

RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY

Prepared by: Research Office

Approving Authority: FNU Senate

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1.0 Purpose

Fiji National University is committed to managing research ethically and with integrity. FNU's reputation for achieving research excellence requires all members of the University, including staff and students, adjuncts, and all persons affiliated with research at the university, to demonstrate and adopt the highest level of academic and intellectual integrity. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all FNU staff, students, adjuncts, visitors, and all persons affiliated with the university comply with the FNU Research Integrity Policy.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all FNU staff, students, adjuncts, visitors, and affiliates engaged in any research activity in any college, school, department, research centres, and units at Fiji National University. The policy aims to set standards and expectations that support research quality, integrity, and compliance, protecting both the public and researchers.

3.0 Policy Statement

The Research Integrity Policy is an overarching policy specifying research standards, policies, and procedures for implementing and ensuring good research practices at FNU. It outlines the University's approach to research integrity about maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.

4.0 Related Policies

This policy shall be read in conjunction, but not limited, to the following policies:

- FNU Human Research Ethics Policy
 - Human Research Ethics Application Form
 - Participant Information Sheet
 - Consent Form
 - Confidentiality Agreement Form
- Constitution of the FNU Animal Research Ethics Committee
 - Animal Owner Informed Consent Form for the use of Animals for Research
 - Information Sheet for Animal Owners
 - Animal Research Ethics Feedback Template
 - Application Form for Ethics Approval for Research Involving Animals
 - Postmortem Report Template
 - Unexpected Adverse Event Report
 - FNU Code of Conduct for Animal Research
- FNU Hazardous Material Management Policy for Researchers
- FNU Intellectual Property & Research Commercialisation Policy
- FNU Research Data Management Policy and Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, HDR Candidates, and Visitors
- FNU Authorship Policy
- FNU Conference Policy
- FNU Higher Degrees by Research Policy and Procedure
- FNU Higher Degrees by Research Supervision Policy
- FNU HDR Supervisor and Student Code of Practice
- Procedures and Conditions for Appointing Adjunct Professors as PhD Supervisors at FNU

- FNU Thesis Structure Guideline
- FNU Nomination of Examiners Guideline
- FNU External Examiner Guideline for Research Degrees

5.0 Code of Practice for Research

Fiji National University expects all university members - staff, students (including HDR candidates), adjuncts, visitors, and affiliates engaged in research activities at FNU and/or using the university premises, funds, and resources to observe and employ the highest standards of integrity in the conduct of research. In doing so, everyone is required to:

- a. Be honest in proposing, conducting, and reporting research.
- b. Comply with FNU research ethics and approval requirements.
- c. Declare any actual or potential conflict of interest.
- d. Properly acknowledge contributors to the research.
- e. Acknowledge authorship, which has genuinely contributed to the research.
- f. Administer transparent procedures to deal with any research misconduct and report on the findings to the appropriate body.

6.0 Research Misconduct

Research Misconduct involves:

- a. Falsification and fabrication of data.
- b. Intentionally misleading data and findings.
- c. Deliberately reporting false or fabricated data.
- d. Use of other people's works without due acknowledgment.
- e. Acknowledging or granting of authorship to anyone who did not contribute to the research.
- f. Not including legitimate authors.
- g. Becoming lead author when in reality the lead researcher is some other person, for instance, publishing students' work as lead author. Instead, the student should be the lead author, and the supervisor/s are listed as second and third author/s.
- h. Non-declaration of conflict of interest - actual or potential.

Incidental errors and genuine (honest) errors where due diligence has not been accommodated on the part of the researcher are generally not accounted for misconduct in research. Additionally, flawed research is not accounted for misconduct in research.

Differences in honest opinion, interpretation, or judgment in evaluation methods used, presentation, and discussion of the findings in an examined work such as a dissertation do not depict misconduct in research.

7.0 Misconduct in Research Reporting Procedure

A. Referrals

Any suspected complaint of misconduct in research shall be made to the Research Office who will receive and record the complaint for the URC assessment and decision.

B. Preliminary Review

Any suspected well-founded complaint on misconduct in research referred to the Research Office shall be assessed based on the evidence provided. Where Research Office finds that no misconduct in research has occurred and does not require further investigation, Research Office will report the outcome of the investigation to the URC for a conclusion.

If the Research Office believes that there is a case to proceed with further investigation, the matter will be referred to the URC with a preliminary report for further deliberation.

Where URC determines that no further investigation is required, the allegation shall be dismissed. Research Office will provide a written report on the conclusion of the case to the person referring to the case of misconduct in research.

URC will consider all cases based on their seriousness, credibility, and feasibility of confirming the misconduct with evidence.

C. Investigation

The URC shall institute investigation proceedings by appointing a panel.

The panel shall take into account the complaint and evidence provided to substantiate the research misconduct for the URC for a final deliberation on the matter.

D. Findings of Research Misconduct and recommendations

If misconduct in research has been evidenced, the chair of the panel appointed to investigate the matter will make recommendations to the URC for the course of action to address the misconduct in research.

The following actions may be taken:

- a. URC, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor may warn the subject not to re-offend.
- b. URC, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor shall report the matter to the Director Human Resource, who will address the matter as academic misconduct.

In the case of a research student, the following shall apply:

- a. A panel appointed by the HDRC will investigate the nature of research misconduct and report to HDRC for a deliberation on the matter.
- b. Depending on the seriousness of the case, the matter may be escalated to the Academic Office for the final decision.

E. Notification of investigation

Any or all parties who are involved in reporting misconduct in research shall be informed of the decision of the investigation. Similarly, the subject/s involved will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

F. Appeal

The subject has the right to appeal the decision. The matter of appeal shall be forwarded to the Research Office within 15 days of the formal decision who will notify the URC/HDRC.

G. Awareness of Research integrity at FNU

FNU is committed and anticipates maintaining a high level of awareness of research integrity at all levels. It further aims to conduct all investigations in a fair, prudent, and transparent manner on any well-grounded complaint or allegation concerning research misconduct.

8.0 Abbreviations and Definitions

HDR	Higher Degrees by Research
HDRC	Higher Degrees by Research Committee
URC	University Research Committee
Allegation	is a formal report of potential research misconduct brought to University's attention.
Investigation	is the process whereby a claim on research misconduct is referred, case determined and deliberated on, and concluded.
Research Misconduct	is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results (https://ori.hhs.gov/definition-misconduct 19 April 2021).
Subject/s	is the person or persons against whom misconduct in research has been filed to the Fiji National University.

9.0 References/ Acknowledgement

The Fiji National University acknowledges the following sources which have been extensively used in the compilation of the FNU Research Integrity Policy.

University of Oxford. (2021 online) *Academic Integrity in Research*. Available online at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/academic-integrity-in-research#collapse1310981>

UK Research Integrity Office. (2021 online). *Code of Practice for Research*. Available online at <https://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/>

University of Pittsburgh. (2011). University of Pittsburgh Policy: Research integrity. Available online at <http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy11-01-01.web.pdf>

10.0 Approval Agency

The FNU Senate

11.0 Revision Log

This table will be used to insert dates of the different versions made on the policy/procedure.

Version	Date of Approval	Comment
1.0	18-08-2021	Approved by the Senate.
2.0		

12.0 Policy Sponsor

Research Office

13.0 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Executive Officer - Research Office

Phone: (679) 3394000 extension 2042

Email: eo-ro@fnu.ac.fj