Research Integrity Policy

Date approved:	20/06/2025	Date policy will take effect:	01/09/2025	Date of Next Review:	01/09/2028
Approving Authority:	Academic Council				
Responsibility:	Registrar, Research and Graduate Studies Office				
Consultation undertaken:	Research Sub Committee				
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	**Supporting documentation** This policy should be read in conjunction with: 1. **Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures:** (https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policies-and-Guidelines/Academic-Policies/Student-Centred-Learning-Teaching-and-Assessment/DkIT-Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-Procedures.pdf) 2. **Research Ethics Policy:** (https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policies-and-Guidelines/Research/DkIT-Research-Ethics-Policy.pdf) 3. **Code of Practice on Authorship:** (https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policies-and-Guidelines/Research/DkIT_Code_of_Practice_on_Authorship_Policy.pdf) 4. **Research Data Management Policy**				
Reference(s)					

Expiry Date of Policy (if applicable)	Not applicable.
Audience:	Public – accessible to anyone
Category:	Research and Innovation

1   **Version Control and Change History**

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment(s)
1	20/06/2025	Academic Council (AC:DOC:200:06:04)	• Policy approved for the first time.

Contents

2   **Purpose of Policy**

1. **Context:** Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to enabling and supporting the highest standards of practice in the conduct of research and it ensures that it's research activity is aligned to the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2019). This national policy statement sets out agreed good practice in promoting and ensuring research integrity across Higher Education Institutions.

2. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish the responsibilities of Dundalk Institute of Technology and its research community with regard to research integrity. Through clarifying what is meant by research integrity and research misconduct, and defining the responsibilities of those involved in research to report and deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise, it is intended that this policy will help to prevent research misconduct from occurring.

3   **Definitions**

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Research integrity	Research integrity relates to the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, and to the accuracy and integrity of the research record in publications and elsewhere.
Research Integrity Officer	The Research Integrity Officer (RIO) (or nominated alternate) is the person nominated by Dundalk Institute of Technology to promote adherence to the principles of research integrity. They (or nominated alternate) will also assist in the processing of any instances of allegations of research misconduct. This compliance aspect of the RIO role will be assisted by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies and the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR).
Research Misconduct	Research misconduct relates to breaches of research integrity. Where the principles and good practice underpinning research integrity are not followed, issues of research misconduct may arise. The most serious research integrity breaches that are classified as research misconduct are fabrication of data, falsification of data, and plagiarism of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. However, there are also other unacceptable research practices[1] that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research, and serious or repeated examples of such practices can constitute research misconduct. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

<Definitions that will be used throughout the policy that need clarification for the reader, this can also include any keywords. Include also technical terms, abbreviations that maybe used in this document. >

---

[1] As outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023) and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2019).

4 Application & Scope

1. This policy applies to all staff members, students and all those officially engaged in research work at Dundalk Institute of Technology and/or undertaking any research activity in Dundalk Institute of Technology's name (including visiting researchers).

5 Policy Principles

Principles of Research Integrity

Where the principles and good practices of research integrity, in line with institutional and national policy, are not followed, issues of research misconduct may arise. DkIT recognises the following components of research misconduct based on OECD *Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct* (OECD, 2007)(see Table 1 below).

In addition, The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2019) specify four fundamental principles of research integrity, which Dundalk Institute of Technology endorses. These principles are:

1. *Reliability* in ensuring that the research is conducted to the highest standards of integrity and that it is founded on basic principles of good research practice.
2. *Honesty* in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
3. *Respect* for colleagues, research participants and subjects, be they human or animal, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
4. *Accountability* for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

6 Breaches of Research Integrity

Breaches of research integrity may take many forms and can be of varying seriousness[2]. Drawing on OECD definitions of research misconduct and unacceptable practices in research, the most serious breaches of research integrity are:

- *Fabrication of data* i.e. making up results and recording or reporting them
- *Falsification of data*, i.e. manipulating research, materials, equipment or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- *Plagiarism*, i.e. the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of other's research proposals and manuscripts. Non-disclosure of AI text generating tools used could also leave researchers open to accusations of plagiarism[3].

---

[2] OECD, Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct: based on a workshop held on 22-23 February 2007, in Tokyo, Japan, submitted to the first World Conference on Research Integrity, Lisbon, September 2007; http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/40188303.pdf

[3] COPE Position Statement on Authorship and AI Tools (February 2023), https://publicationethics.org/cope- position-statements/ai-author

In addition to these, there are also additional types of unacceptable practices, which, may be present and in the aggregate potentially be as damaging to the overall reputation of research and the research community's integrity. These practices include, but are not confined to:

- *Data-related misconduct*, for example not preserving primary data where appropriate; poor data management and storage; withholding data from the scientific community;
- *Publication-related misconduct*, for example claiming undeserved authorship; denying authorship to contributors; artificially proliferating publications ("self- plagiarism"); failure to correct the publication record; including authors without permission; selective citing to enhance importance of finding; establishing or supporting journals that undermine the quality control of research ('predatory journals'); grossly exaggerating the importance and practical applicability of findings;
- *Research practice misconduct*, for example using inappropriate (e.g., harmful or dangerous) research methods; poor research design; experimental, analytical, computational errors; violation of human subject protocols; abuse of laboratory animals; concealment of research misconduct;
- *Personal misconduct in the research setting*, for example inappropriate personal behaviour; harassment, bullying; inadequate supervision, mentoring, counselling of researchers; insensitivity to social or cultural norms; misusing seniority to encourage violations of research integrity; delaying or inappropriately hampering the work of other researchers;
- *Financial, and other misconduct,* for example peer review abuse e.g., non- disclosure of conflict of interest, unfairly holding up a rival's publication; misrepresenting credentials or publication record; misuse of research funds for unauthorised purchases or for personal gain; making an unsubstantiated or malicious misconduct allegation.

Table 1: OECD description of types of misconduct by scientists and scholars[4]

Core "Research Misconduct" • Fabrication of data • Falsification of data • Plagiarism FFP normally includes: - Selectively excluding data from analysis Misinterpreting data to obtain desired results (including inappropriate use of statistical methods) • - Doctoring images in publications • - Producing false data or results under pressure from a sponsor	Research practice misconduct - Using inappropriate (e.g., harmful or dangerous) research methods - Poor research design - Experimental, analytical, computational errors - Violation of human subject protocols - Abuse of laboratory animals
Data-related misconduct - Not preserving primary data - Bad data management, storage - Withholding data from the scientific community NB: The above applies to physical research materials as well	Publication-related misconduct - Claiming undeserved authorship - Denying authorship to contributors - Artificially proliferating publications ("salami-slicing") - Failure to correct the publication record
Personal misconduct in research setting - Inappropriate personal behaviour, harassment and/or bullying • - Inadequate leadership, mentoring, counselling of students • - Insensitivity to social or cultural norms	Financial, and other misconduct • - Peer review abuse e.g., non-disclosure of conflict of interest, unfairly holding up a rival's publication • - Misrepresenting credentials or publication record • - Misuse of research funds for unauthorised purchases or for personal gain • - Making an unsubstantiated or malicious misconduct allegation

[4] Reproduced and amended from OECD publication 'Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct.'
http://www.oecd.org/sti/scienceandtechnologypolicy/40188303.pdf

7   Addressing Research Misconduct

Dundalk Institute of Technology will take all reasonable steps to adhere to the principles that underpin transparent, fair and effective procedures to deal with allegations of research misconduct, in line with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023) and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland (2019). These principles include:

Integrity of the process

- Investigations into research misconduct allegations must be fair, comprehensive and conducted expediently but without compromising accuracy, objectivity and thoroughness.
- Those parties involved in the procedure must ensure that any interests they have that might constitute a conflict of interest are disclosed and managed.
- Detailed and confidential records should be maintained on all aspects of the procedure.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that investigations are carried through to a conclusion.

Fairness

- Investigation of research misconduct allegations should be conducted in a manner that is fair to all parties and in accordance with relevant laws.
- Persons accused of research misconduct must be given full details of the allegation(s) in writing and allowed a fair process for responding and to have a representative or work colleague present for any meeting or interview associated with the investigation or disciplinary hearing.
- Proportionate action should be taken against persons found to have committed research misconduct.
- Any action(s) taken should be subject to right of appeal.

Uniformity

- Procedures for dealing with misconduct should be spelled out in sufficient detail so that the transparency and consistency of the process is ensured.

Confidentiality

- The procedure should be conducted in a confidential manner subject to certain disclosure requirements. Such confidentiality should be maintained provided this does not compromise the investigation of the allegation, health and safety and the safety of participants in research.
- Where possible, any disclosure to third parties should be made on a confidential basis.
- If the organisation and/or its staff have legal obligations to inform third parties of research misconduct allegations, those obligations must be fulfilled at the appropriate time through the correct mechanisms.

No detriment

- Anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed innocent.
- No person should suffer any unnecessary penalty when accused of research misconduct before the allegation is proven.
- No person should suffer any penalty before, during or after an investigation for making an allegation of research misconduct in good faith, but action should be taken against persons found to have made allegations in bad faith.
- Appropriate restorative action should be taken, in consultation with the respondent of the allegation, when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

Researcher
It is first and foremost the responsibility of all staff members, students and all those officially engaged in research work at DkIT and/or undertaking any research activity in DkIT's name (including visiting researchers) to maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research and to ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional obligations and standards. Where students are undertaking research on behalf of DkIT, their Principal Investigator/Supervisor have responsibility for ensuring students undertake appropriate training in research integrity. All staff members are expected to report research misconduct.

Institute
It is the responsibility of the Institute and its Leadership (President; Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Head of Research and Graduate Studies, Heads of School, Research Centre leadership) to support a research environment in the Institute that is underpinned by a culture of research integrity and is based on good governance, good research practice and support for the development of researchers.

It is the responsibility of the Institute to ensure that transparent, robust and fair processes are in place to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise, and that the review of these processes takes place regularly in accordance with best national and international practice. DkIT will protect the confidentiality of those making allegations as far as is reasonably possible under these procedures and the associated DkIT Research Integrity Policy, the DkIT Protected Disclosure Policy; and in the context of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 and the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

Research Integrity Officer
The Research Integrity Officer (RIO), whom reports into the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, has overall responsibility for the management and oversight of this Policy and associated Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct and is also responsible for the oversight of established inquiry and investigation committees as cases of potential research misconduct are considered.

Contacts : Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the Research Office, researchoffice@dkit.ie.

Policy Review : This policy will be reviewed as and when changes are required to ensure its continuing relevance. Such review will be based on analysis and experiential learning arising from cases covered by the policy in the intervening period, as well as the relevant external policy environment. Responsibility for its review lies with the Institute's Research and Innovation sub-committee of Academic Council