



Harvard University

Guiding Principles for Communication in Research Misconduct Proceedings

Research misconduct proceedings necessarily involve a difficult balance between maintaining confidentiality of the participants in the process, on the one hand, and respecting any legitimate public, scientific and academic demands for information, on the other. A respondent's interests in privacy and the legitimate need to protect the reputations of those who have not committed misconduct must be both considered and weighed against potentially competing institutional responsibilities to all of those that rely on the integrity of research processes and results: persons, including research subjects, institutions and the general public at large. Of equal and overarching importance is the need to maintain the confidence of external funders who have entrusted self-governance over research integrity matters to universities, such as Harvard. Cognizant of this difficult balance, Harvard's responsibility to communicate, or not, about research misconduct proceedings should comport with the following guiding principles. These principles should be considered and balanced at each stage of a research misconduct proceeding.

- At all stages of the process, all parties should endeavor to advance and protect the integrity and trustworthiness of the research enterprise.
- Complaints of research misconduct should be resolved promptly, fairly, and equitably. The University is also committed to providing information regarding the research misconduct process when appropriate.
- The interests of respondents, complainants, research subjects, and students, post-doctoral fellows, research staff, and collaborators affiliated with respondents and/or with the research in question should be protected when providing notification to those who should be made aware of allegations and findings of misconduct.
- In the research misconduct process, Harvard must seek to respect its many diverse constituencies, both public and private, including those who publish, fund, and rely upon research conducted at Harvard.
- In concordance with the core values that underlie these principles, the University may conclude that it is necessary or appropriate to comment about, or disclose, findings resulting from research misconduct proceedings.