

**Commission on Research
Revision to Policy No. 13020 - Policy on Misconduct in Research
to address “Self-plagiarism”
COR Resolution 2014-15A**

First Reading, Commission on Research:	March 4, 2015
Approved, Commission on Research:	April 8, 2015
First reading by University Council:	April 20, 2015
Second Reading by University Council:	May 4, 2015
Approved by the President:	May 4, 2015
Effective Date:	Upon Approval

WHEREAS, The Commission on Research (COR) exists to represent the issues and concerns associated with the research mission of the university; and

WHEREAS, Policy 13020 Misconduct in Research does not recognize “self-plagiarism” as research misconduct; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech, recognizes “self-plagiarism” as unethical behavior and awareness should be raised; and

WHEREAS, the faculty handbook has an established procedure for handling claims of unethical behavior and this resolution adds self-plagiarism as an unethical behavior; and

WHEREAS, policy revisions are intended to clarify the expectations for faculty members to assure the integrity of research conducted at Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, the proposed revised policy has been vetted and endorsed by the Vice President for Research, the Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies, Commission on Faculty Affairs, Faculty Senate and Committee on Faculty Ethics;

THEREFORE be it resolved that Policy 13020, Policy on Misconduct in Research be revised to incorporate language which recognizes “self-plagiarism” as unethical behavior (see attached) and the 2015 Faculty Handbook and Graduate Catalog be revised to incorporate language which recognizes “self-plagiarism” as unethical behavior (see attached).

Subject: Policy on Misconduct in Research

Proposed Amendment to Add Self-Plagiarism

Purpose of amendment: To raise awareness of self-plagiarism and refer to faculty **handbook** and graduate **catalog**.

Section 2.2 Activities Covered

Current text:

The university will follow this policy in addressing all allegations of misconduct in research. *Misconduct in research* (or research misconduct) means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research; or in reporting research results. *Fabrication* is making up data or results and recording or reporting them. *Falsification* is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words, including those of a student, colleague or mentor, without giving appropriate credit. It does not include authorship or credit disputes.

Proposed text (changes marked in red):

The university will follow this policy in addressing all allegations of misconduct in research. *Misconduct in research* (or research misconduct) means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, in proposing, performing, or reviewing research; or in reporting research results. *Fabrication* is making up data or results and recording or reporting them. *Falsification* is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words, including those of a student, colleague or mentor, without giving appropriate credit. It does not include authorship or credit disputes.

At Virginia Tech, self-plagiarism is considered unethical behavior. Therefore, it is not covered by this policy but is addressed in the Faculty Handbook and Graduate Catalog.

8. Approval and Revisions

- **Revision 2**

Updated to recognize self-plagiarism as unethical behavior.

This revision is consistent with the definition of self-plagiarism identified by the Federal Office of Research and Integrity as of April, 2015.

Approved by Interim Vice President for Research, Dennis R. Dean

PROPOSED FACULTY HANDBOOK CHANGES REGARDING “SELF-PLAGIARISM”

Chapter Excerpts and Additions to the *Faculty Handbook* Upon Approval, 2015 (new text is in red)

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Mission and Governance of the University

(Excerpt from Section 1.3.5.3, Committee on Faculty Ethics)

The Committee on Faculty Ethics (CFE) receives and considers charges of violations of faculty ethics that abrogate the principles of ethical behavior set forward in chapter two of the Faculty Handbook “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct.” The CFE also acts to promote knowledge of and adherence to the principles of ethical behavior.

No change recommended to Chapter One.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Employment Policies and Procedures for All Faculty

2.7 Professional Responsibilities of Ethical Behavior

(Excerpt from Section 2.7.1, Statement of Principles of Ethical Behavior)

We accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. We practice intellectual honesty and do not compromise our freedom of inquiry. At Virginia Tech, self-plagiarism is considered unethical behavior. Self-plagiarism occurs when authors reuse substantial parts of their own published work as new without providing appropriate references to the previous work if this reuse deviates materially from standard practice in the field.

(Excerpt from Section 2.7.1.1, Allegations of Unprofessional or Unethical Conduct)

The [Committee on Faculty Ethics](#) (CFE) receives, investigates, and considers allegations of unprofessional or unethical conduct for all types of faculty members, except administrative and professional faculty members. See chapter on “Committee on Faculty Ethics” for further information on the committee charge, membership, and procedures.

CHAPTER TEN

10.0 Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activities

(Excerpt from Section 10.2.2, Activities Covered)

[University Policy 13020: “Policy on Misconduct in Research”](#) applies to allegations of research misconduct (fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results) involving a person who was employed by, was an agent of, or was affiliated by contract or agreement with the university and was engaged in research under the auspices of the university at the time of occurrence of the alleged research misconduct. In addition, any student engaged in sponsored research is covered by this policy.

Misconduct in non-research activities and other ethical violations are covered by separate policies. Ethical misconduct, **including self-plagiarism**, is covered in chapter two, “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct,” which describes the principles of ethical behavior. Violations of ethical conduct by graduate students are guided by the constitution of the graduate honor system, which is available in the graduate policies and procedures section of the [Graduate Catalog](#). Violations of ethical conduct by undergraduate students are guided by the university’s honor system, as outlined in the [Hokie Handbook](#). Standards of conduct and performance, as well as procedures for dealing with alleged violations of unacceptable conduct and grievance procedures for staff, are available on the Department of Human Resources [website](#).
