**Research Misconduct (RM) FAQs**

**What’s the importance of RM?**

The integrity of the research record, including creative works, is the foundation for society’s trust in academia and of researchers’ trust on work that they rely upon for their own work. Without that trust, research funding will diminish – along with research jobs – and perceptions of research quality will decline.

**What is the purpose of our RM policy?**

The policy provides a federally-compliant way to handle allegations of RM that aims to be fair to all sides.

**What are some examples of RM?**

Plagiarism: taking others ideas, words, or data and presenting them as your own or without acknowledging the source.

Falsification: altering data, such as Western blots or data point outliers; omitting results to improve study conclusions.

Fabrication: making up data or results.

**How do I file an allegation of RM?**

Contact UM’s Research Integrity Officer, the Vice Chancellor of Research & Sponsored Programs – by any method.

**Will my allegation be confidential?**

Several policy clauses protect the person alleging RM, such as confidentiality and proscription against retaliation – with mandatory actions. [There are similar protections for the accused.]

**What if someone directly accuses me of RM?**

Do not respond. Instead, report it directly to the Vice Chancellor for Research & Sponsored Programs. Keep the allegation confidential in order to protect yourself.

**What is UM’s history of RM cases?**

UM receives 1-2 RM allegations each year. Most are resolved at the allegation assessment stage [i.e., they do not proceed to formal committee reviews]. Allegation assessments are similar to a district attorney marshalling evidence to determine if a case is sufficient to move forward.

Most allegations are plagiarism. Many allegations come from graduate students who are insufficiently trained in laboratory culture, who owns lab data, etc.

**Can authorship disputes be RM?**

No, except for 2 cases specified in the policy.\*\*\*

Departments should handle authorship disputes. The UM ombudsman may also be helpful.

\*\*\* Policy section II. R. Definitions of RM Related to Authorship

7. Use of honorary authorships, without the person’s consent, and/or with the intent to deceive.

8. Without being involved with the research in question, making a demand to be listed as an author on a researcher’s publication, solely because the person making the demand is in a position of authority over the researcher.

RM Policy URL: <https://policies.olemiss.edu/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=10874767>