

**Infectious Diseases Institute
RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY**



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ABBREVIATIONS

ED	Executive Director
HoD	Head of Department
IDI	Infectious Diseases Institute
NDA	National Drug Authority
RIO	Research Integrity Officer
UNCST	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

1. PREAMBLE

The value and benefits of research are vitally dependent on the integrity of research. While there can be national and disciplinary differences in the way research is organized and conducted, there are also principles and professional responsibilities that are fundamental to the integrity of research wherever is conducted.

Responsible Conduct of Research is essential to society's trust in the scientific enterprise. Principles of Research Integrity provide a foundation for good research practices and professional responsibilities(1).

Although the principles are not legally binding, they provide global guidance to researchers and research institutions. National (and regional) regulatory agencies, such as UNCST and NDA, issue legally binding policies and regulations for research integrity.

This policy should be reviewed in conjunction with the IDI Research Policy and Research Misconduct Standard Operating procedures, which guide investigators and research conducted at/with IDI as a sponsor or study site.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is based on the Singapore statement on research integrity, the first international effort to develop policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for research integrity.

The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) is committed to generating new knowledge through research, and seeks to ensure Research Integrity in the design, conduct and reporting of results. Violation of RI endangers public trust and the pursuit of scientific truth, and the Institution has an obligation to deal promptly with any allegations. This policy provides orderly means of fostering a climate of research integrity, and handling allegations or suspicions of breach of research integrity, in compliance with applicable government regulations for research institutions.

IDI has a responsibility to provide an intellectual climate in which open inquiry can flourish, including pursuit of research in novel areas. Adherence to the RI policy will protect the institution, provide a conducive research environment for staff and participants, promote society's trust in science.

This Research Integrity Policy applies to all trainees, students, staff, visitors and consultants affiliated to IDI engaged in the proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting of research, regardless of funding source.

This Policy does not apply to allegations or complaints that do not fall within the definition of research integrity violation and research misconduct set forth below or to matters that fall exclusively under other policies. Where an allegation includes matters that may be partly within the scope of this policy and also within the scope of another policy, the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) shall coordinate as necessary with other officers.

It is not intended that proceedings under this policy be adversarial. Rather, all proceedings should be conducted in the spirit of peer review. As a peer review activity, the Research Integrity committee will meet staff regarding allegations raised under this policy. Complainant(s), respondent(s) or witness(es) will appear before the Research Integrity Committee.

3. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

3.1 Principles for Research Integrity

The policy is premised on the adoption of principles in the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity the first international effort to develop policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for research integrity:

- i. **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
- ii. **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.
- iii. **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- iv. **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.

3.2 Professional Responsibilities for Researchers

To operationalise the Singapore statement on research integrity, researchers are required to adhere to the following responsibilities;

1. **Integrity:** Researchers should take responsibility for the trustworthiness of their research.
2. **Adherence to Regulations:** Researchers should be aware of and adhere to regulations and policies related to research.
3. **Research Methods:** Researchers should employ appropriate research methods, base conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report findings and interpretations fully and objectively.
4. **Research Records:** Researchers should keep clear, accurate records of all research in ways that will allow verification and replication of their work by others.
5. **Research Findings:** Researchers should share data and findings openly and promptly, as soon as they have had an opportunity to establish priority and ownership claims.
6. **Authorship:** Researchers should take responsibility for their contributions to all publications, funding applications, reports and other representations of their research. Lists of authors should include all those and only those who meet applicable authorship criteria.
7. **Publication Acknowledgement:** Researchers should acknowledge in publications the names and roles of those who made significant contributions to the research, including writers, funders, sponsors, and others, but do not meet authorship criteria.
8. **Peer Review:** Researchers should provide fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations and respect confidentiality when reviewing others' work.
9. **Conflict of Interest:** Researchers should disclose financial and other conflicts of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness of their work in research proposals, publications and public communications as well as in all review activities.
10. **Public Communication:** Researchers should limit professional comments to their recognized expertise when engaged in public discussions about the application and

importance of research findings and clearly distinguish professional comments from opinions based on personal views.

11. Reporting Irresponsible Research Practices: Researchers should report to the appropriate authorities any suspected research misconduct, including fabrication, falsification or plagiarism, and other irresponsible research practices that undermine the trustworthiness of research, such as carelessness, improperly listing authors, failing to report conflicting data, or the use of misleading analytical methods.

12. Responding to Irresponsible Research Practices: Research institutions, as well as journals, professional organizations and agencies that have commitments to research, should have procedures for responding to allegations of misconduct and other irresponsible research practices and for protecting those who report such behaviour in good faith. When misconduct or other irresponsible research practice is confirmed, appropriate actions should be taken promptly, including correcting the research record.

13. Research Environments: Research institutions should create and sustain environments that encourage integrity through education, clear policies, and reasonable standards for advancement, while fostering work environments that support research integrity.

14. Societal Considerations: Researchers and research institutions should recognize that they have an ethical obligation to weigh societal benefits against risks inherent in their work.

3.3 Institutional roles to foster research integrity

- Research policies and procedures
- Other institutional policies (e.g. Anti-fraud policy)
- Training, supervision and mentoring
- Compliance to human subject protection and safety (e.g. Good Clinical Practice)
- Compliance to research ethics committee regulations and monitoring standards
- Antiplagiarism software

4. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

This section of the policy sets forth procedures for reporting, assessing, inquiring into, and investigating allegations of violations of research integrity. It is intended to comply with the regulatory requirements of government funding agencies, related to research integrity.

4.1 Definition of research misconduct

Research misconduct means falsification, fabrication or plagiarism in the proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting of research.

- (a) Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- (b) Falsification is 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.
- (c) Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Each of the following must be proven by a preponderance of the evidence to support a finding of research misconduct:

- a. There has been a significant departure from the accepted practices of the scientific community.
- b. The misconduct was committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.

Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

4.2 Policy enforcement

Enforcement

The IDI Research Integrity Officer are responsible for the conduct of inquiries and investigations. Disciplinary actions may be taken as outlined in the research violations standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Reporting Violations

All members of the IDI community have an obligation to report good faith suspicions of research integrity violation within the scope of this Policy.

4.3 Exceptions

This Policy does not apply to allegations or complaints that do not fall within the definition of research integrity violation or misconduct including violations of conflict of interest policies, violations of Institutional Review Board or violations of fiscal or other IDI policies, which shall be directed to the officers responsible for such matters. Where an allegation includes matters that are within the scope of this policy and of another policy, the Research Integrity Officer shall coordinate as necessary with other officers.

NOTE. Questionable research practices do not fall under the definition of research misconduct, however they represent a breach of research integrity and therefore they will be handled according to any appropriate institutional policy (e.g. HR manual).

4.4 Obligation to Report

- ✓ Allegations should be directed to the RIO. All members of the IDI community have an obligation to report good faith suspicions of research integrity violation within the scope of this policy. Allegations that come from outside sources, such as journal editors, funding agencies, or other institutions, shall be directed to the RIO.
- ✓ Individuals are encouraged, but not required, to submit allegations in writing, so that the issues raised may be clearly identified.
- ✓ Anonymous allegations will be assessed, provided that sufficient specific detail or corroborating evidence is provided.
- ✓ Complainants who raise allegations in good faith will be protected from retaliation, in compliance with applicable government regulations and guidelines for protection of whistle blowers.

Where there is a reasonable indication of possible violations of civil or criminal law, the matter shall be immediately reported to the Human Resources Office, which will assume responsibility for prompt notification of the appropriate government and state authorities.

Where the violation involves an US federal funding recipient PI or Senior/Key personnel, the RIO will coordinate with the ED the notification to the funder within 30 days of disciplinary action being taken due to hostile working conditions as specified in NOT-OD-22-129.

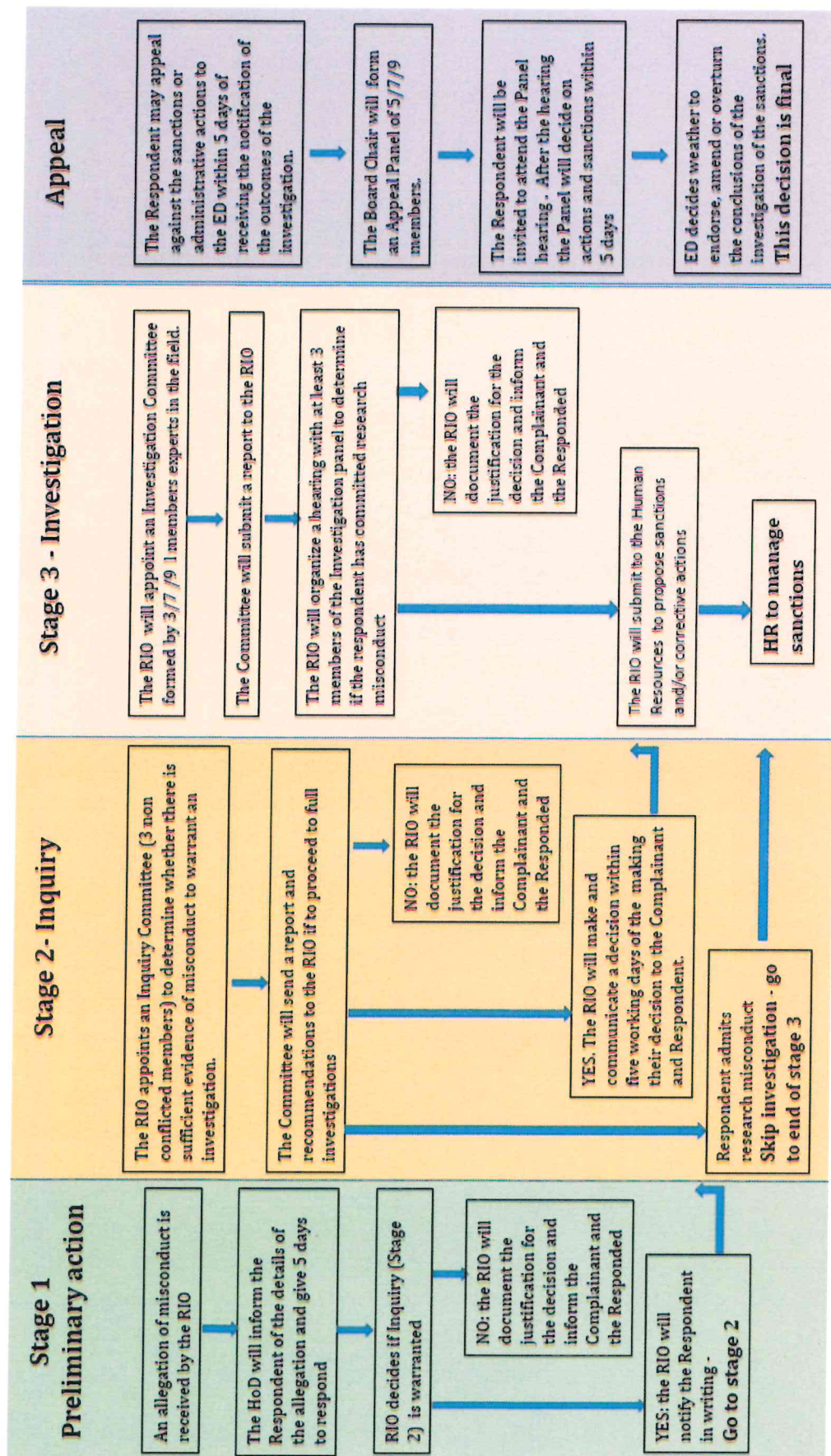
4.5 Confidentiality

Since an allegation of research integrity violation, particularly if later determined to be unfounded, may jeopardize a respondent's career or reputation, care shall be taken to maintain the confidentiality of proceedings conducted under this policy.

- ✓ During the period of an inquiry or investigation, information should be shared only with persons having a need to know in order to carry out the obligations of this policy, including notification to responsible agencies in accordance with applicable regulations.
- ✓ Information regarding an allegation may be disclosed by the IDI at any time, if IDI officials determine that: 1) the health or safety of the public is at risk, including an immediate need to protect human or animal subjects; 2) government resources or interests are threatened; 3) research activities should be suspended; 4) action is required to protect those involved in the research integrity violation proceeding; 5) if government agencies need to take appropriate steps to safeguard evidence and protect the rights of those involved; or 6) the research community or public should be informed.
- ✓ IDI reserves the right to conceal the identity of any witnesses or the Complainant if it deems it necessary, in which case statements may be anonymized. Witness statements will only be anonymized in exceptional circumstances, since anonymity weakens the case. Witnesses should also be made aware that should the case proceed to a hearing; their statement will be divulged to the Respondent. Where the case does not proceed to a hearing, witness statements will be kept confidential although their content may be referred to.

4.6 Schematic for processing research integrity violations

For details refer to SOPs for processing research integrity violations



4.7 Records retention

All reports and records will be retained in a confidential and secure file in the office of the RIO for at least seven years after the completion of this review process. This file or parts of this file will not become a part of the respondent's confidential personnel record at IDI, unless applicable sanctions include such a requirement.

5. TRAINING

Selected research office and study coordinators staff will train the rest of IDI staff on research integrity and the RI policy using the training content developed.

All staff at IDI will receive training on the Research Integrity Policy, and for new staff training on the RI Policy will be included in the orientations package. The face-to-face/virtual sessions will be delivered over a course 1.5 hours .

- ✓ Overall the RI policy and the training will contain the following essential components: Video: what does research integrity means to you? (featuring IDI staff)
- ✓ Research integrity definition
- ✓ Principles of research integrity
- ✓ Case scenarios
- ✓ What Institution should do to promote research integrity
- ✓ Functions of the RIO
- ✓ IDI Research Integrity policy
- ✓ Reporting, assessing, inquiring into, and investigating allegations of violations of research integrity

Every year we will hold a research integrity week where the research forum will be dedicated to Research Integrity and all institutional meetings will start with the research integrity video.

REFERENCES

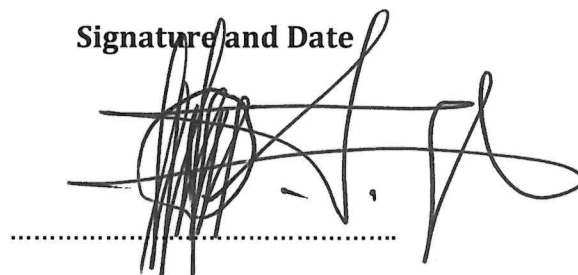
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2. US deptment of health and human services. Office of reseach integrity ORI. [ttps://ori.hhs.gov/definition-research-misconduct](https://ori.hhs.gov/definition-research-misconduct)

Signature and Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Kambugu', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr. Andrew Kambugu
Executive Director

Signature and Date

A complex handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal dotted line.

Rev. Prof. Samuel Abimerech Luboga
Board Chair