

Faculty of Medicine Task Force Report on Research Integrity 2017

Executive Summary

(See full report at: <https://medicine.utoronto.ca/research/ethics-policies-and-guidelines>)

Ensuring the highest ethical standards is essential to the Faculty of Medicine's academic research mission and standing as a national and global leader. A breach of research integrity not only damages the credibility of individuals, colleagues and collaborating programs, but the dissemination of fabricated results has the potential to cause harm to patients and families. It can also negatively impact research conducted by others and confer extensive reputational risk to the Faculty and University at large. The speed and ubiquity of digital media amplify these risks.

Research misconduct has many causes and can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- fabrication/misrepresentation of data
- plagiarism, including “text recycling” or self-plagiarism
- image or statistical manipulation
- image fraud

It can also be associated with a lack of supervisory rigor and failure to apply due diligence in the operation of a research study, laboratory or program. For further definitions of research misconduct, see the University's [Framework to Address Allegations of Research Misconduct](#).

In 2016, at the request of the Dean, a Task Force on Research Integrity (see link above to full report for list of members) undertook an examination of the environment, locally and beyond, and issued 20 recommendations related to data management, integrity training and fostering a culture of integrity.

The Dean has accepted these recommendations and we will be developing a plan for **faculty conducting research to have completed training in the Responsible Conduct of Research**. This training is available on-line through the Network of Networks (“N2”), a not-for-profit Canadian corporation of which the University is a member organization. N2 training is available free of charge, through the University. Implementation will be coordinated through the Office of the Vice Dean Research and Innovation; further details about this will be forthcoming.

The Task Force also recognized that bringing forward concerns about research misconduct may be a daunting prospect for members of the University community. A high level overview of the University's process is provided in the report (see link above) to assist faculty members in reporting and responding to allegations of research misconduct. A Research Misconduct Investigation Timeline also outlines what takes place during such an investigation. And, finally, the Task Force has drafted a series of questions and answers around the issue of research integrity and misconduct investigations (see link above).

The Faculty of Medicine is committed to collaborating with its faculty members and affiliated institutions in disseminating these recommendations, and providing faculty development and other supports to facilitate their adoption.