

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 13 – Research Misconduct: Procedure for Graduate Research Students suspected of Research Misconduct

Contents

1.	General Principles	1
2.	Definitions	4
3.	References to Persons and Offices.....	8
4.	Responsibilities.....	10
5.	Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct: Faculty Research Misconduct Panel	11
6.	Procedure for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct identified by the Board of Examiners.....	16
7.	Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct: University Stage	18
8.	Procedure for a University Research Misconduct Panel	19
9.	Appeals	21
10.	Tables of Actions.....	24

This Procedure is applicable for alleged Research Misconduct by Students only. It does not cover alleged Research Misconduct by staff, the Procedure for which is available here. For guidance or advice on the Procedure please contact the [Student Cases Office](#).

Students needing help with their own case should contact the Student Advice Service at [Exeter Students' Guild](#) in Exeter, and [The SU](#) in Cornwall.

1. [General Principles](#)
- 1.1 The University fully subscribes to the ideals set out in the '[Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)' and the UKRI's '[Policy on the Governance of Good Research Practice](#)'. The University takes academic integrity very seriously and expects all researchers to conduct themselves accordingly, and in line with the University's '[Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#)'. The University promotes a culture of

research integrity, and encourages Students to discuss this with their supervisory team. Research Misconduct does not include honest error, or honest differences in interpretation or judgement in evaluating research methods or results. The University offers an online training course about Research Integrity online on [ELE](#).

- 1.2 The [Student Cases Office](#) will have oversight of all cases of Research Misconduct by Students in order that they can carry out the University's reporting requirements. This will include responding to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, and the General Data Protection Regulation.
- 1.3 All instances of Research Misconduct by Students should be investigated consistently within and between Faculties and the [Student Cases Office](#). All decisions taken under this Procedure should consider evidence on the basis of the balance of probability and take full account of natural justice, fairness and equity.
- 1.4 This Procedure shall apply to all currently registered Students and alumni of the University. For Students who are also members of staff, the following definition contained in the University's '[Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#)' shall apply.
- 1.5 All Students will be given the opportunity to submit a defence. This **may** be in writing and/or in person. However, a Student cannot prevent a hearing from taking place by refusing to attend or by failing to submit evidence. A meeting **may** proceed as long as reasonable steps have been taken to allow the Student to submit evidence.
- 1.6 All allegations of Research Misconduct **should** be considered without unnecessary delay, and Students **should** be kept informed of any delays to proceedings. All cases considered under this Procedure **should** be completed within 60 calendar days of the Student being formally notified of the alleged offence. Where this is not possible, or where a case is deemed complex, Students **should** be kept informed of the delay.

- 1.7 Any penalty imposed **should** be proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct. Evidence of an intention to gain advantage, deliberate falsification, or an intention to deceive will be considered as aggravating factors in determining the severity of the offence and the penalty.
- 1.8 If, after investigation, no case of Research Misconduct is found against a Student, the Student's record as held by the Faculty and by Student Records will not contain reference to the allegation. Where a case is proven, the outcome and the penalty will be placed on their record held by the Faculty and by Student Records.
- 1.9 Information on proven cases of Research Misconduct will be available to staff who are asked to provide references for Students.
- 1.10 The University provides guidance on appropriate penalties for cases of Research Misconduct (see Section [10 below](#)). However, each Faculty or Research Misconduct Panel will have discretion in the penalty they choose to apply, providing that a clear written record is kept of the reasons for doing so.
- 1.11 The University does not consider mitigation in cases of research misconduct unless clinical evidence is provided showing that the Student's judgment was affected in such a way as to lead directly to the misconduct. Students presenting such evidence **should** be immediately referred to the [Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study procedure](#), and all Research Misconduct proceedings **must** be suspended until any health and wellbeing issues have been addressed.
- 1.12 The University **may** be legally obliged to inform the Student's sponsor, funder, Research Council, employer, partner institution, or professional regulatory body of action taken under this Procedure. The University **may** be required to inform certain Research Councils as soon as any informal investigation is to take place, with the subsequent formal investigation stages and the outcome being communicated to the Research Council once any investigation is completed.

- 1.13 The University **may** also determine that it is appropriate to inform the Student's sponsor, funder, Research Council, employer, partner institution, or professional regulatory body or other party of action taken under this Procedure. Furthermore, where a complaint of Research Misconduct has been made against a Student by another person, then the University reserves the right to inform that individual of the outcome of the investigation.
- 1.14 Where the person under investigation has published the offending material in the name of a particular institution, or where they **may** have undertaken whole or part of the work at a particular institution, then the University reserves the right to inform that institution.
- 1.15 Any allegations raised under this Procedure **may** also result in the Student being subject to the '[Fitness to Practise Procedures](#)'.

2. Definitions

Submission

- 2.1 Graduate Research Students **should** be aware that any work submitted to a member of their supervisory team either in full, in part, or as a draft will fall under the provisions of this Procedure, as will any work handed to a member of staff. For the purposes of this Procedure work **may** be defined as, but not limited to, material submitted to a supervisor, or in a thesis, publication, public presentation, poster, website, grant proposal etc. related to their programme of study, or submitted as a Student of the University. For the purposes of some of the offences under this Procedure, any data created for the purposes of the Student's studies will also fall under the remit of this Procedure.
- 2.2 Should a Student submit work to an external body which was undertaken whilst a Student is at the University and Research Misconduct is detected, or should Research Misconduct be detected in any work the Student is intending to submit for an award of the University, then the University will take action under this Procedure, as if the work had been submitted to the Student's supervisory team.

2.3 Research Misconduct

Research Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

2.3.1 **Fabrication:** with the intention of deceiving, the creation of false data or other aspects of research or assessed work, including but not limited to documentation and participant consent.

2.3.2 **Falsification:** with the intention of deceiving, the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery, and/or consents.

2.3.3 **Plagiarism:** with the intention of deceiving, the act of representing work or ideas as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing. There are three main types of plagiarism, which could occur:

- a. Direct copying of text or illustrations from a webpage, book, article, thesis, handout, fellow Student's work, webpage, AI-generated content or other source without proper acknowledgement. This includes extracting sections of text from another source, and merely linking these together with a few of one's own sentences or words. This does not mean that direct quotes from other texts cannot be used, but that these **should** be placed in quotation marks and referenced appropriately (see [Referencing Guidance](#)) so that the reader understands that they are not the Student's own words.
- b. Claiming individual ideas derived from a book, article etc. as one's own, and incorporating them into one's work without acknowledging the source of those ideas. This includes paraphrasing a source, or altering the material taken from the source, so it appears to be one's own work.
- c. The resubmission or reuse of the Student's own work in another assignment, whether this was submitted and approved for an award or for which the Student received credit (i.e. for a module but which did not lead to an award) at the University of Exeter or any other academic institution worldwide, except where the incorporation of previous work into a larger argument is

permitted under the Postgraduate Research Handbook, Chapter 11: Presentation of theses/dissertations for Postgraduate Research degrees: statement of procedures, Section 2: Content of Thesis/Dissertation.

2.3.4 Collusion: working with another on a piece of work (when not specifically directed to do so), where neither recognises the other's contribution, in an attempt to deceive others into thinking the work is one person's alone. Collusion can also be taken to mean the act of not informing the relevant authorities that another is undertaking Research Misconduct, or actively covering up the misconduct of another. This includes using a ghost writer. Note that Students may have their work proof-read or copy edited in order to correct the English, though not to have it corrected for ideas or academic content. See the [University Statement on the Use of Proof Reading Services](#) for more information.

2.3.5 Misrepresentation. This includes, knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence¹ including, or not limited to:

- a. Misrepresentation of data in work including withholding or suppression of relevant findings and/or data, (e.g. 'cherry picking') or presenting a flawed interpretation of data without acknowledging its weaknesses.
- b. Undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication.
- c. Misrepresentation of interests, including failure to declare material interests either of the researcher or of the funders of the research, which includes appropriate acknowledgement of sources of funding where appropriate.
- d. Misrepresentation of qualifications and/or experience, including claiming or implying to hold qualifications or experience which are not held.

¹ Gross negligence occurs when methods of data analysis, presentation and/or interpretation that should have been known (via supervisors or training modules) are not used or are used wholly inappropriately leading to flawed interpretation of the data.

2.3.6 Misrepresentation of involvement, such as inappropriate claims to authorship and/or attribution of work (including reports, publication, seminar and conference presentations, posters, web pages etc.) where there has been no significant contribution, or the denial of authorship where an author has made a significant contribution. This includes misrepresenting the work of someone else, or from an AI-generated source, as your own, in whole or in part. For example: disguising the authorship of the work through the use of electronic devices to conceal the extent to which the work is not the Student's own; using source material originally in another language and translating this into English without attributing the work to the original author, or by using synonyms throughout copied material; copying another's bibliography and referencing, implying the research completed is the Student's own. This may also include the presence of hidden characters (white text) within the work which may have been included to manipulate the word count, to avoid source matches or to otherwise mislead the marker. Please note, evidence of an attempt to disguise any of the forms of plagiarism listed above (which might involve the use of paraphrasing systems or translation systems, or a translator or third party who acts as more than a proof-reader under the University's regulations) will normally be treated more severely than plagiarism alone. Please also see the [University Statement on the Use of Proof Reading Services](#) for more information.

2.3.7 Breach of University, research funders', or publishers' codes and policies on ethics, data management (including open access) and peer review. This list is illustrative, and is not exhaustive:

- a. Disclosing improperly the identities of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, or other breach of confidentiality.
- b. Placing any of those involved in research in danger, whether as subjects, participants, or associated individuals, without their prior consent, and without appropriate safeguards even with consent; this includes reputational danger where that can be anticipated.

- c. Not taking all reasonable care to ensure that the risks and dangers, and the broad objectives and the sponsors of the research are known to participants or to their legal representatives, to ensure appropriate informed consent is obtained properly, explicitly and transparently.
- d. Not observing legal and reasonable ethical requirements or obligations of care for animal subjects, human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment.
- e. Improper conduct in peer review of research proposals or results (including manuscripts submitted for publication); this includes failure to disclose conflicts of interest.
- f. Inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for peer review purposes.
- g. Failure to manage data according to the research funder's data policy and all relevant legislation.
- h. Failure to keep clear and accurate records appropriate to the research being conducted.
- i. Failure to adhere to data storage requirements, including taking data off campus where this is not permitted. This also includes adherence with any requirements stipulated as part of ethics approval.

3. [References to Persons and Offices](#)

- 3.1 Where the procedures refer to University officers and members of staff, it is standard practice that such procedures may, where appropriate, be handled through an appropriate person nominated by the stated officer/staff member to act on their behalf.

- 3.2 In the cases below where the [Student Cases Office](#) is referenced, they are acting on the delegated authority of the Director of Legal & Student Cases.
- 3.3 Where reference is made to the Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research (APVC-R), the APVC-R can appoint the Faculty Director of Postgraduate Research (DPGR) to act as their nominee. Where neither the APVC-R nor the DPGR is appropriate, for example because they are (or have been) the Student's supervisor or PGR pastoral tutor, then another senior member of the Faculty should be appointed to fulfil the APVC-R's role.
- 3.4 Where reference is made to the Dean of Postgraduate Research, the Dean of Postgraduate Research's role can be fulfilled by the Dean for Taught Students, where appropriate. Where neither Dean is appropriate, for example where they are the Student's supervisor or PGR pastoral tutor, they **must** delegate their role to an APVC-R.
- 3.5 Throughout this document, references to Students also refer to alumni of the University in respect of work undertaken whilst a Student of the University or that has been submitted for an award of the University.
- 3.6 Throughout this Chapter reference is made to the Student's Supporter at formal meetings. The Student's Supporter will normally be a member of the University, or the Students' Guild and the role is defined as follows; the Supporter is there to provide moral support to the Student and to support the Student with asking and answering questions during the meeting. They may also take notes of the meeting for the Student. The Student is expected to speak for themselves, and there is no automatic right for the Supporter to address the meeting, unless permitted to do so by the Chair. Should a Supporter act beyond this definition, then the Chair **may** suspend the meeting and ask the Supporter to leave; in the event that the Student is unable to continue the meeting in the absence of the Supporter, then the meeting will continue in the absence of the Student, based on the verbal evidence heard to date and the written documentation. Should the Supporter be asked to leave this meeting, this will not affect the attendance

of others at the meeting such as the marker, or any witness of the Faculty Representative.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the University

4.1.1 The University will ensure that all procedures and policies that relate to Research Misconduct are fit for purpose and widely available to both staff and Students.

4.1.2 The University will ensure that all staff involved in handling Research Misconduct cases have access to appropriate support.

4.1.3 The University will support Faculties in developing methods to reduce incidences of Research Misconduct.

4.1.4 The University will ensure that Students have access to appropriate levels of information, advice and guidance to ensure adherence with the University's [Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#) and to support Students if Research Misconduct is proven against them.

4.1.5 The University will keep records of all proven cases of Research Misconduct, providing annual reports to the Board of Postgraduate Research and to Senate.

4.2 Responsibilities of Faculties

4.2.1 All Faculties will ensure that they have appropriate arrangements in place in order to comply with the requirements set out in this Procedure. All Faculties will follow the Procedure when handling cases of suspected Research Misconduct.

4.2.2 All Faculties will provide Students with training and guidance on Research Conduct.

4.2.3 All Faculties will ensure that the information provided in their Handbooks includes information on Research Conduct.

4.2.4 All Faculties will ensure that supervisors are appropriately supported should they suspect Research Misconduct within a Student's work.

4.2.5 Responsibility for this Procedure's implementation by Faculties rests with the APVC-R.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Student

4.3.1 Each Student shall operate in accordance with the University's '[Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#)' at all times.

4.3.2 Each Student shall familiarise themselves with the University's [Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#), and the University's Attribution Policy, the definitions contained within these procedures, their Faculty/Department specific guidance, and any further guidelines specific to their area of research, taking advantage of training and seeking further guidance from their supervisory team as necessary.

4.3.3 All Students will complete the required training on ELE on Research Integrity.

5. [Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct: Faculty Research Misconduct Panel](#)

5.1 Reporting Concerns

5.1.1 Should a supervisor suspect that a Student has committed Research Misconduct, they should in the first instance raise this with the other members of the supervisory team and, if they still have concerns after doing so, they should report this to the APVC-R or to the DPGR for the Student's Faculty.

5.1.2 Should a Department upgrade committee suspect there is any form of Research Misconduct, as defined [in Section 2](#), within work which has been submitted for upgrade, the Department upgrade committee should immediately refer the

Student's work to the APVC-R or DPGR, with a report of their concerns. The APVC-R or DPGR shall then investigate the allegations as outlined below.

5.1.3 If Research Misconduct is suspected in a Student's work for a module (other than the main thesis/dissertation) this should be brought to the attention of the module convenor first who will inform the APVC-R or DPGR as per [5.1.1 above](#).

5.1.4 In all other instances where a person has reason to suspect that a Student may be guilty of Research Misconduct as defined above, they should report this directly to the APVC-R or DPGR of the Student's Faculty immediately. Students are also encouraged to report any witnessed or suspected incident of research misconduct by staff, Students or other researchers. In accordance with the University's policy and procedure on [Public Interest Disclosure \('whistleblowing'\)](#), individuals who raise concerns in good faith will not be penalised or disadvantaged for doing so.

5.1.5 In all instances allegations should be reported in writing, setting out exactly what the concerns are, and how this amounts to Research Misconduct.

5.2 Investigation of Suspected Research Misconduct

5.2.1 The APVC-R or DPGR on receipt of an allegation of Research Misconduct has the discretion to consider whether an investigation is required or not. The APVC-R or DPGR can review the allegations and determine whether a full investigation is required in which case they continue under [7 below](#) or if the concern is such that the APVC-R/DPGR is satisfied that this can be resolved immediately with a meeting with the Student and no investigation is required then they may move immediately to section [5.4 below](#) by proceeding to meet with the Student. The APVC-R or DPGR, may undertake initial investigatory steps to establish the credibility of such an allegation, such steps should be limited to purely establishing whether the allegation is credible or not. Should an allegation be determined to not be credible then the APVC-R or DPGR can determine that there are no further steps to take under this procedure.

5.2.2 The APVC-R or DPGR should write to the Student as soon as possible, informing them that an allegation of Research Misconduct has been made, and that the matter is being investigated. If the APVC-R or DPGR has determined that an investigation is required they may decide to inform the Student of the allegation once preparations have been made to conduct interviews. This is to prevent unnecessary impact on the Student's wellbeing. They should inform the Student in writing that they may wish to contact their PGR pastoral tutor and/or the Students' Guild Advice Service for advice and support.

5.2.3 The APVC-R or DPGR should then investigate the concerns raised. This may involve the appointment of a member (or members) of staff, who have knowledge of the issues or activities under investigation and who are independent and objective, to support that investigation. This will include examination of all relevant documentation, data and materials. It may also include interviews with the Student, and other individuals who might have information regarding key aspects of the allegations. Notes of each interview will be kept; a statement prepared by the individual interviewed may also be produced.

5.2.4 All individuals interviewed during the investigation will be asked to respect the confidential nature of the investigation. A request for anyone attending for interview to be accompanied by another Student, staff member, or a member of staff of the Students' Guild /Students' Union shall not be unreasonably refused. At the investigation stage it is the discretion of the APVC-R/DPGR to determine what information needs to be disclosed to determine the validity of the allegation. The APVC-R/DPGR should give individuals asked to attend interviews a minimum of 48 hours' notice, however this may be waived in circumstances whereby individuals' safety or wellbeing is put at risk of not conducting the interviews sooner.

5.3 Outcomes of the Investigation

5.3.1 The purpose of the investigation is to gather evidence and to enable a decision to be taken on whether the matter should proceed to a formal hearing under the

appropriate part of this Procedure. The University aims to complete the Faculty stage of the process within one calendar month, and if unable to do so, will update the subject of the investigation with an approximate timetable for completion of the investigation.

5.3.2 Following completion of the investigation, the APVC-R/DPGR or Panel reviewing the evidence gathered during the investigation may determine that there is no case for further consideration, that it is not sufficiently serious to merit referral to a University Research Misconduct Panel, or that it should be referred to a University Research Misconduct Panel. The list of outcomes under [section 10](#) should be referred to when considering whether or not a case merits referral to a University Research Misconduct Panel. The APVC-R/DPGR or Panel may seek advice from the [Student Cases Office](#) in determining the appropriate outcome.

5.3.3 Where there is sufficient evidence to indicate misconduct requiring consideration by a University Research Misconduct Panel, the APVC-R/DPGR or Panel may refer the matter to the [Student Cases Office](#) immediately upon conclusion of the initial informal investigation or formal Faculty investigation, with the recommendation that a University Research Misconduct Panel be held.

5.3.4 Where the conclusion is to immediately refer the case to a University Research Misconduct Panel, the APVC-R or DPGR is not required to meet with the Student to explain their conclusions but can instead inform them of this conclusion by letter.

5.4 Meeting with the Student

5.4.1 Where the case is not referred for a University Research Misconduct Panel, the APVC-R or DPGR should meet with the Student to explain their conclusions. Where additional members of staff had been appointed to investigate the matter, it may also be appropriate for them to attend this meeting, particularly where they bring specific expertise.

- 5.4.2 The Student cannot prevent a meeting from happening by refusing to attend providing they have been given at least five working days' notice of the meeting. Should the Student fail to attend the meeting it should continue in their absence. The meeting may be postponed should the Student be able to demonstrate that they would be unable to attend for a good reason (which may include previously approved absences from the University, where this remained appropriate, for example fieldwork or attending a conference).
- 5.4.3 The Student **should** be sent a summary of the allegations against them, any submission or data relevant to the allegation and any information that is relevant to the allegation which was discovered during the investigation to date, including any notes of interviews. This **must** be sent five working days in advance of the meeting. The Student is entitled to submit a written statement and accompanying evidence ahead of the meeting provided that this is received no later than one working day ahead of the meeting.
- 5.4.4 The Student has the right to attend the meeting and be accompanied by a Supporter, as defined in section [3.6 above](#), who should be a member of the University, such as a staff member, a member of staff of the Students' Guild/Students' Union, or another Student. Any variation on this principle should be approved by the APVC-R or DPGR. The purpose of the Supporter is to support the Student during the meeting, and they may take a written record on the Student's behalf. They should not, however, speak for the Student. The use of electronic recording devices will not normally be permitted. Proxies for the Student are not permitted; neither can the Student be represented in their absence.
- 5.4.5 At the meeting the APVC-R or DPGR should outline the allegations against the Student and explain how this could amount to Research Misconduct. The Student should be given a chance to respond. A written record of the meeting must be kept by an administrator.

- 5.4.6 The Student should be notified of the outcome of the investigation in writing within five working days of its conclusion. The formal report, which should be copied to the Student's supervisors, PGR pastoral tutor and the [Student Cases Office](#), will be then sent in due course. Where a penalty has been applied, the Student may appeal the outcome, once the formal report is received, as outlined in section [9 below](#).
- 5.4.7 If the allegation of suspected Research Misconduct was referred to the APVC-R or DPGR by a Department upgrade committee, the formal report **must** make clear to the Student the impact of the outcome on their ability to apply for upgrade. Where the Student is required to resubmit work, the works **must** be deemed satisfactory before any further opportunity for upgrade is given, which will also be dependent on the Student's deadline for upgrade.
- 5.4.8 Where a case of Research Misconduct is referred to the [Student Cases Office](#), this **must** take the form of a report outlining the allegations against the Student and the steps taken to investigate the allegations, attaching any material gathered in the course of the investigation, including the notes of all meetings that have taken place. Faculties may wish to use the report form in the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 13, Annex 1: Research Misconduct Faculty Report Form as a guide. This should be sent to [Student Cases](#).
6. [Procedure for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct identified by the Board of Examiners.](#)
- 6.1 If an Examiner is concerned that they may have identified evidence of Research Misconduct as defined in Section [2 above](#), they should report this to the other members of the Board of Examiners without delay. The Internal Examiner will inform the APVC-R or DPGR for the Faculty as a matter of urgency and submit a detailed report identifying the areas of concern; particular concerns within a thesis (e.g. plagiarism, fabrication) should be cross-referenced within the Internal Examiner's report.

- 6.2 As there will be no prior investigation by the Department or Faculty, there would be no need for the student to be interviewed prior to the referral being made to the Student Cases Office.
- 6.3 Upon receipt of the report from the Examiner(s), a Postgraduate Research Manager within the Doctoral College will write to the Student on behalf of the APVC-R or DPGR, as soon as reasonably possible, informing the Student of the allegations (and the cancellation of the viva, if one was scheduled to take place), and informing the Student that the matter will be referred to the [Student Cases Office](#), as any suspected Research Misconduct in the final thesis/dissertation is sufficiently serious to warrant direct referral to the [Student Cases Office](#) without a prior Faculty-level investigation. A copy of this notification should also be sent to the Student's PGR pastoral tutor and supervisors as appropriate.
- 6.4 Where the Board of Examiners identifies suspected Research Misconduct during the viva they should continue with the viva. Following the viva, the Internal Examiner should immediately contact the APVC-R or DPGR to report that concerns had arisen during the viva about suspected Research Misconduct. The Internal Examiner should then prepare a detailed report outlining their concerns and submit this report to the APVC-R or DPGR, as agreed with the APVC-R or DPGR#
- 6.5 The Internal Examiner's report needs to explain the nature of the alleged Research Misconduct that has been detected, where it can be found, and at what stage it was found e.g. in the thesis before the viva, during the viva etc. In terms of investigation, it may be that where it is detected at the viva stage that it is necessary to go back and check through the thesis.
- 6.6 The APVC-R or DPGR will then refer the case to the [Student Cases Office](#) including a copy of the Board of Examiner's report, the completed report form (available on request from [PGR Student Cases](#)) and the Internal Examiner's report as per Section 6.4, as well as any other relevant documentation (including a copy of the work submitted for examination). The report form must be signed by the APVC-R/DPGR for the Faculty,

but appropriate members of Professional Services staff within the Doctoral College may assist with the completion of the form and compiling the accompanying documentation.

6.7 Examples of relevant documentation may include, where available:

6.7.1 A Faculty or Department handbook which sets out what Research Misconduct.

6.7.2 Ethics application(s) made by the Student.

6.7.3 Raw data files created by the Student.

6.7.3 Emails between members of the Board of Examiners.

These examples are illustrative, and are by no means exhaustive. Documentation that may need to be sent to the Student Cases Office with the Faculty report form needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis – the Student Cases Office can provide guidance where this is needed.

7. [Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Research Misconduct: University Stage](#)

7.1 The [Student Cases Office](#), upon receipt of a report from the APVC-R or DPGR, will appoint an Investigating Officer who will consider the case with the Dean of Postgraduate Research.

7.2 The Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) and the Investigating Officer shall review the report and accompanying documentation and may request additional paperwork or comment from the Faculty concerned. They will direct a University Research Misconduct Panel to be held. In exceptional cases, where the evidence does not warrant holding a University Research Misconduct Panel, the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) may refer the case back to the Faculty.

8. Procedure for a University Research Misconduct Panel

8.1 A University Research Misconduct Panel shall comprise the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee), who shall chair the panel, and two of either APVC-Rs/DPGRs or Department Directors of PGR who have not previously been involved with the case, and who are not from the same department as the Student.

8.1.1 Note, UKRI **may** seek to have observer status at the University Research Misconduct Panel for those cases involving Students in receipt of funding or involved in a project funded by UKRI. Moreover, should a Student who is in receipt of funding from RCUK or involved in the project funded by RCUK be called to a University Research Misconduct Panel, then one of the APVC-Rs or DPGRs **must** be replaced by an independent member external to the University.

8.2 The Investigating Officer shall attend the University Research Misconduct Panel throughout and minute the meeting. The Panel shall be empowered to call witnesses or experts as required, who may be external to the University.

8.3 The Student **should** be notified in writing no later than five working days prior to the Research Misconduct Panel being convened. The Student shall be entitled to a copy of all the papers to be considered by the Panel, including a list of witnesses or experts that the Panel intends to call. The papers should include the records of the Faculty's investigation, and any reports written in the process of the investigation; any other paperwork which is material to the allegations may also be included. The papers **must** be sent no later than five working days in advance of the meeting.

8.4 The Student may prepare a statement in advance of the Panel and submit this to the [Student Cases Office](#), which **must** be received no later than one full working day prior to the meeting of the Research Misconduct Panel. The Student will also be permitted to call witnesses but **must** ensure that details of their witnesses are submitted to the [Student Cases Office no later than](#) two full working days prior to the meeting.

8.5 The Student is entitled to attend the Research Misconduct Panel for the duration of the hearing (except as in section [8.7 below](#)). The Student may be accompanied by a

Supporter whose role is defined in section [3.6 above](#). The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not normally be permitted. The Student may not be represented in their absence.

- 8.6 The APVC-R or DPGR for the Faculty, or nominee, shall attend on behalf of the relevant Faculty, and shall be entitled to attend for the duration of the meeting (except as outlined in sections [8.7](#) and [8.7 below](#)). At the Chair's discretion, the Faculty Representative may directly question the Student and any witnesses or experts that the Student calls. The Faculty Representative is entitled to call such witnesses and experts as they believe necessary but **must** ensure that details of any witnesses are submitted to the [Student Cases Office no later than](#) one full working day prior to the meeting.
- 8.7 The Student may, at the Chair's discretion, be given the opportunity to address the panel in the absence of the Faculty Representative. Following this, the Panel may recall the Faculty Representative should the need arise.
- 8.8 The Panel shall then meet in private to consider the case. The Research Misconduct Panel shall have the power to impose any penalty listed in Table 2 in section [10 below](#) and may exercise its discretion when imposing a penalty.
- 8.9 The [Student Cases Office](#) shall inform the Student and the Faculty in writing of its decision within five working days, and the penalty to be imposed. This may take the form of a summary report, with the full report and formal outcome (including a copy of the minutes of the Panel) following in due course.
- 8.10 If the Student is found guilty of Research Misconduct a record of the Panel's decision will be kept by the [Student Cases Office](#), Student Records and by the relevant Faculty. It may also be necessary to inform the Student's sponsor, funder, Research Council, employer, partner institution, or professional regulatory body as appropriate.
- 8.11 If no case of Research Misconduct is found against the Student, whilst the Student Cases Office will keep a record of the case, the Student's record held by the Faculty and

Student Records will not contain reference to the allegation, nor will the University inform external bodies of the outcome unless there was a requirement to inform the Student's sponsor, funder, Research Council, employer, partner institution, or professional regulatory body that an allegation was being investigated in the first place.

9. Appeals

- 9.1 A Student shall have the right of appeal against any penalty imposed either by the Faculty or by the University Research Misconduct Panel. The Student **must** complete the Research Misconduct Appeal Form, available from the [PGR Support Cases team](#) and submit it to the [Student Cases Office](#), with reference to the appropriate evidence. The Appeal **must** be received by the [Student Cases Office](#) within 10 working days of the date on the letter informing the Student of the decision.
- 9.2 A Student should note that an appeal against a decision taken at any of these levels will only be accepted if:
- 9.2.1 There is evidence of a procedural irregularity.
- 9.2.2 There is evidence of bias.
- 9.2.3 The decision reached is one no reasonable body (properly directing itself, and taking into account all of the relevant factors) could have arrived at.
- 9.2.4 The Student submits further material circumstances which could not reasonably be expected to have been submitted for consideration when the original decision was made.
- 9.3 The [Student Cases Office](#), in consultation with the Dean of Taught Students or Dean of Postgraduate Research (whoever was not involved in the original Panel making the decision being appealed against) will establish whether there is a prima facie case for considering the case before a Senate Appeal Committee.

- 9.4 If no prima facie grounds for the appeal are found, the appeal will be dismissed and the Student informed of the reasons in writing. There is no further right of internal appeal against such decisions (see section [O below](#)).
- 9.5 If it is decided that there is a prima facie case for an appeal, a Senate Appeal Committee shall be convened. The Senate Appeal Committee has the power to confirm, to set aside, or to vary the penalty imposed by the Faculty-level hearing or by the University Research Misconduct Panel. There shall be no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the Senate Appeal Committee.
- 9.6 A Senate Appeal Committee shall comprise three members (including a Student representative) of Senate. The [Student Cases Office](#) will appoint the Chair from that number. No person shall be entitled to be a member of the Senate Appeal Committee who is also associated with the Student's department(s) or who was previously involved in the case.
- 9.7 The Student shall be informed of the date of the meeting of the Senate Appeal Committee no less than five working days in advance. The Student **may** choose to appear before the Senate Appeal Committee but the Committee **may** also hear a case in the absence of the Student. The Student shall be entitled to attend the Committee meeting for its duration but will be required to withdraw whilst the Committee retires to reach its decision. Proxies for the Student shall not be allowed. The Student **may** be accompanied by a Supporter who should normally be a member of the University (with any variation to this principle at the discretion of the Chair), such as a staff member, a member of the Students' Guild or Students' Union, or another Student. The purpose of this person is to support the Student during the course of the meeting, and they **may** take a written record on the Student's behalf. However, the use of electronic audio recording equipment will not normally be allowed. With the permission of the Chair, the Supporter **may** take a role in the cross-examination of any witnesses on behalf of the Student and **may** make summative remarks following the Student's concluding statement. The Student should indicate at the start of the hearing whether the accompanying person was expected to take an active role in the proceedings. The

Student **may** direct questions to the Faculty representative (and any witnesses called) in an appropriate manner.

- 9.8 The Senate Appeal Committee shall call the Faculty representative and shall be empowered to call other members of the University or partner institution as witnesses as required.
- 9.9 The Senate Appeal Committee, having considered the evidence, **may** uphold or reject the appeal, such a decision being final.
- 9.10 The Senate Appeal Committee shall minute its deliberations and decisions and submit a report to Senate. If the Committee's report includes a recommendation requiring action before the next meeting of the Senate, it shall be for the Vice-Chancellor to authorise action and then report to the Senate retrospectively.
- 9.11 The Secretary of the Committee shall notify the Student in writing of the Senate Appeal Committee's decision, giving the reasons for it within five working days; this may take the form of a summary outcome, with a letter and formal report following later.
- 9.12 There are no other University appeal procedures beyond those stages detailed above. If, in the opinion of a Student, an appeal remains unresolved after the University's processes have been exhausted, application **may** be made to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. For further details see <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

10. Tables of Actions

10.1 Table of Actions under section [5 above](#) of the Procedure (decisions taken by the APVC-R, DPGR or Faculty Panel).

	Decision	Action
1	Following the investigation no concerns remain.	No action is taken and no record is kept on the Student's file.
2	The Student is not found guilty, but nevertheless there are concerns as to whether they have sufficient understanding of the necessary academic conventions or research practices within the Department or Faculty.	The Student will be referred to the relevant source of support or training course as required.
3	Misconduct is proven, APVC-R, DPGR or Panel determines action (a) or (b), taking into account the principles set out in this Procedure in reaching its decision.	a) The Student will be formally warned by the APVC-R, DPGR or Chair of the Faculty-level panel and may be required to resubmit work, normally to their supervisory team, by a fixed date appropriate to the work in question, or to otherwise demonstrate satisfactory adherence with the University's Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research . For a Student enrolled on a Professional Doctorate programme or otherwise undertaking a module as part of their programme of studies, resubmission may involve resubmitting the work for that particular module or undertaking a new piece of work under the direction of the module convenor. Failure to abide by the conditions of this warning will result in the Student being referred to the Student Cases Office . This warning will be placed on the Student's record for the duration of their programme. In addition, further support may be recommended.
		b) The case will be referred to the Student Cases Office with the recommendation that a University Research Misconduct Panel be held.

10.2 Table of Actions for Application by the University Research Misconduct Panel.

	Offence	Penalty
1	Following the investigation no concerns remain.	No action is taken and no record is kept on the Student's file.
2	Research Misconduct is proven. The University Research Misconduct Panel recommends penalty (a) or (b), taking into account the principles set out in this Procedure in reaching its decision.	a) The Student will be formally warned by the University Research Misconduct Panel and required to resubmit the work, normally to their supervisory team, by a fixed date appropriate to the work in question, or to otherwise demonstrate satisfactory adherence with the University's Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research . Failure to abide by the conditions of this warning will result in withdrawal from their programme and from the University. This warning will be placed on the Student's record for the duration of their programme. In addition the University Research Misconduct Panel may recommend further support as they believe necessary.
		b) The Student is expelled permanently from the University and may not keep any credit they have gained. The expulsion will be placed on their permanent record.