SUMMARY:
Coastal Carolina University has established a policy on misconduct in research applicable to all research at the institution, has designated a committee responsible for receiving allegations of misconduct, and has created a process for resolving such allegations. Since instances of research misconduct are extremely serious matters, Coastal Carolina University has developed policies and procedures to help prevent, identify and resolve these matters.

POLICY:

I. PURPOSE OF POLICY

Coastal Carolina University, through its commitment to academic excellence and ethical leadership, strives to promote a climate of honesty in research. The University recognizes the importance of open debate regarding correct methodologies and protocols and that honest errors are an inevitable part of the research process.

In order to sustain the atmosphere of trust essential to quality research, ensure the integrity of research and maintain public confidence in research results, misconduct must be dealt with decisively and collectively. Federal agencies are mandating that institutions engaged in federally funded research develop policies and procedures for dealing with research misconduct.

Coastal Carolina University has established a policy on misconduct in research applicable to all research at the institution, has designated a committee responsible for receiving allegations of misconduct, and has created a process for resolving such allegations. Since instances of research misconduct are extremely serious matters, Coastal Carolina University has developed policies and procedures to help prevent, identify and resolve these matters.

All policies on research misconduct must contain procedures for distinguishing instances of genuine and serious misconduct from honest errors, insignificant deviations from acceptable practices, simple carelessness and minor infractions. The policy and procedures in this
document will allow such distinctions to be made in a manner that minimizes disruptiveness and protects the conscientious, honest researcher from false or mistaken accusations.

II. SCOPE
The policy and procedures set forth herein shall apply to all research activities which are designed to or do in fact contribute to general knowledge (basic research) or specific knowledge (applied research) and not merely to a classroom assignment; sponsored by Coastal Carolina University; and conducted by Coastal Carolina University employees, students or others as part of their employment or educational responsibilities.

III. POLICY STATEMENT AND DEFINITION
Coastal Carolina University expects that all endeavors will be conducted with absolute integrity, and that faculty engaged in research will be well-informed on what constitutes ethical conduct in research.

Research Misconduct includes falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. For the purpose of this document, we consider the term “research” to encompass both research and scholarship.

A. Finding of Research Misconduct requires:
1. There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community; and
2. The misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly or recklessly; and
3. The allegation be proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

B. Research Misconduct requires that the person committed the research misconduct intentionally, knowingly or recklessly.
1. “Intentionally” means intending the result of one’s actions to result in a prohibited act — such as plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, misappropriation, retaliation or other fraud — which is a violation of the Research Misconduct Policy.
   “Intentionally” does not require that one was aware the resulting act was a violation of the Research Misconduct Policy or that one intended to violate the policy.
2. “Knowingly” means being aware that one’s actions are practically certain to result in the prohibited act — such as plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, misappropriation, retaliation or other fraud — which is a violation of the Research Misconduct Policy.
3. “Recklessly” means a conscious disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that one’s action will result in the prohibited act — such as plagiarism, falsification,
fabrication, misappropriation, retaliation or other fraud — which is a violation of the Research Misconduct Policy.¹

C. Research Misconduct involves

1. Fabrication of data.

Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them. Falsification of data, research procedures or data analysis. Falsification can range from selective reporting, such as purposeful omission of conflicting data with the intent to falsify conclusions, to changing data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

2. Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a representation of another’s work as one’s own. Subtle forms of plagiarism include inadequate citation and footnoting, along with presentation of the same data in more than one publication without citation.

3. Misappropriation of other’s ideas through the unauthorized use of privileged information, such as acting upon an idea obtained from someone’s research proposal during peer review.

4. Other fraudulent actions in proposing, conducting, reporting or reviewing any research activity

5. Retaliation of any kind against a person who has reported or provided information about suspected alleged misconduct and who has not acted in bad faith²

D. Research Misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

E. Principal Investigators and others in positions of responsibility for the conduct of research activity are expected to exercise reasonable supervision of those under their direction to ensure the integrity of the research activity being conducted. The University assumes primary responsibility for investigating and resolving allegations of Research Misconduct made against its employees.

F. Those responsible for conducting inquiries and investigations into research misconduct should be guided by the following important principles:

1. The University must vigorously pursue and resolve any charges of misconduct in research.

¹ SEE Appendix I for further explanation of mental states.
² Coastal Carolina University considers knowing and willful substantial failure to comply with requirements affecting specific aspects of the conduct of research (e.g., Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols with respect to the protection of human subjects and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) protocols with respect to the welfare of laboratory animals) to be Research Misconduct.
2. All parties must be treated fairly, bearing in mind the vulnerabilities of an individual position and the sensitive nature of academic reputations.

3. Confidentiality must be maintained to the maximum practical extent.

4. Conflict of interest, real and potential, must be minimized.

5. All stages of the procedure must be fully documented.

All parties are responsible for acting in such a way as to avoid unnecessary damage to the general enterprise of academic research. Nevertheless, the University may be required to inform appropriate funding agencies of its actions when the work is supported by extramural funding. If it is found that misleading data or information has been published, the University is responsible for setting the public record straight, for example, by informing the editors of scientific or scholarly journals.

IV. Procedural Overview

A. All employees or individuals associated with the University should report observed, suspected or apparent research misconduct in writing to the Research Misconduct Committee Chair. Anyone who receives an inquiry about Research Misconduct should refer the inquiring person to the Research Misconduct Committee chair. The vice president for research and emerging initiatives will serve as the Research Misconduct Committee chair. The procedure to be followed once an allegation has been made has four stages: inquiry, investigation, report of findings and resolution.

1. Inquiry: to determine, with minimum publicity and maximum confidentiality, whether an allegation warrants a formal investigation.

2. Investigation by the Research Misconduct Committee: to collect and thoroughly examine, with minimum publicity and maximum confidentiality, all evidence pertaining to the allegation and determine whether research misconduct has taken place.

3. Report of findings: a written report by the Research Misconduct Committee to be sent to the provost. The report conveys the committee’s findings on whether misconduct has taken place and recommends a resolution.

4. Resolution: a final decision by the provost. When warranted, an appropriate charge and/or disciplinary action or efforts to rehabilitate the researcher’s reputation.

B. Detailed guidelines related to allegations and to the four subsequent stages described above are available through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research.

C. The Research Misconduct Committee chairperson must file an annual report with the Office of Research Integrity (ORI), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which contains information specified by ORI on the institution’s compliance with 42 CFR Part 93 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

V. HELP WITH THIS POLICY
Contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research for questions or comments on this policy.

VI POLICY AUTHORITY

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research is the responsible authority for making changes and updating this policy.