

7.1.3 Responsible Conduct of Research

POLICY

This policy is required under the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research to address any allegations of policy breaches.

PURPOSE

The intent is to foster research excellence at the College of the Rockies as well as to ensure that research expectations align with the policies of external funding agencies, particularly the Tri-Council Agencies.

SCOPE

College of the Rockies requires that all those conducting research at or under the authority of the College comply with this policy and responsible conduct of research requirements.

This policy describes the framework of responsible research expectations at the College. Specifically, the rights and responsibilities of researchers at the College and the responsibilities of management to promote responsible research at the College.

The purpose of this policy is also to address allegations such as:

- misconduct in research,
- misconduct in use of research funds or assets,
- misconduct in data collection, gathering and retention,
- misconduct in authorship,
- misconduct in the exercise of the responsibilities of investigators and supervisors, and
- conflict of interest in research.

Appendix A: COMPLAINT PROCESS describes the mechanisms for filing and receipt of allegations regarding breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Policy.

ABBREVIATIONS

NSERC: Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, one of the Tri-Agency partners

RCR: responsible conduct of research

SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, one of the Tri-Agency partners

SRCR: Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, a Tri-Agency organization

Tri- Council/Tri- Agency: see definition of Agencies

DEFINITIONS

Accountability: being responsible for one's actions.

Agencies: Canada's three federal granting agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada: www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

Allegation: a conduct, comment, and/or event alleged in the complaint.

Applicant (including Co-Applicant): an individual who has submitted an application, individually or as part of a group or team, for research funding.

Author (including Co-Author): the writer, or contributing writer, of a research publication or document.

Breach: failure to comply with any Agency policy or element of this policy throughout the life cycle of a research project – from application for funding, to the conduct of the research and the dissemination of research results. It includes all activities related to the research, including the management of research funds.

Complainant: the person making a complaint.

Conflict of Interest: as defined in policy 1.1.5 *Code of Ethics*

Destruction of Research Records: the destruction of one's own or another's research data or records in contravention of the applicable funding agreement, institutional policy and/or laws, regulations and professional or disciplinary standards. This also includes the destruction of data or records to avoid the detection of wrongdoing

Fairness: investigations must be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness. Elements of procedural fairness include right to know the nature of the allegations; opportunity to respond; right to fair and impartial decision maker; processing without undue delay; right to reasons for decision that impacts their privileges, entitlements, rights or obligations.

Framework: reference to the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research* (2016)

Funding agreement: a written agreement that sets out the terms and conditions that an Agency and a researcher and/or the Institution agree to for a particular grant or award. It defines the researcher's responsibilities, what constitutes a breach of the agreement, and the consequences of a breach.

Honesty: being straightforward, and free of fraud and deception.

Inquiry: the process of reviewing an allegation to determine: whether the allegation is responsible (a Responsible Allegation); the particular policy or policies that may have been breached; and whether an investigation is warranted based on the information provided in the allegation.

Investigation: process undertaken by the College to find whether a Respondent is in breach of policy or engaging in conduct that warrants discipline, restrictions on movements or activities, or any other limitation of the Respondent's privileges, entitlements, rights or obligations.

Openness: being transparent in process and practice, as characterized by visibility or accessibility of information.

Particulars: facts surrounding an allegation (i.e. date, time, location, witnesses etc.)

Research: an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.

Researcher: anyone who conducts research activities.

Respondent: an individual who is the subject of a complaint/allegations being investigated.

Responsible Allegation: an allegation: 1) that is based on facts which have not been the subject of a previous investigation; 2) that falls within Sections 4 and 6 of this policy; 3) which would have constituted a breach at the time the alleged breach occurred; and 4) for which the institution has direct access to the evidence necessary to corroborate or dismiss the allegation.

Responsible Conduct of Research: the behavior expected of anyone who conducts research activities throughout the life cycle of a research project (i.e., from the formulation of the research question, through the design, conduct and analysis of the research, to its reporting, publication and dissemination). It involves the awareness and application of established professional norms, as well as values and ethical principles that are essential in the performance of all activities related to scholarly research. These values include honesty, fairness, trust, accountability, and openness.

Responsible Conduct of Research Allegations Contact: the contact for receiving allegations, which is the Office of the Vice President Academic and Applied Research.

GUIDELINES

A. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COLLEGE

A.1 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COLLEGE REGARDING THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The College is responsible for promoting awareness of what constitutes responsible conduct of research, Agency requirements, the requirements described in this policy, the process for addressing allegations and sanctions related to breach of policy, to all those engaged in research activities at the institution. The College is responsible for ensuring that researchers comply with institutional policies that may impact the responsible conduct of research, in particular those policies that relate to providing appropriate oversight, adequate training, and fair treatment to individuals in their research team. The College should be proactive in supporting a healthy research environment.

A.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COLLEGE REGARDING ALLEGATIONS OF BREACH OF POLICY

The College is responsible for communicating within the institution and to the public the Responsible Conduct of Research Allegations Contact who is responsible for receiving confidential enquiries, allegations and information related to allegations of breaches of policies. It is the College's responsibility to receive, investigate, communicate to appropriate people, and report findings.

A.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COLLEGE REGARDING REPORTING

The College is responsible for reporting annually to the Secretariat on the Responsible Conduct of Research (SRCR) on the total number of allegations received involving Agency funds, the number of confirmed breaches and the nature of those breaches, subject to applicable laws, including privacy laws. The College is responsible for posting annually on its website information on confirmed findings of breaches of its policy (e.g., the number and general nature of the breaches), subject to applicable laws, including the privacy laws.

B. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RESEARCHER

B.1 Researchers shall strive to follow the best research practices honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for and in the dissemination of knowledge.

Researchers shall follow the requirements of applicable institutional policies, Agency policies and professional or disciplinary standards and shall comply with applicable laws and regulations.

At a minimum, researchers are responsible for the following:

- Using a high level of rigor in proposing and performing research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing data and findings.
- Keeping complete and accurate records of data, methodologies and findings, including graphs and images, in accordance with the applicable funding agreement, institutional policies and/or laws, regulations, and professional or disciplinary standards in a manner that will allow verification or replication of the work by others.
- Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs and images.
- Including as authors, with their consent, all those and only those who have materially or conceptually contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication or document, in a manner consistent with their respective contributions, and authorship policies of relevant publications.
- Acknowledging, in addition to authors, all contributors and contributions to research, including writers, funders and sponsors.
- Appropriately managing any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

It is also the responsibility of researchers to report any misconduct that they become aware of in the course of their work. Researchers and the college will ensure appropriate oversight, training and fair treatment in the conduct of research. Researchers should familiarize themselves with principles of responsible conduct of research and foster the application of these principles in their research environment. Researchers with supervisory roles should provide adequate oversight of, and training to, their trainees, staff and students in responsible conduct of research. Fair treatment in peer review, in performance assessment and in resolving intellectual disagreements, is essential for a healthy research environment.

C. REQUIREMENTS

C.1 APPLYING FOR AND HOLDING RESEARCH FUNDING

Applicants and holders of grants and awards, from internal and external funding sources, as well as researchers with access and responsibility for College assets, shall provide true, complete, and accurate information in their funding applications and related documents. They must represent themselves, their research, and their accomplishments in a manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field.

- Applicants must certify that they are not currently ineligible to apply for, and/or hold, funds from Tri-Council agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) or any other research funding organization for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity, or financial management policies.
- Principal funding applicants must ensure that others listed on the application have agreed to be included.

C.2 MANAGEMENT OF GRANTS AND AWARD FUNDS

The College ensures that research funds are administered with a high degree of responsibility and accountability. All research funded by the Agencies must be administered in accordance with the Tri-Council Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions as well as the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide as well as guidelines specific to individual funds.

Researchers are responsible for using grant or award funds in accordance with the policies of the awarding agency, and for providing true, complete, and accurate information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.

C.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF RESEARCH

All research conducted by College researchers whether with or without humansubjects, must be done in an ethical manner, in accordance with the Responsible Conduct of Research policy requirements of the Tri-Council. Researchers must comply with all applicable requirements and legislation for the conduct of research including but not limited to:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans (current edition)
- College policy 7.1.2 *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects*
- Agency policies related to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
- Licenses for research in the field
- Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines
- Controlled Goods Program
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) Regulations
- Canada Food and Drugs Act
- Health Canada's Regulatory Directive: Good Laboratory Practice

No research requiring animals is permitted at College of the Rockies.

D. POLICY BREACHES

Breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research policy can cause reputation harm on the College and are therefore serious offenses.

Breaches of policy include, but are not limited to:

- Breaches of policy or requirements for certain types of research: failing to meet College policy requirements or to comply with relevant policies, laws or, regulations for the conduct of certain types of research activities; or failing to obtain appropriate approvals, permits or certifications before conducting these activities.
- Breach of Tri-Agency review processes: non-compliance with the conflict of interest and confidentiality policy of the federal research funding agencies.

- Destruction of research records: the destruction of one's own or another's research data or records data or records to specifically avoid the detection of wrongdoing or in contravention of the applicable funding agreement, institutional policy and/or laws, regulations and professional or disciplinary standards. This also includes the destruction of data or records to avoid the detection of wrongdoing.
- Fabrication: making up data, source material, methodologies, or findings, including graphs and images.
- Falsification: manipulating, changing, or omitting data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, without acknowledgement, such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- Inadequate acknowledgement: failure to appropriately recognize contributions of others in a manner consistent with their respective contributions and authorship policies of relevant publications.
- Invalid authorship: inaccurate attribution of authorship, including attribution of authorship to persons other than those who have contributed sufficiently to take responsibility for the intellectual content, or agreeing to be listed as author to a publication for which one made little or no material contribution.
- Lack of rigor: lack of scholarly and scientific rigor in proposing and performing research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing data and findings.
- Mismanagement of conflict of interest: failure to appropriately manage any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the College policy.
- Mismanagement of grants or award funds: using grant or research funds for purposes inconsistent with the policies of the awardee and/or the purposes represented at the time the funding was requested; misappropriating grants and award funds; contravening College financial policies; or providing incomplete, inaccurate, or false information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.
- Misrepresentation in an application of related document: providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information in a grant or award application or related document, such as a letter of support or a progress report; applying for and/or holding an award when deemed ineligible by NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR or any other research organization for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity, or financial management policies; or listing of co-applicants, collaborators, or partners without their agreement.
- Plagiarism: presenting and using another's published or unpublished work, including theories, concepts, data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, as one's own, without appropriate referencing and without permission.
- Redundant publications: the re-publication of one's own previously published work or part thereof, or data, in the same or another language, without adequate acknowledgment of the source, or justification.

In determining whether a breach is a major breach, the College will consider the extent to which the breach jeopardizes the safety of the public or brings the conduct of research or the institution into disrepute. This determination will be based on an assessment of the nature of the breach, the level of experience of the researcher, whether there is a pattern of breaches by the researcher and other factors as appropriate.

Examples of major breaches, include but are not limited to:

- recruiting human participants into a study with significant risks or harms without Research Ethics Board approval, or not following approved protocols;
- deliberate misuse of grant funds for personal benefit not related to research;
- knowingly publishing research results based on fabricated data;
- obtaining grant/award funds from the Tri-Agencies by misrepresenting one's credentials, qualifications and/or research contributions in any application.

E. SANCTIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Breach of policy will result in appropriate sanctions. The College is also required to report to the Tri-Agency.

RESPONSIBILITY

Vice President Academic and Applied Research

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Related policies:

[1.1.5 Code of Ethics](#)

4.8.10 Investigations

[7.1 Research at the College of the Rockies](#)

[CORFA Collective Agreement](#)

Related documents:

[BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

B.C. College and Institute Act (gov.bc.ca). *College and Institute Act*, RSBC 1996, c 52. Accessed online 26 November 2021: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96052_01

Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research. (2016). *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2016)*. Government of Canada. Accessed online 26 November 2021: <https://rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/framework-cadre.html>