

The Institution's Investigation Report: Best and Worst Practices

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The Institution's Investigation Report

This presentation will review:

- What should be included in and with the investigation report
- Writing and organizational “tips”



Contents of Investigation Report

Starting Point: Our Referral Letter



Evaluate if research misconduct was committed:

- Did the subject commit fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism?
- If yes, was it a significant departure from accepted practices?
- If yes, was it committed recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally?

If research misconduct committed:

- Were the subject's actions part of a pattern?
- Did the subject's actions have a significant impact?
- Has the subject received training in RECR?

Contents of the Investigation Report

Important Information to Include

The Allegation(s) – Be specific:



Contents of Investigation Report

Important Information to Include

The Allegation(s) – Be specific:

The Subject falsified data.

Contents of Investigation Report

Important Information to Include

The Allegation(s) – Be specific:

~~The Subject falsified data.~~

No!

Contents of Investigation Report

Important Information to Include

The Allegation(s) – Be specific:

~~The Subject falsified data.~~

No!

The Subject falsified the data plotted in figure 6a of the Journal of Nanostuff paper.

Yes!

...Also include information on the nexus to NSF and any other agencies



Contents of the Investigation Report

Important Information to Include

- Investigative Steps:
 - Was evidence sequestered?
 - What evidence was reviewed?
 - Who was interviewed?

- Identify the committee members



Contents of the Investigation Report

Case Dependent Information

- Backstory of the allegations
- Timeline  
- Aggravating or mitigating factors

What to Include with Report

Additional Documents

The documents that support the committee's conclusions:

- Data Files or Logs
- Paper or Proposal Drafts
- Emails
- Interview Transcripts

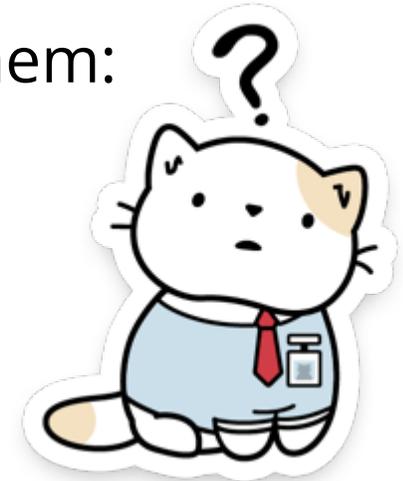
... to the extent possible, we prefer searchable PDFs



What to Include with Report

Interview Documentation

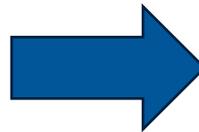
- Official transcripts are the best
- If not transcribed, provide detailed summary
- Zoom transcripts are very inaccurate. If you rely on them:
 - Consider reviewing and correcting them
 - Please provide the recording



What to Include with Report

Organization of Supporting Documents

- Give the documents clear names
- The supporting documents can be included in the report itself or...
- As individual documents as part of an organized file structure



-  _Final Investigation Report
-  Attachment 01 Complaint
-  Attachment 02 Complainant Interview Transcript
-  Attachment 03 Paper 1 Draft
-  Attachment 04 Paper 1 as Published
-  Attachment 05 Smoking Gun
-  Attachment 06 Important Email
-  Attachment 07 Subject Interview Transcript
-  Attachment 08 Witness 1 Written Statement
-  Attachment 09 Lab Policy

What to Include with Report

Organization of Supporting Documents

- You don't need to give us every document you sequestered
- If you have documents in addition to report attachments:
 - Consult with us to determine if necessary
 - Organize them



Poll Questions



Writing the Investigation Report

General

- Address each allegation
- Address each of the elements of a finding for each allegation
- Address pattern and impact in relation to all the findings

... templates can help committees organize the material



Writing the Investigation Report

Detailed Analysis

Did the subject commit fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism?

Yes.

If yes, was it a significant departure from accepted practices?

Yes.

If yes, was it committed recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally?

Intentionally.



Writing the Investigation Report

Detailed Analysis

No!

~~Did the subject commit fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism?~~

~~Yes.~~

~~If yes, was it a significant departure from accepted practices?~~

~~Yes.~~

~~If yes, was it committed recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally?~~

~~Intentionally.~~



Writing the Investigation Report

Detailed Analysis

- The report should explain how the committee drew their conclusions
- The explanation should refer to supporting documents:

Some sentences about the Subject's version of events (**Attachment 7 Subject Interview Transcript, pp. 6-10**). Some sentences about email contradicting the Subject (**Attachment 6 Important Email, p. 2**).



Institution Investigation Report

Key Takeaways

- Include relevant introductory material
- Address each allegation
- Provide detailed analysis that refers to the supporting documents
- Organize your supporting documents



Questions?

