

Mandate for the Research Integrity Committee

University of Southeastern Norway and Inland Norway University College of Applied Sciences

The Act on organisation of research ethics work (of 01.05.2017) obliges the research institutions to *create an Research Integrity Committee. From the autumn of 2017, the University of Southeastern Norway (USN) and Inland Norway University College of Applied Sciences (HINN) have decided to establish a common Research Integrity Committee to strengthen the impartiality of the Committee, contribute to a greater degree of continuity in the Committee's work, and thus comply with section 3 of the Act (Impartiality): Committees and boards appointed under the provisions of this Act shall be academically independent.*

Area of responsibility

The Research Integrity Committee shall process and make statements about reported cases of possible violations of recognised research ethics standards in which employees of USN/HINN are involved.

In the case of reported cases, the Committee shall always take a position in accordance with section 8 (Statements in misconduct cases) to the following:

- a) Whether the researcher has acted scientifically dishonestly or not
- b) Whether there are systemic errors at the institution and
- c) Whether the scientific work should be corrected or withdrawn.

In its statement, the Research Integrity Committee may give a recommendation on further follow-up. Such a recommendation is not binding on USN/HINN. Nor is the Committee's recommendation according to letter c).

Everyone, including persons and organisations outside of USN/HINN, is entitled to notify the Committee of such cases. If the Committee's statements conclude that researchers have violated recognised research ethics standards, sanctions may be enforced. Statements that conclude that a researcher has acted scientifically dishonestly may be appealed by the researcher to the Investigation Committee (Section 6).

The Research Integrity Committee has an independent responsibility to ensure that the cases are sufficiently illuminated. The Chair of the Committee decides what information and documentation should be collected. In respect of cases associated with USN, the university's research administration will assist the Committee in this work. The corresponding applies to the research administration at HINN.

The Research Integrity Committee shall send an annual report on its activities to the Boards of USN/HINN. The report should deal with the number of processed cases and the content of any statements. The report follows the calendar year.

Composition and working period of the Committee

To ensure the best possible unbiased administrative procedure, the Research Integrity Committee should have a composition that allows it to act independently of the ordinary line organisation at USN/HINN. The Committee shall consist of a total of five members with necessary expertise in research, research ethics and the law. The Committee's Chair shall be externally recruited and possess legal competence. USN and HINN each have two members who reflect the academic breadth of the two institutions. A PhD candidate must be one of the members. USN has the candidate in its quota for the first three-year period, HINN for the following period. The Committee shall have two

deputy members, one each from USN and HINN.

The members, including the two deputy board members, are appointed for four years at a time by the Rectors of USN and HINN. Exemption may be made for the PhD candidates' representative.

Meetings

The Research Integrity Committee itself determines the meeting frequency in relation to ongoing reported cases and for other reasons the Committee itself determines.