



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
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www.defra.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6173
Date: 28 January 2014

Dear,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: RESEARCH MISCONDUCT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND STAFF

Thank you for your request for information about research misconduct of postgraduate students and staff, which we received on 10 January 2014. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

“1. I would like to know how you record instances of research misconduct, both proven cases and allegations.

- a) For how many years do you hold this information and in what format.*
- b) Do you have a central database where you record this information.*
- c) Do you keep records at a lower level e.g. within each school or faculty at your institution.*
- d) If your record keeping falls under neither (b) or (c) above then I would like to know how you record instances of research misconduct.*

2. I would like to know what procedure the university follows when there is a breach of your policy or guidelines on research integrity, e.g. there is an instance of research misconduct.

- a) In instances where the allegation is proven, what happens with regards to the present and future funding of the relevant research.*
- b) In instances where the allegation is proven, what ramifications are there for the guilty party(s).*
- c) What procedure is followed where research funds (e.g. through a grant) have been used by a person later found guilty of research misconduct.”*



The information you requested is as follows:

1. Defra's disciplinary records are maintained by Defra's HR Casework Service Team in electronic (Word document, Outlook email and Excel spreadsheet) and paper format for seven years in accordance with National Archives guidance.

Defra does not have a central database for disciplinary records.

2. Defra is not an academic institution, although the Department does invest in research. Defra has robust quality assurance procedures in place for research activities and we expect Defra employees and research contractors to adhere to this guidance at all times.

For Defra employees, the Department is governed by the Civil Service Code, Defra's Standards of Conduct and a disciplinary policy and procedure. Any incidents of research misconduct by a Defra employee would be investigated under Defra's disciplinary policy and appropriate action taken. Research misconduct by a contractor would constitute a breach of contract.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Tarran

Direct Line 020 7979 8583

Email ann.tarran@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF