

RESEARCH INTEGRITY		Standard Operating Procedure	
Title	Management of Plagiarism and/or Copyright Infringement by External Authors		
SOP No.	SOP_NWU Research Integrity _5	Version No.	2
Date of approval	April 2022	Revision date	November 2025
Web address	https://www.nwu.ac.za/irims	Page No.	Page 1 to 16

1 COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

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Reviewed and approved by:	Registrar (Prof Marlene Verhoef) Legal Office (Mr Kobus Joubert)		March 2021
Approved by:	Faculty Board		August 2022

2 DISTRIBUTION

Department/Unit	Name	Date	Signature
Research and School Directors, academic staff, and postgraduate students in the Faculty	Deputy Deans: Research and Innovation (FEDUC, FEMS, FHS, FHUM, FNAS). Executive Deans (FENG, FLAW, FTHEO).	August 2022	

3 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version no	Reason for revision
April 2022	1	SOP approved
November 2022	2	SOP updated

4 PURPOSE OF THE SOP

To provide guidelines and procedures for the Deputy Dean: Research and Innovation (DD: R&I) and the Executive Dean (ED) of the Faculty, as well as person(s) seeking 1) to **report an allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement** by (an) external author(s) not linked to the university through any form of employment or a contract and 2) **conducting a formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation** into the said allegation.

Note: Should *copyright infringement* be suspected, Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) will be consulted, and the case escalated to be dealt with in terms of the applicable rules and regulations of the NWU.

It is in the interest of the Faculty and the research community that an allegation of research misconduct through an act of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the university through any form of employment or contract be handled *consistently* and *transparently*, with a clear process and procedure for dealing with such an allegation. If such allegation is proven to be true, this can have negative implications (e.g., reputational damage) for the external author, the institution where the external author resides, funding bodies, as well as journal publishers.

This *SOP for the management of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the university through any form of employment or a contract* aims to find a balance between:

- i. Providing safeguards for those who raise genuine concerns about an allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s), and
- ii. Providing protection against an uninformed, inaccurate, and malicious allegation that can cause serious harm to (an) innocent author(s) as well as his/her institution (adapted from UCT, 2014).

The balance is found in:

- An initial ***informal intra-faculty research integrity process of assessment*** by the DD: R&I (in larger Faculties) or ED (in smaller Faculties) and the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) in the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation (DVC: R&I), without the involvement of the person(s) making the allegation (allegor(s)). The merits of the allegation are assessed for formal grounds.
- A follow-up ***formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation*** by the DD: R&I (in larger Faculties) or ED (in smaller Faculties) as chairperson, the RIO in the office of the DVC: R& I and the appointed Standing Research Integrity Committee (SRIC) as well as specifically appointed ad hoc members (the research director of the entity in which the allegor resides, an independent consulting attorney in the legal office and an expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement).

5 SCOPE

This SOP guides different parties within the Faculty on how to handle an allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s), as well as how to engage the support of Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) through escalating the case if further actions are deemed necessary.

Because the author is not a staff member of the North-West University (NWU) (through any form of employment or contract), the normal route of a *formal academic integrity investigation* by the office of the Registrar is not followed, and the process must be managed on an intra-faculty level unless further actions are required.

The definitions provided under section 6 guide the specific interpretation and use of terminology used in this SOP.

6 ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation	Description
DD: R&I	Deputy Dean: Research and Innovation

ED	Executive Dean
RD	Research Director
RIO	Research Integrity Officer in the office of the DVC: R&I
RI	Research Integrity
SRIC	Standing Research Integrity Committee
DVC: R&I	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation
RCR	Responsible Conduct of Research
Concepts	Definitions
Research	<p>Research includes the activities that are aimed at improving knowledge of any discipline through enquiry or systematic investigation. This applies to Research, whether in the public interest or not, or whether the Research is published or not.</p> <p>It refers to all academic Research conducted as part of any academic programme in any subject, including Agricultural Sciences, Earth Sciences, Economic Sciences, Education, Health/Medical Sciences, Humanities, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Theology and Technological and Engineering Sciences.</p> <p>Scientific Research conducted by public or private bodies (regardless of whether the Research is privately or publicly funded).</p> <p>Commercial or industrial Research aimed at developing or improving products or services.</p> <p>Technological development and demonstration (e.g., prototype development, testing, user trials). (Adapted for the ASSAF Draft POPIA Code of Conduct for research, 2022).</p>
Larger Faculties	<p>Faculty of Education (EDUC)</p> <p>Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)</p> <p>Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)</p> <p>Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)</p> <p>Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)</p>
Smaller Faculties	<p>Faculty of Engineering (FENG)</p> <p>Faculty of Law (FLAW)</p> <p>Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)</p>
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)	The act of making research integrity visible; refers to the practice of scientific investigation with <i>responsibility and integrity</i> through an awareness and application of established <i>professional research norms/standards</i> and <i>ethical principles</i> in the performance of all activities related to the research.
Breach in Research Integrity	The finding of a formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation that (an) external author(s) has <i>potentially transgressed</i> in responsible conduct of research based on an act of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement.
Violation of Good Research Practice	<p>Violations of good research practice that damage the integrity of the research process or researchers and that lead to “<i>questionable research practices</i>”.</p> <p>Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulating authorship or denigrating the role of other researchers in publications. • Deliberate misrepresentations in publications.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright infringement.
Research Misconduct	<p>Refers to the FFP categorisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fabrication • Falsification • Plagiarism • In • Proposing • Performing • Reviewing research • Reporting results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using other people’s work and ideas in research without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author to their intellectual outputs. Or • Re-publishing substantive parts of one’s own earlier publications, including translations, without duly acknowledging or citing the original (self-plagiarism), as well as copying text in various sections of a research report without referencing the earlier use. <p><i>Also see definition in the NWU Policy on Academic Integrity: Annexure 1.</i></p>
Copyright infringement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of work protected by <i>copyright</i> law without permission. • <i>Infringing</i> certain exclusive rights granted to the copyright holder, such as the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reproduce the protected work. ○ Distribute the protected work. ○ Display the protected work. ○ Perform the protected work. ○ Make derivative work. <p><i>Also see definition in the NWU Policy on Academic Integrity: Annexure 1.</i></p>
External Author	An author not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract.
External Institution	An institution where the external author(s) reside(s).
Journal Editor	The editor of the journal that has published the work containing the suspected plagiarism and/or copyright infringement.
Allegation	A report that represents an <i>unproven assertion</i> .
Alleger	The person (a researcher or any other member of a research team at the NWU) who raises awareness of possible plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) as the alleged.
Alleged	The external author(s) not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract, accused of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement.
Informal Research Assessment	An initial informal intra-faculty research integrity assessment process conducted by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or the ED (smaller Faculties) of the Faculty and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I, into the <i>merit of the allegation</i> or <i>formal grounds</i> of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s).
Formal Research Investigation	A formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation into the allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s). This process is conducted by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or the ED (smaller Faculties) of the Faculty as chairperson with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I, the appointed Standing Research Integrity Committee (SRIC) and specified ad hoc members (the research director of the entity in which the

	allegor resides, an independent consulting attorney in the legal office and an expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement) should the allegation seem to have merit and formal grounds.
Escalation	The process of referring a possible finding of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) after a response from the external institution(s) has been received and potential further actions are required.
Finding of Potential Plagiarism and/or Copyright Infringement	A result concluding that an allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) is <i>potentially</i> true based on the preponderance of the evidence.
Research Integrity Officer (RIO)	A person appointed in the office of the DVC: R&I to facilitate research integrity (RI) within the Faculty through various functions, i.e. expanding the development of IRIMS, supporting the development and maintenance of processes, procedure and SOPs related to research integrity on Faculty level, as well as managing RCR/RI within the Faculties through guidance of how to foster a climate of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), as well as handling reported breaches/transgressions in RI/RCR. Also acts in an advising capacity to the DVC: R&I, ED, and DD: R&I. The person is not appointed in a research management position to ensure no potential conflict of interest.
Standing Integrity (SRIC) Research Committee	<p>A Standing Research Integrity Committee (SRIC) appointed in the Faculty and consisting of specific members.</p> <p>In the five larger Faculties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson: DD: R&I. • Research Integrity Officer in the office of the DVC: R&I. • Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Faculty REC) or if such a person exists within the Faculty, the Head of the Ethics Office. • An elected Research Director in the Faculty (<i>appointed for three years</i>). • Secretariat provided by the Faculty (to sign a confidentiality agreement). <p>Ad hoc members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement. • The RD of the entity in which the alleging researcher(s) reside(s). • A consulting attorney in the legal office must be included. <p>In the four smaller Faculties:</p> <p>Faculty of Engineering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson: ED: R&I. • Research Integrity Officer in the office of the DVC: R&I. • Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Faculty REC). • An elected Research Director in the Faculty (<i>appointed for three years</i>). • Secretariat provided by the Faculty (to sign confidentiality agreement). <p>Faculty of Law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson: ED. • Research Integrity Officer (in the office of the DVC: R&I). • Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Faculty REC). • The Research Director in the Faculty. • The Postgraduate Director.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat: Provided by the Faculty (to sign confidentiality agreement). <p>Faculty of Theology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson: ED. • Research Integrity Officer in the office of the DVC: R&I. • Research Directors of the research entities in the Faculty. • Secretariat provided by the Faculty (to sign a confidentiality agreement). <p>Ad hoc members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement. • The RD of the entity in which the alleging researcher(s) reside(s). • A consulting attorney in the legal office must be included.
Integrated Research Integrity Management System	<p>The integrated system used by the Faculty to manage research integrity in such a way that it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fosters a climate of <i>Responsible Conduct of Research</i> (RCR). 2) Effectively manages potential breaches in research integrity through acts of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Research non-compliance. ii) Violation of good research practice. iii) Research misconduct. 3) Effectively manages possible appeals stemming from research integrity assessments or investigations.

7 VALUES UNDERPINNING THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS AN ALLEGATION OF PLAGIARISM AND/OR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT BY (AN) EXTERNAL AUTHOR(S)

The North-West University believes:

- in the importance of impeccable research ethical standards and research integrity;
- that reporting of suspected plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by and external author(s) (not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract) is a shared and serious responsibility of all members of the Faculty;
- that an allegation must be dealt with equitably, confidentially and as expeditiously as possible, taking care that all interested persons have the opportunity to be heard;
- that the procedure for dealing with an allegation must be accessible, understandable, fair, transparent and expeditious;
- that the Faculty has a responsibility to protect the rights and reputations of all individuals, including the person against whom an allegation is made and the person who makes the allegation;
- that a formal investigation is dealt with in terms of existing faculty and university procedures (adapted from UCT, 2014).

8 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the primary responsibility of the Faculty within the bigger NWU to protect the integrity of all research conducted by the researchers (academics and postgraduate students) of the Faculty, as the value and benefits of this research are vitally dependent on the integrity of the research. Should there be any possibility of a breach in research integrity through plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) (not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract), the Faculty must follow a process that will ensure that this allegation is assessed and handled in a *transparent* and *accountable* way in accordance with the highest standard of *integrity, fairness, due process* and

reasonableness. Persons who are tasked with the management of this investigative process into an allegation must act with the utmost *integrity* and *sensitivity*. Conflict of interest must be avoided (adapted from UCT, 2014).

8.1 Various role players have different responsibilities in this process:

The specific responsibilities of the various role players are set out with a more detailed step-by-step process under the *process discussed* in section 9.3.

8.1.1 The allegor

The person (a researcher) with an allegation, observations, or evidence of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) (not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract) who follows any one of several processes to bring this to the attention of the DD: R&I (larger Faculties or the ED (smaller Faculties) of the Faculty and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I.

Must share requested documentation as proof of evidence.

Clarifies any uncertainties the SRIC and ad hoc members may have.

8.1.2 The alleged

The external author(s) (not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract) against whom the allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement is being made must offer his/her full cooperation in the investigation of the allegation by his/her own institution by providing requested documentation.

It should be clear to the external author(s) that he/she/they is/are protected until the allegation is determined to be defensible.

8.1.3 The external institution

Acknowledges receipt of the request from the Faculty, NWU that they (the external institution) investigate a potential breach in research integrity through the act of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by one of its researchers.

On receipt of the allegation of potential plagiarism and/or copy right infringement against one of its researchers, investigate the allegation.

Notify the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or the ED (smaller Faculties) and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I of the outcome of the institution's investigation.

If found to be true, will request the retraction/correction of the article.

8.1.4 The journal editor

The journal editor on receiving the notification of the possibility of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) author(s) investigates the possibility of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement in the published article.

Retract/correct the published article on receiving the request from the external investigating institution, wait for the outcome of the investigation by the external institution, or decide not to change anything.

8.1.5 The Deputy Dean: Research and Innovation

Note: If it is a smaller Faculty the ED fulfils all the functions mentioned below.

The DD: R&I of the Faculty must launch an initial informal intra-faculty assessment with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I into the *merit of or grounds for the allegation* of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract, before proceeding to the more formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation.

If the allegation seems to have formal grounds, the DD: R&I as chairperson of the SRIC with the support of the RIO, empanel the SRIC and specified ad hoc members and initiate a formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation.

The DD: R&I as chairperson with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I and the empanelled SRIC and appointed expert ad hoc members first meet with the alleging persons(s).

The DD: R&I with the support of the RIO finalises the letters to the alleged external author(s), the institution(s) where the external author(s) reside(s), and the journal editor.

The DD: R&I and the RIO discuss the outcome of the investigation and planned actions of the SRIC and expert ad hoc members with the ED of the Faculty to finalise the way forward.

The DD: R&I with the support of the RIO does regular follow up on the progress made by the external institution and the editor of the journal and provide regular feedback to the alleging person(s).

The DD: R&I and RIO evaluate the final letter(s)/report(s) provided by the external institution(s) and the editor and decide whether the case can be closed or whether any further action should be taken.

The DD: R&I and RIO provide written feedback to the alleging person(s) on the outcome of the case.

The DD: R&I and RIO ensure that Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) are well informed and provide all the necessary documentation (*only if escalated*).

The DD: R&I with the support of the RIO closes the case if satisfied.

The DD: R&I with the support of the secretariat sets up and manages an effective data record system and registry with a track record of cases (allegations, processes, letters, and reports).

8.1.6 The Research Integrity Officer

The RIO situated in the office of the DVC: R&I acts as advisor and support to the DD: R&I (in larger Faculties) and ED throughout all processes of alleged research integrity breaches and the investigation thereof.

- Receives the allegation with the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties).
- Supports the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) in deciding on the merit and formal grounds.
- Sets up the SRIC and appointed expert ad hoc members after empanelment by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties).
- Oversees the secretariat in setting up meetings and taking minutes during meetings.
- Supports the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) in writing the necessary letters to the author(s), the institution(s) and the journal editor.
- Joins the DD: R&I (larger Faculties only) in feedback meetings with the ED.
- Writes the final summative report.
- Where a case needs to be escalated for a formal external investigation, helps with organising supporting documentation and formulating the accompanying letter of referral to the appropriate person, and sets up the handover meeting.
- Joins the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) in the handover meeting if escalated to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) (*only if applicable*).

Support from the secretary allocated for this purpose by the Faculty:

- Allocates a case number from the Research Integrity Register of the Faculty.
- Keeps records of all evidence.
- Ensures that progress reports reach the office as indicated and closes cases.
- Gives monthly status reports of RI cases to the DD: R&I (if a larger Faculty) and ED.
- Ensures that required reports are submitted to the DD: R&I (in larger Faculties), ED, and Faculty Board.

8.1.7 The Executive Dean in Larger Faculties

The ED (if in a Larger Faculty) listens to the report on the outcomes of the investigation of the SRIC and the appointed expert ad hoc members presented to him/her by the DD: R&I (if a larger Faculty) and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I, gives his/her stamp of approval to the way forward and co-signs the letters set up by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) with the support of the RIO to the external author(s), the institution(s) where the external author(s) reside(s), as well as the journal editor.

Keeps up to date with all active RI cases.

8.1.8 The Research Directors

The RD of the research entity where the alleging researcher(s) reside(s) forms part of the SRIC and appointed expert ad hoc members.

8.1.9 The Chairperson of the Faculty REC or Head of the Ethics Office

The Chairperson/Head forms part of the SRIC.

8.1.10 The independent plagiarism and/or copyright infringement expert

The independent expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement does the necessary assessment and provides the empanelled SRIC and ad hoc members with a written report that will be used in the communication to the external author(s), the external institution(s) and the editor of the journal.

8.1.11 Independent consulting attorney in the legal office

The independent consulting attorney in the legal office only ensures safety in legal *communication* to the various parties.

9 PROCEDURE(S)

9.1 The principles underpinning the process of handling an allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s)

- Procedural fairness.
- Natural justice.
- Due process.
- Integrity.
- Confidentiality (“need-to-know rule”).
- One assessment where possible.

9.2 Questions that guide the procedural framework

- Who receives the allegation?
- Who takes the first step(s)?
- Who appoints the SRIC and expert ad hoc members?
- Who does the formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation?
- How are the outcomes managed?

Note: The details of this procedural framework are explained in the rest of the document.

9.3 The process

9.3.1 Reporting of possible plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s)

The alleging person(s), with an allegation based on observations or evidence of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract, must directly notify the office of the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I.

In all cases of reporting, it must be very clear from the start whether it is:

- Just a process of seeking advice
Or
- A process of making a formal allegation.

Important note: *Under no circumstances should an initial assessment be conducted by any party other than the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) and the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I. Neither should the internal author/person(s) attempt to communicate with the external author(s) or the editor of the journal.*

9.3.2 The steps in handling allegations

- 1) Initial informal intra-faculty research integrity assessment into the *merit and formal grounds* of the allegation(s) by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) and RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I only and the decision whether the process should continue.
- 2) Formal intra-faculty investigation by the SRIC and appointed ad hoc members.
- 3) Reporting and recording.
- 4) Escalation to the Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) if any further action is required due to possible copyright infringement (*only if applicable*).

9.3.2.1 Informal Intra-faculty Research Integrity Assessment

On receiving a written allegation of a possible breach in RCR/RI, the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I launches an initial *informal intra-faculty assessment* into the *merit and formal grounds of the allegation* of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the NWU though any form of employment or contract, before deciding to proceed to a more formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation process.

This assessment is done with the hard evidence provided by the allegor(s) and handled at face value.

The focus of the initial informal intra-faculty assessment is to determine *whether an answerable case* can be made:

- Is it a valid complaint of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by (an) external author(s)?
- Is it in good faith and not malicious?

A final decision is taken whether the case has merit and formal grounds.

If the allegation(s) seem(s) to have merit and formal grounds of a *potential breach of RCR/RI through an act of plagiarism and/or copy right infringement by (an) external author(s) not linked to the NWU through any form of employment or contract*, the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) continues with the next step in the process and launches a *formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation* with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I.

9.3.2.2 Formal Intra-faculty Research Integrity Investigation

A case number is allocated from the Research Integrity Register of the Faculty.

A risk management-based approach will be used.

The formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation is handled by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) as chairperson, the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I and an empanelled SRIC and ad hoc members. In *empanelling the SRIC and appropriate ad hoc members*, the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO must rule out any possible *conflict of interest, bias, and unfairness*. *Confidentiality* and *due process* will be maintained throughout the process.

The Standing Research Integrity Committee (SRIC) as indicated in the definition

And

Ad hoc members:

- An expert in plagiarism and/or copyright infringement.
- The RD of the entity in which the alleging researcher(s) reside(s).
- A consulting attorney in the legal office must be included.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I will as soon ***as possible, but no later than a week*** after receiving the allegation, call a meeting with the empanelled SRIC and ad hoc members.

The formal intra-faculty investigation process should be prompt, discreet and effective, and should decide **within three weeks**.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO decides whether he/she will make any material available to the SRIC and ad hoc members before the meeting. The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) and RIO decide on the material to be made available and the secretariat ensures that the SRIC and ad hoc members receive it in time. The panel reviews materials available to them, draws from knowledgeable sources and collects relevant documentation, if necessary, to empower them for the investigation.

The initial meeting begins with the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) welcoming all and allowing time for introductions if necessary. The confidentiality of the matter is emphasised and each member's role during the investigation explained to them. The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) makes it clear that this is a formal intra-faculty research integrity investigation and that the external author(s) is/are not considered guilty unless evidence proves otherwise.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO presents the case in detail to the SRIC and ad hoc members with the necessary evidence and documentation at hand.

Should the SRIC and ad hoc members deem it necessary, the allegor(s) is called to present his/her/their allegation and evidence and provide clarity.

An important initial responsibility of the SRIC and ad hoc members is to make sure that the allegation was made in good faith.

A timeframe is set for **one week after the present meeting** to reconvene for a follow-up meeting and make a final decision based on the expert's findings.

Time is allowed for discussions, reflections, questions, and answers.

The SRIC and ad hoc members continue with their discussion with all evidence at hand, having heard the expert's report, and come to some form of a summarised version of the allegation and decide on a finding. They must come to a decision that the allegation proved to have *substance* and *defensibility* and a finding of a *potential breach or no breach in RCR/RI*.

If a finding of a potential breach in RCR/RI is made, the SRIC and ad hoc members decide on:

- The way forward.
- The time frames.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO prepares letters to:

- the external author(s),
- the institution(s) where the researcher(s) reside(s),
- the editor of the journal, and
- the allegor(s).

The **letters** indicate the following:

- *To the external researcher(s):*
 - The finding of a *potential* breach in research integrity through (an) act(s) of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement naming the publication.
 - Explaining the nature of the *potential* breach and attached addenda if applicable.
 - The process followed at the NWU.
 - That (a) letter(s) will be sent to his/her/their institution(s) to request an internal investigation.
 - That a letter will be sent to the editor of the journal explaining the finding and process followed.
 - Request of confirmation of receipt of the letter by a stated date (two weeks from sending the letter).

- *To the appropriate person dealing with such matters at the institution(s) where the researcher(s) reside(s) (Note: This will vary for each institution and initial groundwork is required to identify the appropriate person):*
 - The finding of a *potential* breach in research integrity through an act(s) of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement naming the author(s) and the publication.
 - Explaining the nature of the *potential* breach and attached addenda if applicable.
 - The process followed at the NWU.
 - That letters will be sent to the author(s), other institutions if applicable, as well as the editor of the journal (attach copies of letters).
 - A specific request for an internal investigation by the external institution into the allegation(s).
 - Request confirmation of receipt of the letter by a stated date (two weeks from sending the letter).
- *To the editor of the journal:*
 - The finding of a *potential* breach in research integrity through an act(s) of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement naming the author(s) and the publication.
 - Explaining the nature of the *potential* breach and attached addenda if applicable.
 - The process followed at the NWU.
 - That letters will be sent to the author(s) and his/her/their institution(s) to request an internal investigation.
 - A specific request for an internal investigation into the allegation(s) and, if proven true, to retract the article or request that the necessary correction be made.
 - Request confirmation of receipt of the letter by a stated date (two weeks from sending the letter).
- *To the internal researcher(s) that made the allegation of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement:*
 - That letters were sent to the external author(s), the appropriate person at the institution where the external author(s) reside(s), and the editor of the journal.
 - That they should *not attempt any interaction with the authors, or any parties* involved in the incident.
 - That feedback will be provided of the outcome of the investigation and any further actions deemed necessary.

An appointment is made with the ED (in larger Faculties) where the DD: R&I (in larger Faculties) with the support of the RIO presents the case and letters to the various recipients to the ED. If the ED concurs with the findings and letters, he/she co-signs the letter with the DD: R&I (larger Faculties).

The letters are sent off to the various recipients.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO notifies the internal author/person(s) by email of the outcome and the process being followed. The authors are cautioned not to interact with any of the mentioned external parties.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO does regular follow up with the institution(s) as to the progress made with the case at hand if timelines are unnecessarily stretched and keep the internal author/person(s) up to date.

On receipt of a response from the external institution(s), the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO calls for a meeting **within one week** with the SRIC and ad hoc members to decide:

- 1) Whether they are satisfied with the response and the case can be closed.
- 2) Whether they would like to request further information from the external institution(s).
- 3) Whether they would like to escalate it to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) for possible further actions (see section 9.3.2.6).

If the SRIC and ad hoc members decide that they are satisfied with the response, the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO writes a letter to the external institution(s) of accepting the outcome of the investigation.

The internal author/person(s) is/are notified by email of the outcome of the investigation, whether further action is required, and the way forward.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO closes the case.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the secretariat sets up and manages an effective data record system and registry with a track record of cases (allegations, processes, letters, and reports).

9.3.2.3 Reporting and recordkeeping

A register for research integrity cases is kept in the Faculty.

A number is allocated to each registered case.

A factual and objective mandatory report must be written after the formal intra-faculty investigation and updated with a closing report at the end of the investigation. The RIO will be responsible for the report and approved by the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties).

The following should be included in the initial report:

- Name of the internal institution.
- Name of the Faculty.
- The research entity in which the internal researcher(s) reside(s).
- Full names and surname of the alleging researcher(s).
- Personnel/student number.
- Title of the publication (if applicable).
- Name and institution of the external author(s).
- Date of receiving the allegation.
- A detailed description of the allegation.
- The evidence summarised (available evidence and record(s)).
- The process followed.
- Finding(s) that indicate(s) breach or no breach.
- Actions the Faculty is taking to address the breach in research integrity.
- Name of the RD.
- Name of the independent consulting attorney in the legal office.
- Name of the independent expert.
- A final copy of the report must be stored in the office of the DD: R&I.

The following should be included in the closing report:

- The name of the internal researcher(s) and the entity in which the researcher resides.
- The name(s) of the external author(s) and the institution(s).
- Name of the publication.
- Date of conclusion of the case.
- Summary of the conclusion process and any further comments.

9.3.2.6 Possible escalation to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) if further actions are required due to possible copyright infringement

As indicated earlier in the SOP, the SRIC and ad hoc members can make a finding that they deem the case worthy of escalation to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) for possible further actions.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I writes a letter explaining the internal process followed and why it seems appropriate to escalate the case to Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS) for possible further actions.

The ED (in larger Faculties) supports the finding and the way forward and co-signs the letter.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) and RIO in the office of the DVC: R&I set up a meeting with the indicated persons at Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation

Support Office (TTIS) to formally hand over the letter of escalation and supporting documents of proof of potential plagiarism and/or copyright infringement and to explain the case.

Points of discussion for the meeting:

- Findings of a potential breach in RI/RCR through the act of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement.
- Why the need to escalate the case for potential further action.
- The future process.

The DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) with the support of the RIO keeps track of the progress made with the case by Legal Services and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office (TTIS).

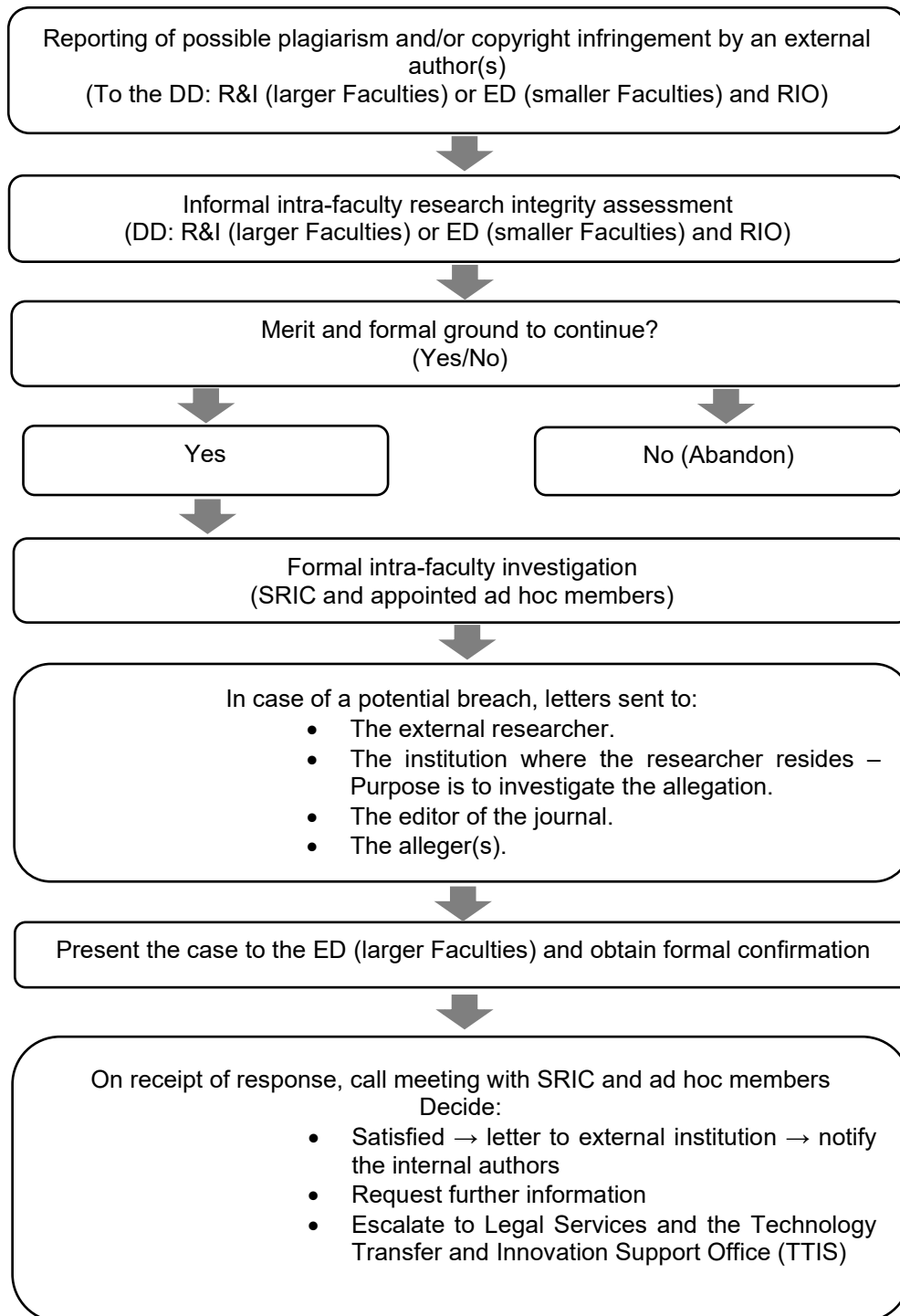
The outcome of the case should be reported to the ED, the DD: R&I, and the RIO.

Once the case has been finalised, the DD: R&I (larger Faculties) or ED (smaller Faculties) signs the case off.

The RIO closes the record.

10 SUMMARISED PROCESS

Diagram 1: Processes and procedures for the management of plagiarism and/or copyright infringement by external authors



11 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

SOP for complaint management (SOP_Ethics_1.5, NWU, 2018).

SOP for the management of whistleblowing pertaining to research ethics and research integrity (SOP_NWU Research Integrity_7).

SOP for non-compliance of the University of Cape Town, 2013.

SOP for ethics committees of the University of the Western Cape.

Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, 2010.

The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (revised edition), 2017.

UCT policy and procedures for the breach of research ethics codes and allegations of misconduct in research, 2014.

12 ADDENDA

No	Document name
None	

Original details: SOP_NWU RI_5 Management of Plagiarism and/or Copyright Infringement by External Authors, 10 August 2021, revised November 2022.

File reference: