

A GUIDE TO Whistleblowing Ethics

YOU'RE PROBABLY AWARE OF MANY FAMOUS INSTANCES OF WHISTLEBLOWING IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, BUT WHISTLEBLOWING HAPPENS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TOO.

A WHISTLEBLOWER

could be anyone in a lab, in the field, or participating in other research who **sees something that does not seem right and comes forward to report it**. For example, someone might see a researcher making up or changing data, plagiarizing, or manipulating a figure in a publication or a grant application.



Before you decide to blow the whistle, consider three things:

1. **Necessity:** Do you feel it is necessary to expose the misconduct?
2. **Obligation:** Do you have a moral obligation to report it?
3. **Consequences:** Are you prepared for the consequences that may result both for you and the accused?

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY SOMETHING. This is especially true if you see research misconduct or behavior that is dangerous to other people, facilities, or any type of scientific or scholarly activity.

Research misconduct is the falsification or fabrication of data, or plagiarism in research. By reporting research misconduct, whistle blowers help protect the integrity of scientific research. Yet whistle blowing is difficult, since people who are whistle blowers often suffer consequences including retribution.

Fortunately, there are some protections for whistle blowers. In accordance with the State Whistleblower Protection Act, UNM is committed to protecting whistleblowers.

Whistle Blowing at UNM

All institutions that receive federal funding, including UNM, must have a process for reporting and investigating research misconduct. We follow a published policy called UNM policy E:40, which details assessment of allegation, inquiry, and investigation processes.

READ POLICY E:40:
handbook.unm.edu/e40/

Before Making a Report

- Examine your own perspective to avoid false accusations.
- Ask questions rather than draw conclusions.
- Gather evidence or documentation to support your claim of misconduct. Evidence can include images that have been altered, emails exchanged, manuscripts submitted, recorded conversations, or other physical representations.
- Remember your role. Your role is not to do an investigation but rather to report what you saw honestly, and then be available if there is a need for additional documentation or questions.

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at aire.unm.edu



How to Report

- Contact the Office of Research and Compliance (researchcompliance.unm.edu)
- Send an email to rcgeneral@unm.edu
- Call the UNM Hotline (1-888-899-6092). To anonymously report, block your phone number before calling
- Report at unm.ethicspoint.edu, UNM's EthicsPoint portal. You can choose to leave your contact information or report anonymously.
- To discuss your concerns with someone before making an official claim, you can contact Academic Integrity & Research Ethics (aireunm@unm.edu)
- You might also consider speaking with your Principle Investigator, a trusted mentor or advisor, your department chair, or the dean of the your department's college/school.

Once your claim is officially reported, the Research Integrity Officer from the Office of the Vice President for Research will initiate an investigation and follow procedures under Policy E-40. For more information about UNM's whistleblowing policy and process, you can contact the Office of Research and Compliance.