

Excerpt – AIS Council Policies – As of June 8, 2014

Subject: Scholarly Misconduct

5.4.3 Scholarly Misconduct (adopted 10/2003; revised 10/2013, 06/2014)

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Scholarly Misconduct policy is to provide guidelines for investigating and adjudicating claims of plagiarism and other scholarly misconduct. This policy embodies the principle that every effort should be made to resolve disputes without resort to formal investigation. Moreover, it is not reasonable to assume that all researchers are informed, or even agree, as to what constitutes acceptable professional practice. Even experienced scholars are sometimes in dispute over what constitutes ethical behavior. Thus, while sanctions may be appropriate in some cases, counseling and training may be appropriate in others.

Misconduct occurs in varying degrees of severity and in many different forms. Each case of alleged member misconduct is expected to have unique aspects and it is impossible to provide a “one size fits all” procedure. This policy is perhaps most suitable for cases where documentary evidence can be obtained to establish authorship or other misconduct with a high degree of certainty. In general, the process should keep all parties informed and allow a respondent to take responsibility before a more serious step in the process occurs. The process should be adapted to fit each individual case while preserving the important principles of the policy.

In general, AIS members are expected to comply with the AIS Code of Research Conduct (AIS Administrative Bulletin 2014.0224.01) which provides a basis for ethical scholarly practice. The AIS Research Conduct Committee regards the Code of Research Conduct not merely as a set of narrow rules upon which complaints of scholarly misconduct may be based, but rather as a source of guidance for the scholarly community.

Editors of non-AIS publications are free to adopt in whole or in part the AIS Code of Research Conduct and the procedures described in this policy. However these processes, guidelines, or such “rules” as they may imply, are not intended to apply to, or otherwise inappropriately interfere with, non-AIS publications.

B. Definitions

1. The AIS “Research Conduct Committee (RCC)” is comprised of AIS members as outlined in the Bylaws.

2. "Scholarly misconduct" is the term we use to describe behaviors by researchers that contravene the AIS Code of Research Conduct. While plagiarism is the form of scholarly misconduct that receives the most attention, there are other forms of scholarly misconduct, such as the fabrication or falsification of data, research procedures or data analysis, or the exercise of power or bias in scholarly activities.
3. "Plagiarism" is:
 - a. the use of another person's writings, information, ideas, concepts or data without that person's permission;
 - b. misrepresentation to an editor or conference program chair about the originality of the submitted work (often called "self-plagiarism").
4. The term "editor" refers to the Editor-in-Chief of an AIS publication or a program chair of an AIS conference who has been selected according to guidelines provided in the Bylaws.
5. The term "complainant" refers to the person or persons submitting a complaint alleging scholarly misconduct. The term refers to the role in the procedure, not the validity of the complaint.
6. The term "respondent" refers to the person or persons alleged to have contravened the AIS Code of Conduct. The term refers to the role in the procedure, not the guilt of the individual.
7. The term "offender" refers to the person or persons determined to have contravened the AIS Code of Conduct.
8. The term "victim" refers to the person or persons who are harmed as a result of the offender's scholarly misconduct.

C. Procedures – Initial Steps

1. Complainants may be any observant scholar, an editor or reviewer, or an author or scholar that believes they have been wronged by another. Complainants may submit their complaints to the appropriate AIS editor or to the AIS President. They may not submit allegations directly to the RCC.
2. Allegations of scholarly misconduct submitted to an AIS editor shall first be investigated by the editor.
3. The editor should undertake an initial investigation to ascertain if the complaint is valid.
4. If, in the opinion of the editor, the complaint is deemed not valid (for instance if the reviewer has mistakenly identified plagiarism, or if an author has uploaded an incorrect file, or if an author has blinded mention of his/her own future work so as to preserve anonymity), then the editor should take those simple steps that will remedy the situation (inform the reviewer, upload the correct file) and then dismiss the complaint. The editor should notify the AIS President if the editor foresees any need to establish a record of a pattern of behavior.
5. If, in the opinion of the editor, the complaint may be valid, then the editor must escalate the matter to the AIS President, who may then turn it over to the RCC. All such allegations must be routed via the AIS President who alone has the authority to refer them to the RCC. In such a case, the editor should not attempt to contact the author or other respondent to ask for explanations.
6. The editor should not ask the eLibrary manager to remove a paper from the eLibrary at any stage of the process or under any circumstances.

D. Procedure –Consideration of Evidence by the RCC

1. The RCC shall only consider cases assigned by the AIS President.
2. Editors or publishers of non-AIS publications may apply to the AIS President on a case-by-case basis for the adjudication by the RCC of allegations of scholarly misconduct in their own publications.
3. Once a case has been assigned to the RCC and the names of the individuals involved in the case identified, each RCC member should consider if he/she has any conflict of interest with any of these individuals. If such a conflict of interest is identified, the member with that conflict is professionally obligated to declare it and to recuse him/herself from the RCC for the duration of the specific case where the conflict applies. The member will then need to be replaced by another member, who will be appointed by the AIS President.
4. If the AIS President has a conflict of interest, then the same rules of recusal apply, and another individual who does not have such a conflict of interest will need to serve as proxy for the AIS President throughout the course of the investigation and the reporting of outcomes.
5. The RCC begins by deciding if sufficient evidence exists to undertake a formal investigation. All evidence gathered by the editor, complainant, and respondent will be examined by the RCC. The RCC may also request additional evidence from either the complainant or the respondent or obtain additional evidence from any other parties (e.g., the superiors of the complainant and respondent) through other channels, as it deems necessary.
6. The RCC should be able to answer each of the following questions in the affirmative to justify further inquiry.
 - a. Has sufficient evidence been submitted to conclude that plagiarism or other scholarly misconduct may have occurred?
 - b. Is the alleged misconduct sufficiently serious to justify pursuing?
 - c. Is there a reasonable prospect of resolution?

Unless all of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, or unless there are other compelling circumstances, the RCC shall inform the AIS President that no further action will be taken unless more compelling evidence becomes available.

7. If the above questions are answered in the affirmative, the RCC shall notify the respondent that if exculpatory evidence is not provided promptly, the RCC will proceed to investigate the case and will reach a conclusion independently. This conclusion will be reported to the AIS President. If an individual admits misconduct at any stage, the RCC may immediately recommend appropriate actions for ratification by the AIS Executive Committee.

E. Compliance – Sanctions and Redress

1. Following completion of an investigation of alleged scholarly misconduct by the RCC, recommended penalties and actions to be taken will be identified for the AIS Executive Committee to review. The AIS President may communicate these outcomes to the

complainant, the respondent and a senior administrator (Dean or above) at the institutions of both the complainant and the respondent, including (if appropriate) a specific response to each allegation made. Further the actions (if any) to be taken as a result of the investigation and its confirmation by the AIS Executive Committee should be effected as soon as is practically possible. Once they have been effected, the complainant and respondent should be informed of the situation, again as soon as practically possible.

2. The nature of the penalties and actions taken by the AIS Executive Committee will depend on the precise circumstances of the case. However, it is important that the injustice done to the victim be redressed and be seen to be redressed.
3. A finding of misconduct by an AIS member that pertains to a scholarly work published in a non-AIS publication may result in sanctions against such individuals as determined by the AIS Executive Committee.
4. A finding of misconduct by an AIS member or non-member that pertains to a scholarly work published by AIS may result in changes to the publication.
 - a. Where scholarly misconduct is demonstrated to have been perpetrated and where the offender is a single author, the entire article is to be removed.
 - b. Where multiple authors are involved, these authors will need to be consulted as well, since any action taken may unduly and unreasonably affect them and their careers.
 - c. Ideally, it will be possible to remove only the offending material, without retracting the whole article. If this occurs, then the offender's name is to be removed from the list of authors of the article, and a retraction notice that details the upheld allegations, the names of the victim(s) and offender(s) and a brief summary of the actions taken should be posted to explain why the changes have occurred. This notice is to be appended as a footnote to the article, which will remain in the eLibrary.
 - d. If the complete article is retracted, then a short note can replace the article to explain the retraction. Where a retraction occurs because of plagiarism, a link (hyperlink where possible, otherwise a text note) to the correct original publication that was plagiarized is to be provided.
 - e. If the original material was unpublished, then a note that describes its provenance can be included instead.
4. In cases where scholarly misconduct has been established, sanctions may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The AIS President issuing a warning letter, with or without copies to the offender's academic and administrative superiors;
 - b. Barring the offender from submitting papers to any of the AIS journals or proceedings;
 - c. Barring the offender from registering for any of the AIS official conferences; or
 - d. Expelling the offender from membership in the AIS for a stated period of time.
5. If significant scholarly misconduct is determined to have occurred in connection with a research project funded by an agency (local, regional, national, or international), the AIS President must also inform the agency.