# Module 8: Research Misconduct

After completing this module, you'll be able to define, recognize, and understand how to report research misconduct.

## Misconduct Overview

*Research misconduct is defined by the NIH as any "fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results." The intent to falsify, fabricate or plagiarize is pivotal to determining if someone has committed misconduct. For an official finding of misconduct, the act must be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.*

Use the space below to describe situations in your own research where instances of misconduct might arise.

Fabrication

Falsification

Plagiarism

What questions do you have about research misconduct? Note any items you would like to address with your IRB at a later date.

## Misconduct Behaviors

*Falsified research is not something that exists in a vacuum. Research results have the potential to become widely known and have a real, tangible impact on the public.*

Example Behaviors:

Fabrication

- "Making up" participants
- Filling in or making up data or answers for participants that were never recorded

Falsification

- Intentionally leaving out or changing data
- Manipulating graphs or charts
- Intentionally leading participants to answers

Plagiarism

- Copying someone else's work or verbiage
- Not appropriately citing someone else's research

Are there any other behaviors, in addition to those listed above, that might be helpful for you to note?

## Reporting Misconduct

*Everyone, from a PI to a part-time research assistant, must be held accountable when it comes to reporting suspected misconduct. If you see something, say something.*

Take a moment to research and note the research misconduct resources at your own institution. For instance, does your institution have an office of research integrity?

Use the space below to make notes about the three-step fact-finding and reporting process for research misconduct.

1. Understand the situation

2. Bring it to someone you trust

3. Report up the chain

## Preventing Misconduct

*While research misconduct is rare, it does happen. Make sure all team members understand what is expected of them and what to do if they see something that might be misconduct. Upholding the study integrity is the entire team's responsibility. Use common sense and use the three-step method just discussed to assess and report potential misconduct.*

Below are several best practices to help prevent misconduct. Be sure to note any others that you feel would be useful to implement in your own environment.

- Establish appropriate systems to help team members understand how the study is to be implemented and how data is to be entered
- Discuss issues and solutions openly at staff meetings
- Implement quality improvement systems (ie. double data entry, secondary data review) to monitor and catch errors

## Other Notes

## Resources

Office of Research Integrity Case Summaries
http://ori.hhs.gov/case_summary

NIH Resources

- Clearinghouse for Training Modules to Enhance Data Reproducibility: https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/pages/clearinghouse-for-training-modules-to-enhance-data-reproducibility.aspx
- Enhancing Reproducibility through Rigor and Transparency Module 1: https://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/module_1/presentation.html
- Examples of Rigor: http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm#resources
- Implementing Rigor and Transparency in NIH & AHRQ Research Grant Applications: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-011.html
- Process for Handling Research Misconduct Allegations: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/research_integrity/process.htm
- Research Integrity: https://grants.nih.gov/policy/research_integrity/index.htm
- Rigor and Reproducibility: https://grants.nih.gov/policy/research_integrity/index.htm
- Updated Application Instructions to Enhance Rigor & Reproducibility: https://www.nih.gov/research-training/rigor-reproducibility/updated-application-instructions-enhance-rigor-reproducibility