

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

OBLIGATIONS AND PROTECTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES IN REPORTING WRONGDOING, NON-COMPLIANCE OR RESEARCH MISCONDUCT:

Adopted By: Research Policy Advisory Committee

Approved By: Vice Chancellor for Research

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Reviewed By: Associate Deans for Research

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Approved By: Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

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Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Madison strives to foster the highest scholarly and ethical standards among its students, faculty, and staff. As a recipient of federal funding, the University of Wisconsin must comply with federal laws related to civil rights, animal welfare research misconduct, and others. Though extremely rare, we realize there are times when reportable events of wrongdoing, noncompliance, or misconduct may occur in our midst and that it is our responsibility as an academic community to take steps to rectify them.

Reportable events can occur in the course of carrying out one's normal institutional work assignments, including a breadth of interpersonal interactions, the design, conduct, publication and communication of research, or the preparation of grant proposals, progress reports and final summaries for funding agencies.

Graduate students and research associates are among the most vulnerable groups when reporting wrongdoing, noncompliance, or research misconduct because their source of financial support and progress in their careers may be placed at risk by their decision to report an adverse event. They are also often the closest witnesses when instances of wrongdoing, noncompliance, or research misconduct occur and therefore must be appropriately protected from the consequences of reporting adverse events and be informed of their rights.

Policy

The University of Wisconsin-Madison provides this policy to empower and protect graduate students and postdoctoral fellows when their report of adverse events occurring in the university workplace has the potential to jeopardize their employment status, continuation of appointment or funding, or progress toward degree.

Through enactment of this policy, the University of Wisconsin-Madison encourages our students and research associates to report instances of wrongdoing, noncompliance, or research

misconduct. Furthermore, the University of Wisconsin-Madison will, by guaranteeing funding and progress towards degree, support and protect them from circumstances arising because of their good faith disclosure of such instances.

By enacting this policy, the University of Wisconsin-Madison recognizes that graduate and postdoctoral studies represent unique endeavors that cannot always be replaced or supervised by interchangeable advisors. Consequently, it may be necessary for students and research associates to carry out new research or to find a new advisor or research supervisor as an ultimate consequence of reporting an adverse event. The Graduate School, Dean's Office and Department Chair will collaborate with affected students and research associates to secure funds and to identify acceptable advisors so that they may continue their studies while allegation of wrongdoing, noncompliance or research misconduct are under institutional review. This support includes a planned and mutually agreed upon completion of their degree after allegations have been settled.

It is also important to recognize that unfounded or bad faith allegations of wrongdoing, noncompliance, or research misconduct can have serious impacts on the individual accused of the wrongdoing, even when the allegations are subsequently proven wrong. Consequently, students are reminded that under UWS 17, "Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures", disciplinary sanctions may be imposed for knowingly making a false statement to any university employee or agents regarding a university matter. Similarly, regarding Research Associates, disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination may be imposed for knowingly making a false statement to any university employee or agents regarding a university matter.

Procedures

Graduate students and research associates may report instances of wrongdoing, noncompliance or research misconduct to their department Chair, or to the Associate Dean for Research of their respective college or school. The University of Wisconsin-Madison also provides many additional ways to learn about policies and procedures regarding wrongdoing, noncompliance, or research misconduct, and to report these to responsible institutional officials, including by use of anonymous, electronic resources. These are summarized below.

For additional details on University of Wisconsin-Madison commitments to providing protection from retaliation for individuals who report an adverse event, please see the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education website, research.wisc.edu/kb-article/?id=34484.

For additional details on University of Wisconsin-Madison commitments to providing equal opportunity and equal access, including our non-discrimination policies and procedures and reporting procedures, please see the Office of Compliance website, compliance.wisc.edu.

For additional details on University of Wisconsin-Madison commitments to animal welfare, please see the Research Animals Resources Center website, rarc.wisc.edu/animal_health/rules_we_live_by.html.

For additional details on University of Wisconsin-Madison policies and procedures for evaluating allegations of misconduct in research, which is defined as falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of research results, please see the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education website, research.wisc.edu/kb-article/?id=34484.

For additional details on University of Wisconsin-Madison policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct, which is associated with instruction, please see the Office of the Dean of Students website, <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>.

At any time in this process, and particularly if a witness does not believe that due attention has been given to a written report of wrongdoing, the witness should contact the University of Wisconsin Ombuds Office, <https://ombuds.wisc.edu>, which serves to provide confidential, impartial, informal and independent advice on how to proceed.

This policy will be disseminated by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education along with the Schools'/Colleges' Associate Deans for Research and be posted on the Schools'/Colleges' Websites.