

RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY

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 Applicable Department : All faculty, staff, researchers, students, and collaborators
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Records of changes

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1. PURPOSE

As part of VinUniversity Code of Conduct, this Policy is enacted to promote and sustain a research environment characterized by honesty, transparency, and accountability at VinUniversity (VinUni) through a systematic framework for detecting and handling misconduct of research integrity.

2. SCOPE

It applies to all research activities conducted by VinUni faculty, staff, researchers, students, and collaborators, whether undertaken independently or under the auspices of VinUni through any form of collaboration, contract, or agreement.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Research Integrity	The commitment to uphold the highest standards of honesty, transparency, and accountability in the conduct, publication, and management of research.
Research Misconduct / Integrity Misconduct	Any act that breaches these standards during the research or publication process. Such acts include, but are not limited to: plagiarism; fabrication; falsification; misuse of confidential information; inappropriate or undisclosed use of AI ¹ ; any misrepresentation or failure to disclose intellectual property, institutional contribution, or use of external resources that may mislead stakeholders; misrepresentation of academic credentials, authorship status, or institutional affiliation ² . Manipulating AI-assisted systems in ways that compromise research integrity, such as embedding hidden prompts or concealed instructions to influence AI-based reviews or hiding citations (<i>e.g: in white or invisible text</i>) to artificially inflate citation counts or academic metrics. Honest errors or differences in interpretation or judgment are not considered misconduct.
Conflict of Interest (“COI”) in research	A conflict of interest occurs when an individual’s financial, personal, or professional interest may affect or can be reasonably expected to affect research objectivity, evaluation, or decision-making.
Conflict of Commitment (“COC”) in research	A conflict of commitment occurs when an individual’s commitments affect or can be reasonably expected to affect her/his ability to devote the necessary time to fulfil her/his responsibilities to VinUni. <i>E.g: A Principal Investigator (PI) leads multiple concurrent research projects, exceeding the reasonable workload of a full-time faculty member and limiting their ability to fulfill teaching, supervision, and institutional responsibilities effectively.</i>

¹ More detailed information is provided in 8. Responsibilities and Ethics in Research, [Research Management Policies and Procedures](#).

² More detailed information is provided in 10. Authorship of Publications, [Research Management Policies and Procedures](#).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Unit/Entity	Responsibilities
All faculty, staff, researchers, students, and collaborators, leader of research group	• Follow this policy in all their research activities. (For leader of research group, ensure that members of the research group follow that). • Proactively disclose any financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that may affect research objectivity, evaluation, or decision-making (<i>attached disclosure form</i>). • Promptly report any suspected misconduct of research integrity through established channels while strictly respecting confidentiality and whistleblower protection provisions. • Provide accurate information, relevant documents, and full cooperation during any review, investigation, or audit initiated under this Policy. • Maintain complete, accurate, and securely stored research data, documentation, and related materials in accordance with VinUni's Research Management Policies and Procedures. • Collaborate with supporting departments (RMO, HR and CPL) to take appropriate action in cases of non-compliance with this policy.
Supervisors, College Deans, Head of Research Centers (or their delegated representatives)	• Take reasonable steps within their scope of authority to ensure that research commitments do not interfere with other institutional responsibilities such as teaching, service, or administrative duties. • Provide oversight and review, within their delegated authority, of compliance with VinUni's regulations and processes on research integrity. • Collaborate with supporting departments (RMO, HR and CPL) to take appropriate and proportionate action, within their delegated authority, in cases of non-compliance with this policy.
Research Management Office (RMO)	• Provide appropriate guidance, support, and training to all faculty, staff, researchers, students, and collaborators to ensure adherence to research integrity standards. • Collaborate with CPL and HR in guiding VinUni faculty, employee and supervisor regarding appropriate approaches for managing any COI and COC in research. • Assist in matters of suspected or real non-compliance with this policy. • Maintain and publish this policy.
Legal and Compliance Office (CPL)	• Implement investigation procedures when required, including cases where the accused does not admit the misconduct. • Collaborate with RMO & HR in managing any COI and COC in research. • Record in Compliance system.
Human Resources	• Review disclosures of research engagements and participate in determining follow-up actions as appropriate.

Unit/Entity	Responsibilities
	• Collaborate with CPL & RMO in managing any COI and COC in research • Record in HR personnel system the Disciplinary action form
Student Affairs Management Office (SAM)	• Communicate this policy to students involved in research activities. • Collaborate with the RMO to deliver training programs for students on research integrity. • Record in the Student Information System.
Research Affairs Committee (RAC)	• Review and verify cases related to research integrity upon recommendation from the RMO. • Provide advisory opinions and propose appropriate disciplinary actions before referring the case to the Compliance and Organizational Ethics Committee for misconduct handling. • Make recommendations for improvement and evaluate changes to the policy.
Compliance and Organizational Ethics Committee (COEC)	• Advise the Chair of the Committee and the Executive Board on matters related to research integrity at the University. • Receive and address research misconduct upon recommendation from the RAC. • Make determinations on disciplinary actions for research integrity misconduct.

5. DETECTION OF MISCONDUCT

5.1. Research misconduct may be detected through:

- Reports or complaints by individuals or organizations
- Routine administrative checks or expert supervision
- Internal review processes, grant or publication evaluations
- Technology-assisted detection (e.g., plagiarism or image/data analysis tools)

5.2. Any individual, whether internal or external to VinUni, may report suspected misconduct. All proceedings shall be conducted confidentially, and whistleblowers are protected from retaliation.

6. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING MISCONDUCT

Step	Process Description	Unit/Entity
1. Receipt & Initial Assessment	• Receive official report or allegation. • Collect and review supporting documents. • Conduct initial assessment. • Invite the accused for clarification. • Record findings and submit to the RAC	RMO
2. Screening for Clear-Cut Case	Evaluate whether the case meets all 3 criteria: • The misconduct is clearly evident • Misconduct elements are fully met • The accused admits and confirms in writing	RAC
3. Decision for Clear-Cut Case	If all 3 criteria are met: • RAC recommends disciplinary action	RAC, COEC

Step	Process Description	Unit/Entity
	COEC reviews and issues decision	
4. Escalation for Unclear Case	If any of the 3 criteria are not met: - Conduct further document review and/or witness interviews - Hold full RAC meeting for deliberation	RAC
5. Final Deliberation & Recommendation	- RAC discusses findings - Formulate a recommendation for disciplinary actions	RAC
6. Decision & Notification	- COEC issues formal decision based on RAC recommendation - Notify accused and relevant parties - Archive case records	COEC
7. Appeal (if applicable)	- The accused may submit written appeal - RAC re-evaluates if valid grounds are presented - COEC issues formal decision based on RAC recommendation	RAC, COEC

7. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Depending on the severity of the misconduct³, individuals or organizations may be subject to the following:

- Verbal or written warning.
- Public correction or clarification.
- Removal from project team.
- Exclusion from future authorship submissions.
- Withdrawal of funding, scholarships, or awards.
- Notification to publisher requesting correction or retraction
- Ineligibility for annual performance bonus, promotion, or salary review for at least 6 months.
- Internal disciplinary actions (e.g., reprimand, suspension, demotion, dismissal).
- Referral to competent authorities in cases involving legal misconduct.

References

1. *Cornell University Research Related Conflict of Interest and Commitment| University Policy*
2. *Cornell University Research Integrity| University Policy*
3. *VinUniversity Staff Code of Conduct*
4. *VinUniversity Research Management Policies and Procedures*
5. *VinUniversity External Activities and Outside Income for Faculty and Staff*
6. *VinUniversity Student Code of Conduct*

³ More detailed information is provided in XII. Disciplinary Actions, [the VinUni Code of Conduct document](#).