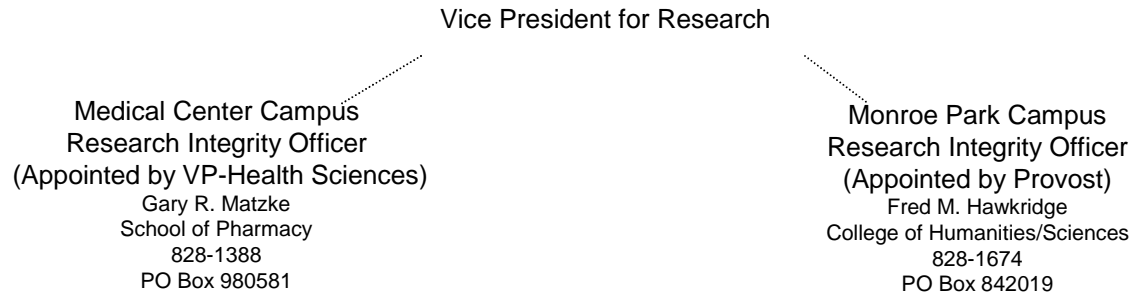


**Structural Organization and Process for  
Reporting, Identifying, and Investigating Alleged  
Research Misconduct  
at  
Virginia Commonwealth University**

Approved by VCU Board of Visitors 5-19-06

## General Organization



### The Research Integrity Officer

- offers consultation to anyone who comes forward with questions about research integrity
- is involved in problem analysis and problem solving in research misconduct issues whether they emanate from the complainant or the respondent
- Provides timely reports to the Vice President for Research from the time an allegation is made until its final resolution
- Maintains confidentiality in matters of research misconduct accusations and investigation
- Serves as a consultant throughout each phase of the process or as presenter of evidence of misconduct throughout each phase of the process

10 days

Allegation of research misconduct may be made by any complainant to any university official

The official receiving the complaint shall report it in confidence within 10 days to the chair or someone administratively responsible (e.g., dean, director) for the unit in which the respondent (the accused) holds an appointment

Such notification must be made whether the accusation is made in writing or made orally

An oral allegation must be immediately rendered into written form by the official receiving the complaint and the written record must be held in confidence.

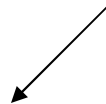
If the allegation involves classroom activities, the university official to whom the allegation has been made shall report it to the Vice President for Research who shall determine if the remainder of any inquiry, investigation, or prosecution shall take place under the aegis of the VCU Honor Code.

At the time of the allegation, university official in consultation with Research Integrity Officer will implement all reasonable and practical steps to obtain custody of research records and evidence, which are then secured and sequestered.

10 days

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Administrative head has 10 days to determine if the allegation warrants an inquiry. At end of or during this 10 day period, the administrative head will



No inquiry justified: administrative head retains a confidential record of the reasons for any decision that an allegation does not warrant an inquiry. Complainant notified that no inquiry is warranted.



Inquiry justified: if not accomplished at allegation, implement reasonable and practical steps to obtain custody of research records and evidence, which are then secured and sequestered and notify respondent of allegation.

# Inquiry

5 days

The administrative head has 5 days to notify the appropriate parties in order to begin the inquiry process (appropriate parties, chair dean, director, research integrity officer, Vice President for Research; the respondent is notified in writing of allegation and of the intended inquiry.

Inquiry Panel is established by the chair of the relevant department and consists of 3 members in addition to the campus research integrity officer who sits ex officio on the panel :  
panel chair appointed by the relevant dean  
two members appointed by the relevant chair

30 days

Panel's charge is to evaluate evidence and decide if an allegation warrants an investigation: their work must be completed and a final written report submitted to the administrative head within 30 days



5 days

Panel finds that the allegation warrants an investigation: respondent provided with a copy of the final report of the Inquiry Panel. Respondent has 5 days to review the final report and add comments, which then become part of the report.

If panel finds that an allegation is not supported: respondent is so notified along with other involved parties. Written report retained for 7 years by the Vice President for Research, then destroyed.

Vice President for Research is responsible for initiating the investigation process, if warranted, and notifying appropriate external sponsor(s) of inquiry proceedings as required

# Investigation

30 days

An investigation must be initiated within 30 days from the determination by the Inquiry Panel that one is warranted. Within 10 working days of the Inquiry Panel's finding, the respondent and the complainant are notified that a formal investigation will be conducted

The relevant dean or director in consultation with the Vice President for Research will appoint the investigative panel consisting of 5 members. Members drawn from the VCU community must be full-time academic faculty and 2 of these should be knowledgeable in the respondent's scientific or scholarly field. Up to two panel members may be from outside of the VCU community. The dean/director will select one panel member to serve as chair. The respondent has the right to challenge for cause 1 panel member within 5 days of his or her notification of the panel's composition.

Charge to the Investigative Panel: explore allegations and determine if any misconduct has occurred

120 days

Panel conducts investigation, prepares report of findings, allows respondent to read and attach comments as needed,

Report of Investigative Panel submitted to the Vice President for Research who acts to notify respondent of conviction or of exoneration of wrongdoing, consistent with findings of panel. The Vice President for Research also notifies sponsors as needed. Where necessary, the Vice President in concert with the relevant administrative head may take administrative action against the respondent in case of a finding of misconduct. Federal agencies sponsoring the research of the respondent may also take administrative action against a convicted respondent.

60 days

# Appeal

A respondent found culpable of misconduct has the right to an appeal according to the procedures outlined in VCU's policy on misconduct in research. All appeals must be submitted to the Vice President for Research within 5 days of respondent receiving notice of Investigative Panel's decision. The Appeal process must be completed within 60 days.