

Scientific Misconduct

EFSD has a strict policy to help protect the integrity of the public scientific record and will take appropriate action if alerted to possible misconduct. The most common forms of scientific misconduct include:

- **Falsification of data:** This ranges from fabrication to deceptive selective reporting of findings and omission of conflicting data, or wilful suppression and/or distortion of data.
- **Improprieties of authorship:** Improper assignment of credit, such as excluding others, misrepresentation of the same material as original in more than one publication, inclusion of individuals as authors who have not made a definite contribution to the work published; or submission of multi-authored publications without the concurrence of all authors.
- **Piracy and plagiarism:** The unauthorised reproduction or use of ideas, data or methods from others without adequate permission or acknowledgement. The intent of the perpetrator is the untruthful portrayal of the ideas or methods as his or her own. Plagiarism is a form of piracy that involves the unauthorised use or close imitation of the language (including figures or tables) and thoughts of others and the representation of them as one's own original work without permission or acknowledgement by the author of the source of these materials. Plagiarism generally involves the use of materials from others, but can apply to researchers' duplication of their own previously published reports without acknowledgement (sometimes called self-plagiarism or duplicate publication).
- **Violation of generally accepted research practices:** Serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing or carrying out research, improper manipulation of experiments to obtain biased results, deceptive statistical or analytical manipulations, or improper reporting of results.
- **Material failure to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements affecting research:** Including but not limited to serious or substantial, wilful violations of applicable local regulations and law involving the use of funds, care of animals, human subjects, investigational drugs, recombinant products, new devices or radioactive, biological or chemical materials.
- **Inappropriate behaviour in relation to misconduct:** This includes unfounded or knowingly false accusations of misconduct, withholding or destruction of information relevant to a claim of misconduct and retaliation against persons involved in the allegation or investigation.

Responding to allegations of possible misconduct

EFSD does not have the resources or authority to conduct a formal judicial inquiry or arrive at a formal conclusion regarding misconduct. That process is the role of the suspect's employer, university, granting agency or regulatory body. However, EFSD takes seriously its responsibility to help protect the integrity of the public scientific record and will refer all allegations of possible misconduct to the Scientific Integrity Panel of EASD/EFSD. The composition of this Panel will not be made known publicly. Such allegations of possible misconduct may relate to a submitted application for any EFSD Programme. The Panel will review the evidence in the strictest confidence and may ask the EFSD office to assist in providing documentation and in communication with the investigator(s) under the same terms of confidentiality. The EFSD office will not be involved in any other way and neither the office nor any officer of the Foundation will respond to direct enquiries during the course of an investigation by the Panel.

Initial fact-finding will usually include a request to all parties involved to state their case, and explain the circumstances, in writing. In questions of research misconduct centring on methods or technical issues, the Scientific Integrity Panel may confidentially consult experts who will be blinded to the identity of the individuals wherever possible. Since the underlying goal of misconduct is to deliberately deceive others as to the truth, the Scientific Integrity Panel's preliminary investigation of potential misconduct will take into account not only the particular act or omission, but also the apparent intention (as best it can be determined) of the person involved. Whenever possible and appropriate, the Scientific Integrity Panel will follow guidelines recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; <http://publicationethics.org/>) for handling cases of misconduct. The Panel will arrive at a conclusion as to whether there is enough evidence to lead a reasonable person to believe there is a possibility of misconduct.

If the Scientific Integrity Panel concludes there is a reasonable possibility of misconduct, they will consider any of the following options, dependent upon the apparent magnitude of the misconduct. Responses may be applied separately or combined, and their implementation will depend on the circumstances of the case as well as the responses of the participating parties and institutions. The following options are ranked in approximate order of severity:

- A letter of explanation (and education) sent only to the person(s) against whom the complaint is made, where there appears to be a genuine and innocent misunderstanding of principles or procedure.
- A letter of reprimand to the person(s) against whom the complaint is made, warning of the consequences of future such instances, where the misunderstanding appears to be not entirely innocent.
- A letter of reprimand to all co-investigators on the application informing them of the findings of the Panel and warning of the consequences of future such instances.
- A formal letter as above, including notification of a ban for a defined period of time on application for funding to any EFSD programme from the person(s) against whom the complaint is made.
- A formal letter as above, including a written request to the supervising institution(s) that an investigation be carried out and the findings of that inquiry be reported in writing to the EFSD office.
- Formal withdrawal or retraction of the application if there is a formal finding of misconduct by the author's institution. Such withdrawal/retraction will not require approval of the PI or co-investigators and will be reported to their institution.
- When allegations arise, the application in question will be halted and no further applications accepted while the above process is carried out. The investigation will be completed even if the authors withdraw their application, and the responses above will still be considered.

Any queries or concerns relating to scientific integrity or misconduct should be directed in the first instance to Dr med Monika Grüsser, Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer EFSD, Rheindorfer Weg 3, 40591 Düsseldorf, Germany: monika.gruesser@easd.org