Notice: A time-bound written communication served in person, by email, mail or letter delivery service to any party of a proceeding.
Plagiarism: The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
Preponderance of the evidence: The evidentiary standard necessary to support a finding in an investigation. The evidence must show that it is "more likely than not" that misconduct occurred.
Research: A systematic investigation, including development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
Research Integrity Officer (RIO): The RIO is an institutional official, appointed by the Vice President for Research, who is responsible for overseeing procedures related to research integrity.
Research misconduct: Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences of opinion.
Respondent: The person against whom an allegation of research misconduct is directed or who

is the subject of a research misconduct proceeding.
Retaliation: An adverse action taken against a complainant, witness, or anyone participating in investigative committees or otherwise assisting in misconduct proceedings by an institution or one of its members in response to:

- A good faith allegation of research misconduct; or
- Good faith cooperation with a research misconduct proceeding.

Sequestration: process of collecting, securing, and maintaining all relevant research records and evidence upon initiation of an inquiry into research misconduct. Sequestration is intended to prevent loss, alteration, or tampering with data and typically occurs immediately after the decision to pursue an inquiry is made. The Research Integrity Officer (RIO) is responsible for overseeing the sequestration process to ensure records are maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

CONFLICTS WITH LAWS OR REGULATIONS

If a policy or portion of a policy conflicts with a state or federal regulation, law, statute or rule, the conflict will be resolved in favor of the regulation, law, statute or rule.

Michael Jackson, Acting President	David Lepre Sr., Chair
New Mexico Tech	Board of Regents