



## **University of Pittsburgh Research Integrity Policy Committee Charter**

### **I. Preamble**

This body is called the Research Integrity Policy Committee (“Committee”). It is authorized by the Chancellor and will serve at the Chancellor’s discretion. The Chancellor has authorized the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research (“SVC-R”) to direct the operations of this Committee, consistent with the terms of this Charter. This Charter outlines the purpose, relevant background, scope, responsibilities, composition, and operations of the Committee, as well as the review process for any proposals generated by this Committee.

This document should be read in conjunction with Policy AO 01, Establishing University Policies, and all other applicable University policies, protocols, and procedures.

### **II. Purpose**

This Committee is created for the purpose of revising University Policy RI 07, Research Integrity, and its supporting documents (e.g., procedures, guidelines). This Policy outlines the responsibilities of researchers and University officials in upholding research integrity and governs the University’s role in handling allegations of research misconduct.

### **III. Background**

University Policy RI 07 applies to all allegations of research misconduct involving faculty, research associates, students, postdoctoral fellows, and any other individuals involved in research conducted at the University. It establishes (i) procedures for reporting and investigating allegations of research misconduct; (ii) the responsibilities of the University Research Integrity Officer (RIO) in addressing research misconduct allegations; (iii) the rights of the University in the event of finding a research misconduct; and (iv) the rights of a complainant, respondent or whistleblower in cases of research misconduct.

University Policy RI 07 was last reviewed in 2017, with minor edits made in 2023, though much of the core content dates back to the 2008 version of the Policy. Since then, new legislative requirements including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (42 C.F.R. §§ 93.25 – 93.511), which will take effect on January 1, 2026, necessitate a thorough review of the Policy. Accordingly, the Committee is charged with assessing and recommending revisions to align the Policy with current regulations, addressing any broader changes in University practices or

requirements, and providing clear guidance on the University's responsibilities in addressing research misconduct and maintaining research integrity.

#### **IV. Scope and Authority**

The Committee will recommend a revised University Policy RI 07, and any necessary documents to support its implementation (e.g., procedures, guidelines). In doing so, the Committee's deliberations must address the following topics:

- **Scope.** Establish a Policy that clearly applies to all allegations of research misconduct on the part of faculty, research associates, trainees, and staff alleged to have occurred while the respondent conducted research at the University.
- **Compliance.** Identify which sections of University Policy RI 07 (i) require amendment to comply with Regulations, and (ii) should be updated to ensure the policy offers clear and thorough guidance on the University's responsibilities in managing research misconduct and upholding research integrity.
- **Timelines.** Define and clearly establish timelines relevant to the conduct of proceedings under this policy, including assessments, inquiries, investigations, hearings, and appeals.
- **Definitions.** Revise, or otherwise update and add, definitions as necessary to align with regulatory requirements and University practices.
- **Application.** Review the new Regulations and clearly define their application to the University and its members.
- **Alignment.** Identify current research integrity practices at the University and in higher education more generally and either align the Policy with both these practices, to the extent practicable, or recommend changes to University Policies and practices, if necessary.
- **Procedure and Guidelines.** Develop necessary procedures and guidelines to effectively manage proceedings under this Policy, so that they are consistent, transparent, and in compliance with all requirements. This work includes outlining the specific steps for conducting thorough and impartial assessments, inquiries, investigations, hearings, and appeals as well as the responsibilities of the RIO to support the implementation of this Policy.
- **Clarity.** Consider users of the Policy and any associated procedures and guidelines, such that the material is written in a manner that is easily understood by the University community.

## V. Responsibilities

As provided above, the Committee is created for the purpose of revising University Policy RI 07, and any necessary documents to support its implementation (e.g., procedures, guidelines). To perform this function, the Committee has the responsibility to:

- Review the University's current practices on upholding research integrity and handling issues related to research misconduct;
- Incorporate or address all applicable sections of the Regulations as well as any applicable local, state, and federal requirements into the proposed Policy and procedures;
- Consistent with this charter Consult with relevant stakeholders such as the Cost Accounting Department as necessary;
- Discuss best practices in higher education related to upholding research integrity and handling issues related to research misconduct, including benchmarking peer universities' respective policies on the matter;
- In accordance with the terms of this Charter, consult with stakeholders (e.g., schools, offices, faculty, staff, students) at the University during the drafting of a revised Policy;
- Recommend a draft Policy for review pursuant to the process described in Section VII below, and consider feedback during that review; and
- Recommend accompanying draft supplemental documents needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the proposed Policy.

It is expected that the Committee will work in confidence to have a full and frank discussion of all options. Individual members should maintain the deliberations of the Committee confidential and are expected to not discuss the content of the Committee's deliberations outside of the Committee unless authorized to do so by the Committee. The broader community will have an opportunity to consider the Committee's proposals pursuant to the process described in Section VIII below.

## VI. Composition

This Committee will be chaired by **Susan Sesack**, Research Integrity Officer and Professor of Neuroscience and Psychiatry. This Committee will include the following members:

1. **Mara Horwitz**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Protections
2. **Saleem Khan**, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Academic Affairs
3. **Melanie Scott**, Vice Chair for Research, Associate Professor of Surgery and Director of Graduate Education for Surgery Research, Representative of the University Senate
4. **Faith Luyster**, Associate Professor, Health and Community Systems, Representative of the University Senate
5. **Peter Wipf**, Distinguished Professor, Department of Chemistry and Director, Combinatorial Chemistry Center and the Center for Chemical Methodologies and Library Development

6. **Sanjeev Shroff**, Distinguished Professor and Gerald E. McGinnis Chair in Bioengineering and Professor of Medicine
7. **Mike Colaresi**, Associate Vice Provost for Data Science, and William S. Dietrich II Chair of Political Science
8. **Robert Gregerson**, President of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

**Jennifer Seng**, will support the Committee on behalf of the Office of University Counsel.

**Craig Wilcox**, Professor of Chemistry, will support the Committee's work.

**Rushika Dias**, Policy Specialist, will help facilitate and support the Committee on behalf of the Office of Policy Development and Management ("Policy Office").

## **VII. Operations**

The Committee will meet monthly, or more frequently as circumstances dictate. The Committee's revised Policy and any necessary supporting documents (e.g., procedures, guidelines) will be submitted to the SVC-R or their designee, no later than Calendar Year 2025. The SVC-R may ask for interim status reports.

## **VIII. Proposed Policy Review Process**

The review process for the Committee's recommended Policy is as follows:

- University comment period;
- Academic Leadership Team;
- University Senate's Committee on Research;
- Faculty Assembly;
- University Senate Council; and
- Administrative Leadership.

The Committee will coordinate with the Policy Office to consider feedback provided throughout this process.

Once this review process is complete, the proposed Policy will be sent to the Policy Office for review and submission to the Chancellor in accordance with Policy AO 01.

## **IX. Amendment**

Any amendments to this Charter must be made in accordance with Policy AO 01 and receive the approval of the Chancellor or designee.