

Allegations Raised, Misconduct Found in Almost All Institutional Types

Analysis of the Annual Reports on Possible Research Misconduct submitted to ORI during the 6-year period 1991-96 showed that 174 institutions reported 432 allegations of scientific misconduct. These allegations resulted in 50 findings of misconduct at 41 institutions. Allegations reported on the Annual Report form should fall within the PHS definition of scientific misconduct and involve research supported by the PHS.

This analysis of the information reported on the forms is limited to the allegations that were received during the 6-year period; it does not include any allegations that were carried into the reporting period nor those still open at the end of 1996. Fifteen cases begun in this period are still open.

All types of institutions reported allegations and misconduct findings except for educational organizations other than higher education. The variance between types most likely results from several factors, including funding level, which will be explored in a later article.

Institutions of higher education, which represent 26.5% of the organizations with an active assurance on file with ORI, reported nearly 70% of the allegations and 68% of the misconduct findings. Allegations were reported by 14.2% of the higher education institutions; misconduct findings by 3.3%.

At the other end, small businesses, which are 43% of the organizations with an active assurance, reported 3.5% of the allegations and 4.9% of the misconduct findings. Allegations were reported by 0.4% of the small businesses and misconduct findings by 0.1%.

Table 1: Institution type by number with active assurances, reporting allegations and finding misconduct, 1991-96.

Type of Institution	Assurance		Allegation		Misconduct	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher Education	851	26.5	121	69.5	28	68.3
Research org.	310	9.6	25	14.4	3	7.3
Independent hosp.	293	9.1	15	8.6	6	14.6
Other Education org.	21	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other Health	360	11.2	7	4.0	2	4.9
Small Business	1,380	43.0	6	3.5	2	4.9
Total	2,847*	100.0	174	100.0	41	100.0

*Number of institutions that submitted the 1996 Annual Report.

The total number of allegations reported by an institution ranged from 1 to 17 over the 6-year

period. Eighty-nine institutions (51%) reported a single allegation; 85 (49%) institutions reported two or more allegations. The number of allegations reported in a single year by an institution ranged from one to seven.

Table 2: Total number of allegations reported by number of institutions, 1991-1996.

Allegations	Institutions	
	N	%
One	89	51
Two	30	17
Three	19	11
Four	13	8
Five	11	6
Total	174	110

The number of years an institution reported an allegation during the reporting period ranged from 1-6. One hundred and one institutions (58%) reported allegations in only 1 year; 73 institutions (42 %) reported allegations in 2 or more years.

Table 3: Number of years reporting an allegation by number of institutions, 1991-96.

Years	Institutions	
	N	%
One	101	58
Two	30	17
Three	37	21
Four	11	7
Five	2	1
Six	2	1
Total	174	100

The 174 institutions reported conducting 425 inquiries and 235 investigations. Fifty-five percent of the inquiries recommended an investigation; 45% did not. Twenty-one percent of the investigations resulted in a finding of misconduct; 73% did not, and 6% are undetermined at this time.

Twelve percent of the 432 allegations received in the 6-year period resulted in findings of scientific misconduct; 84% did not; 4% were undetermined at reporting time. Twenty-four percent of the 174 institutions reported receipt of an allegation found scientific misconduct; 76% did not.