



Procedure for the Management of a Breach of Ethics

This procedure has been developed in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Operations Officer and is supported by the DCU Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct.

In line with current DCU Research Ethics Committee (REC) guidance, Principal Investigator(s)/Researcher(s) are encouraged to contact the University Research Ethics Committee (REC) if they discover a breach of ethics has taken place. However, it is possible that an allegation regarding a breach may be brought to the attention of the REC by a third party.

Once the REC has been notified, the following procedure would apply:

Step 1

The Principal Investigator(s) will be contacted by the REC Chairperson and invited to meet with representatives from the REC, to include; the REC Chairperson, the REC Secretary and the REC Administrator. They will also be invited to bring somebody with them if they wish. The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate a discussion on the nature of the allegation or self –declared breach.

Step 2

REC maintains the right to consult with other parties in the University (e.g. Child Protection Office, Data Protection Office, Office of the Chief Operations Officer) in order to provide clarity/guidance if required.

REC will ascertain the seriousness of the breach and devise a plan to address the concerns. A timeline will be agreed for the PI to resolve the concerns with support from REC and any other unit in DCU, as deemed appropriate. The PI will submit a revised REC protocol for approval if required.

Step 3

If the PI/researcher(s) refuse to engage with the REC or if the breach is considered to be of a serious nature, the REC Chairperson will formally report the matter to the Chief Operations Officer in line with the Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct.