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## The named person: the role and procedures

As part of the ongoing endeavours to promote responsible conduct of research, SUND has established the position of the named person. The task of the named person is to stimulate debate and to offer advice on how to respond to breaches of responsible conduct of research. The named person operates independently from management and must be a scientifically active and highly respected researcher at the faculty.

**The named person's duties are:**

- to promote responsible conduct of research
- to help train researchers in responsible conduct of research, including attending research group meetings and organising meetings on particular themes
- to prevent breaches of responsible conduct of research from occurring, by having informal discussions with individuals who have specific questions
- to offer advice on and help solve disputes in research collaborations when the parties have different views of what constitutes responsible conduct
- to respond to suspicions of, or complaints about, breaches of responsible conduct of research
- to keep up to date with international standards in responsible conduct of research in order to help improve the qualifications of SUND's employees and research directors

The named person does not issue actual rulings but identifies misunderstandings and attempts to resolve disagreements before they become serious. Where this is not possible, the named person refers the complainant to the relevant bodies.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

Members of staff can contact the named person anonymously, without notifying management, and request confidential advice on the relevant rules, procedures etc. before deciding whether to submit a report to management or lodge a complaint with the Practice Committee (PC) or the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty (DCSD).

Anyone may (without mentioning actual names) contact the named person to seek advice or ask general questions if they have any doubts about their research collaboration.

Actual complaints about breach of responsible conduct of research may not be submitted anonymously, however, and the defendant is informed of the complainant's name. If necessary, the

named person provides support and advice during the process of referring the case to other bodies for further investigation.

## **Processing suspicions/complaints about breaches of responsible conduct of research**

### **Initiating proceedings**

The named person acknowledges receipt of enquiries/complaints about potential breaches of responsible conduct of research (a “complaint”). The named person notifies the complainant that the person against whom the complaint is directed (the defendant) will be informed of the content of the complaint. If the breach is reported orally and is general in nature, the named person draws up a private memorandum about the case and its content. This helps maintain an overview of ongoing cases.

If the named person receives an enquiry about a general problem in which other parties are not identified, the named person can, in the strictest confidence, advise the complainant on the rules and guidelines.

### **Investigation and assessment**

The named person may ask the complainant, the defendant or a third party to provide information that the named person believes is necessary to clarify the matter. If the parties do not wish to disclose such information, the named person may involve the dean, who is empowered to require that staff disclose information.

The named person then considers the case and issues an overall assessment of it. Several outcomes are permitted:

1. The case can be closed because the complaint is clearly unfounded
2. The case can be closed after advising the complainant of the general guidelines for responsible conduct of research
3. The case can be closed after a conversation with the complainant, the defendant or both
4. The case gives the named person reason to suspect a breach of responsible conduct of research and to refer the matter to the management, PU or the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty.

Following a case-by-case assessment, cases in category three may be sent to the dean for information. In category four, the named person informs the complainant, the defendant and the dean of the conclusions reached.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The named person must comply with the rules on eligibility laid down in the Danish Act on Public Administration.

As soon as a case is referred, the first order of business is to ensure that the named person is not ineligible to deal with the case in question due to a conflict of interest. If there is any conflict of interest, the named person must inform the dean. Following consultation with the Academic Council, the dean appoints a substitute in such cases.

### **The relationship between the named person and faculty management**

The named person is appointed by and reports to the dean. The named person must not be a manager for the individuals involved in the cases investigated.

Whenever relevant, the named person must notify the dean about specific cases. The named person also keeps the dean abreast of the general state of scientific practice in the faculty, as established via conversations with those who submit enquiries and the work involved in training researchers in responsible conduct of research.

When notified of a specific complaint, the dean decides whether the case is sufficiently serious to involve management.

If the named person suspects that a general enquiry actually refers to a specific situation, the person who made the enquiry is encouraged to say whether this is the case. If the individual concerned denies that this is the case, but the named person suspects that an actual breach of responsible conduct of research has occurred, the named person is not empowered to take any further steps but has a duty to inform the dean, who may call for a more thorough investigation.