



FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD ON
RESEARCH INTEGRITY TENK

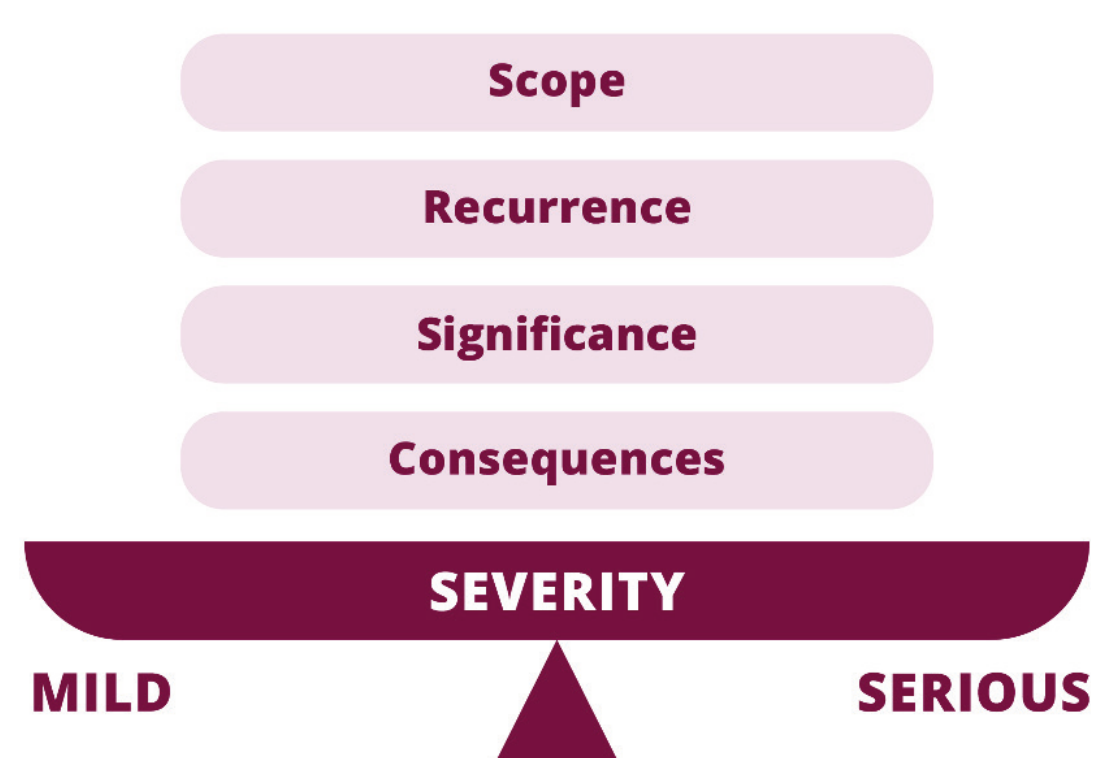
EVALUATING SEVERITY IN CASES OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT: FINLAND'S NEW RESEARCH INTEGRITY GUIDELINES (TENK 2023)

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What are Research Integrity violations?

In TENK 2023 research integrity (RI) violation meets one of the following criteria:

- **Serious** intentional activity that violates research integrity
- Activity in which research integrity has been **seriously** neglected due to indifference or carelessness when principles of RI could have been followed
- Activity in which research integrity has been **seriously** neglected due to ignorance and unawareness of RI principles and guidelines in force (TENK 2023, ch. 4)



(TENK 2023, p.17, fig. 2)

Are RI violations mild or serious?

Four criteria are used as examples to assess level of severity (fig. 2). These are: *scope*, *recurrence*, *significance* and *consequences*. A notable amount of concern regarding at least one of these should be present in order for research misconduct to be in question.

Guidelines mention *mild* and *serious* as amount of severity in relation with these concepts. By using the amount as y-axis, with the scale *negligible-minor-major*, and the four assessment criteria as separate categories on the x-axis, an evaluation matrix is prepared for further development.

Severity evaluation matrix

	Scope	Recurrence	Significance	Consequences
Negligible 0	Limited to a small area or a single individual.	Rare or isolated incident.	Low impact on research subjects or communities.	Minimal or no adverse consequences.
Mild 1	Affects a specific department or a moderate number of individuals.	Occurs occasionally but not frequently.	Moderate impact, may disrupt some processes.	Some negative outcomes but manageable.
Serious 2	Impacts the entire organization or a large number of individuals.	Repeats frequently or continuously.	High impact, significant disruption to research subjects or communities.	Severe and widespread negative consequences, difficult to manage.

Summary of TENK's RI Procedure

- **Submission:** Alleged RI violations are reported to the research organization.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone can file a notification.
- **Procedure:** Complaints are directed to the organization's director.
- **Confidential Advice:** RI advisers are available for consultation.
- **Notification Process:** The organization informs relevant parties.
- **Decision:** The organization's director concludes whether an RI violation occurred. Dissatisfied parties can seek a statement from TENK.
- **Follow-up:** TENK can advise organizations. Possible sanctions are decided within the organization (and not by TENK).
- **Documentation:** The entire process is documented.

TENK's Notification Form for Alleged Research Misconduct 2023, at: tenk.fi

TENK'S new (2023) guidelines



DOWNLOAD THE PDF on your phone!

Great minds think alike!

Yeo-Teh, Nicole Shu Ling & Tang, Bor Luen (2022). A research misconduct severity matrix that could serve to harmonize adjudication of findings. *Accountability in Research*, 29:5, 279–293. DOI: 10.1080/08989621.2021.1917398. Read 16.10.2023.