

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS

1. PURPOSE

The Lebanese American University (LAU) recognizes its commitment to its researchers and the community it serves to ensure the highest ethical standards based on integrity and professionalism in the conduct of research. By fulfilling its mission, the LAU encourages its researchers and faculty to partake in research and professional activities while protecting the concerned community from any form of research misconduct and false allegations.

This Policy provides the guiding ethical and legal principles for the responsible conduct of research and this applies to all those undertaking research at the University and its affiliated facilities (healthcare or otherwise) or on its behalf.

LAU follows this Policy, and relevant procedures, for

- (1) The resolution of allegations of research misconduct,
- (2) Determining threat or harm to the concerned community, sponsored funding and/or integrity of research, and
- (3) Determining the appropriate course of action.

This Policy is intended to carry out LAU's responsibilities in compliance with, but not limited to, the LAU's Code of Ethics, LAU's policies and procedures pertaining to research, and relevant national and international regulations pertaining to the responsible conduct of research, including those applicable to sponsored awards received by LAU.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 *Deciding Official (DO)* means the institutional official who makes final determinations on allegations of research misconduct and any institutional administrative actions. The Deciding Official will not be the same individual as the Research Integrity Officer and should have no direct prior involvement in the institution's inquiry, investigation, or allegation assessment. A DO's appointment of an individual to assess allegations of research misconduct, or to serve on an inquiry or investigation committee, is not considered to be direct prior involvement. For the purpose of this Policy, the DO is the LAU President.

2.2 *Fabrication* is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

2.3 *Falsification* is manipulating research findings, materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

2.4 *Plagiarism* is the use of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit or acknowledging the author, or obtaining their consent.

2.5 *Research* is defined as a systemic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

2.6 *Research Integrity Officer (RIO)* means the institutional official responsible for: (1) assessing allegations of research misconduct to determine if they fall within the definition of research

misconduct, and warrant an inquiry on the basis that the allegation is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential evidence of research misconduct may be identified; (2) overseeing inquires and investigations; and (3) the other responsibilities described in this document. For the purpose of this document, the RIO is the Provost.

- 2.7 Research Misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.
- 2.8 Responsible Conduct of Research is defined as "the practice of scientific investigation with integrity."

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 All Faculty, Staff, Students of the University and its affiliated health care facilities, as well as visitor researchers (if applicable) should adhere to the principles highlighted in this document and report any form of research misconduct as stated in the LAU Procedures for Responsible Conduct of Research and Responding to Allegations.
- 3.2 The Office of Graduate Studies and Research is responsible for informing, providing awareness and educational seminars, online training and support to faculty, staff and students to ensure responsible conduct of research.
- 3.3 The Office of Graduate Studies and Research is responsible for implementing, updating this Policy and relevant procedures and ensuring compliance with its terms.
- 3.4 The DO will make a final determination of the alleged research misconduct following the procedures set forth in the LAU Procedures for Responsible Conduct of Research and Responding to Allegations.
- 3.5 The RIO, in coordination with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, the General Counsel's Office and in line with sponsored award requirements, shall coordinate any required reporting or submissions to the concerned awarding agencies.

4. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all researchers conducting research under its auspices including faculty, staff and students as well as visitor researchers (if applicable).

For the purpose of this document, a finding of research misconduct requires that:

- 4.1.1 There is a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community
- 4.1.2 The misconduct is committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly,
- 4.1.3 The allegations to be proven by a preponderance of the evidence

For the purpose of this document, research misconduct does not include differences of opinion.

Furthermore, this Policy does not apply to authorship or collaboration disputes and applies only to allegations of research misconduct that occurred within six years of the date the institution or sponsored awards agency received the allegation.

4.2 This document applies to allegations of research misconduct as defined above for the fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results involving:

- 4.2.1 Any person, including a faculty member, staff member and/or student who, at the time of the alleged research misconduct, was employed by, as faculty or staff, or was affiliated by contract or agreement with the institution (research collaborators must be made aware of this document) as well as graduate or undergraduate student working under the supervision of a faculty or staff. This also includes members of the faculty research councils /committees within the schools, University Research Council, Institutional Review Board, or any other related Advisory Board or committee).
- 4.2.2 Any form of research proposed, performed, reviewed or reported, regardless of whether an application or proposal for funds resulted in a grant, contact, cooperative agreement, or other form of funding support related to Sponsored Awards.

This document does not apply to authorship or collaboration disputes or non-compliance related matters pertaining to human or animal research. Concerns regarding non-compliance and violations pertaining to ethical conduct of research involving humans / animals must be reported to the LAU Institutional Review Board for Human participant research.

5. Statement of Policy

5.1 LAU will encourage a strong research culture that will demonstrate strong commitment to responsible conduct as per below principles, by actively promoting awareness/training and maintaining an environment of ethical behavior of research.

5.1.1 Integrity

- Oversee and comply with all relevant regulatory and ethical requirements for the conduct of research within LAU and any collaborative organization/institution
- Ensure securing necessary approvals, as it is required, to conduct the research
- Demonstrate accountability of awarded research funds and comply with the specific terms and conditions related to research contracts and grants
- Foster and support honesty in research, in relation to your own research and that of others

5.1.2 Ethical Conduct

- Comply with all relevant regulations, local and international laws or legislations as well as the University's Policies and Procedures for the conduct of research and the protection of human participants, when applicable
- Secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all research involving human participants or participants' information
- Ensure the highest standards of honesty, integrity, accuracy and objectivity

5.1.3 Individual responsibility, Training and Skills

- Conduct the research in accordance with this code and all applicable laws, policies and procedures
- Exercise sound judgement and serve in the best interests of the institution and the community
- Identify and undertake the necessary training and development to carry out the proposed research.

5.1.4 **Conflict of Interest**

- Recognize and disclose any potential or perceived professional or non-financial conflict of interest relating to any aspect of the research conducted
- Recognize and disclose any form of actual or perceived financial conflict of interest, and or receipt of any form of financial or benefit from a third party relating to any aspect of the research conducted

5.1.5 **Compliance**

- Ensure that any research undertaken complies with an approved research project, agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project while maintaining proper governance and transparency
- Comply with multi-institutional agreements when researchers are involved in joint research projects, particularly those relating to dissemination of research findings and management of the research data and materials
- Ensure the accuracy, security and accessibility of all research data
- Avoid plagiarism and use of other researchers' intellectual property, ideas, or data without their proper consent
- Ensure that the data and results are retained or deleted/destroyed in accordance with all legal, ethical, funding organization and University's requirements.
- Comply with all conditions specified by awarding agencies with respect to the research

5.1.6 **Publication and Dissemination of Research Findings**

- Disseminate a complete description and related findings of the research project as broadly as possible, including negative findings, results contrary to the hypothesis, and any changes or corrective actions
- Take into account any restrictions to intellectual property or culturally sensitive data
- Cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately when disseminating research findings
- Include information on all funding resources for the specific research and any potential conflict of interest

5.2 LAU will commit to a timely review of up to 90 days and resolution of allegations related to research misconduct that leads, as appropriate, to an inquiry or an investigation, as per the LAU Procedures for Responsible Conduct of Research and Responding to Allegations.

6. Effective Date

The foregoing Responsible Conduct of Research and Responding to Allegations Policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 21 & 22, 2019 and is effective as of March 22, 2019.

Appendices:

[LAU Compliance Program for US Sponsored Programs & Procurement Contracts](#)

[LAU Procedures for Responding to Allegations related to Research Misconduct](#)