

IOE Research Misconduct Policy

Foreword

UCL is committed to maintaining the integrity and probity of academic research. To this end, UCL has implemented a procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research. The respective up-to-date policies and procedure apply to all UCL staff and students and can be downloaded from the [UCL Research Misconduct page](#).

This document entitled *IOE Research Misconduct Policy* outlines the contextualisation of the UCL policy in relation to the IOE Research Ethics Committee's functions and processes, which effectively reflect the initial stages of UCL's procedure for investigating cases of alleged research misconduct. The objectives of this document are to...

- ...offer transparency on the process of inquiry where potential research misconduct has been alleged.
- ...ensure that the processes of investigation around potential research misconduct are thorough and fair.
- ...outline the relationship between the contextualised IOE processes and the wider UCL research misconduct policies.

This contextualised policy and guidance has been developed by the IOE Research Ethics Committee in consultation with... and approved by the IOE Research Committee and is effective as from 16 October 2023 onwards.

IOE Research misconduct procedure

In the event a complaint or allegation of misconduct regarding an IOE research project is submitted to the Chair of the IOE Research Ethics Committee, this will be investigated at local level in the first instance, in line with UCL's [Procedure for investigating cases of alleged research misconduct](#).

IOE procedures for investigating and resolving research misconduct allegations will be as follows:

1. The Principal Investigator will be informed of the allegation. They will be asked for relevant information and if necessary, asked to cease all activity in the relevant project temporarily while the investigation is pending.
2. The Chair of the IOE Research Ethics Committee will convene a Research Misconduct Panel. The Research Misconduct Panel shall consist of the Chair of the IOE Research Ethics Committee, the respective Departmental Research Ethics Coordinator (or the

Departmental Head of Research as their representative) and one other member of the IOE Research Ethics Committee.

3. The Research Misconduct Panel will screen the allegations to determine the seriousness of the case and the context of the ethics issues mentioned.
4. Less serious cases will be mediated or resolved at the individual or local level and this route will be considered and explored where appropriate, before formal steps of the UCL Procedure for investigating cases of alleged research misconduct are initiated.
5. Cases are considered less serious if:
 - they involve a member of staff at IOE, or where IOE has primary responsibility
 - they relate to research that is carried out within the contexts of IOE
 - they constitute research activity for which IOE is the lead institution or for which IOE has primary (or otherwise material) responsibility
 - they do not encompass breaches of the law or areas within the domain of the relevant regulatory authority which would be better (or better first) addressed through a process other than the misconduct procedure (e.g., HR processes or legal processes)
 - they do not encompass breaches of UCL's regulations or policies such as might require the implementation of the relevant disciplinary process rather than the misconduct procedure
6. Cases are considered as more serious if:
 - according to the above-mentioned screening process the allegations elicit evidence to warrant recommending a formal investigation, for example, due to the nature of the allegations or this not being a first offence.
7. Once the initial screening has been completed, the Research Misconduct Panel will advise the Principal Investigator on the outcome of the investigation. Possible outcomes are:
 - a. The Research Misconduct Panel may recommend to the appropriate parties that necessary action be taken, such as informing stakeholders and other parties involved.
 - b. Where necessary, the Research Misconduct Panel will make recommendations on appropriate actions for the Principal Investigator. In most cases IOE research guidance will be reinforced and/or training will be provided to project investigators.
 - c. In more serious instances of misconduct, the case will be escalated to the Registrar, as per the Formal Investigation Stage of the UCL Procedure. The formal steps described in the Procedure will only be taken forward if the informal route is considered to be inappropriate, or where mediation and/or alternative dispute resolution has been refused or proved unsuccessful.

8. It is not intended that the misconduct policy will be used as part of any disciplinary or regulatory process. However, information gathered in the course of the screening may become relevant to and disclosed in disciplinary or regulatory processes.
9. In accordance with the principle of integrity, the Research Misconduct Panel and the IOE Research Ethics Committee will maintain appropriate confidential records of the process outlined.
10. The Research Ethics Officer assumes responsibility for keeping accurate records of the activities, deliberations and reporting related to the IOE Research Misconduct Policy.
11. The IOE Research Ethics Committee will submit regularly a copy of this procedure with a report indicating whether any significant issues have arisen in relation to the operation of this policy.