SOP 1.1  Triage and Precedence of Procedures

General Description:

As research projects become larger, more multidisciplinary and more multifaceted, allegations of misconduct in research may also require action in other regulated areas of research (i.e. human subjects, animal care and use, conflicts of interest, biosafety). It is critical that the institutional response be properly coordinated so the proper things are done in the right order.

Procedures:

1. Receipt of the allegation and determination of what regulatory areas may be involved. This function is performed by the RIO. It is then the RIO’s responsibility to inform immediately the administrators (i.e. IRB chair and IO) of the other involved regulatory areas.

2. Determination of the Precedence of Proceedings. Subject to the RIO’s ability to stay the misconduct procedures in special circumstances, review of an allegation of research misconduct shall precede all other internal institutional proceedings that relate to or arise out of the alleged misconduct. However, the RIO should have the authority, in consultation with the institution’s legal counsel, to stay any proceeding under the misconduct policy if the RIO determines that other institutional procedures mandated by law must be completed prior to the institution’s further review of the allegation of misconduct. Such governmentally-mandated procedures may involve regulatory actions such as the protection of human subjects of research.

The ordered principles that should guide the RIO’s determination:

A. Protect public health and safety and the safety and well-being of research subjects.

B. Protect evidence necessary to review an allegation of misconduct or alleged violations under other regulated areas of research.

C. Protect the Public Interest.

D. Review the allegation of research misconduct under institutional procedure.

3. Other considerations.

A. Criminal Investigation. If an allegation of misconduct is also the subject of a criminal investigation or proceeding and the pertinent governmental authority advises the institution that its review of the allegation of misconduct may prejudice or interfere with the criminal investigation or proceeding, the RIO or Designated Official in consultation with the institution’s general counsel may stay the misconduct proceeding, while making every effort to assure that the evidence necessary for its review of the misconduct allegation is protected and the chain of custody preserved.

B. Allegation involving a Research Collaborator at another institution. When an allegation involves a respondent at the institution and a research collaborator at another institution, the RIO has the authority to consult the RIO of the other institution, share evidence, and even conduct a joint review of the allegation when appropriate.

C. Agency Investigation. Certain governmental agencies may have the option of initiating their own investigation of an allegation of misconduct involving research supported by that agency. In that event,
the RIO should consult that agency and in concert with the Designated Official, determine whether to suspend the institution’s review of the allegation.

**Related Forms, Guidance, and SOPs:**

Policy 4007, Misconduct in Research and Scholarship

**Responsibility:**

Execution of SOP:
Deciding Official
Research Integrity Officer

**Approval and Version History:**

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<tr>
<td>Aurali Dade</td>
<td>Assistant Vice President, Office of Research Integrity and Assurance</td>
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