



INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP #3-27

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Policy

North Island College is a publicly funded institution of learning and the institution and its employees must consistently and always act with the public interest in mind. To that end, the clearest, highest, and most transparent standards of integrity must be demonstrated in research and scholarly activity, whether conducted on campus or in the community, whether part of a teaching undertaking or as part of a contractual, collaborative project with external agencies and businesses.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish principles and guidelines that identify and promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity in research and scholarship affiliated with the College. This policy also designates responsibility for maintaining these standards and specifies processes for addressing allegations and a timely response to inappropriate conduct related to ethics and integrity of research.

1. Limits:

- 1.1 This policy applies to all North Island College researchers engaged in research activities.
- 1.2 This policy does *not* apply to ongoing information-gathering activities deemed to be of “minimal risk” (*Tri-Council Policy Statement section 2:CI*) that are sanctioned by the College, are in accordance with its core mandate, and are related directly to the normal administering, evaluating, or improving of an operation, program, service or activity within the College. Commonly, such activities include, but are not limited to, quality assurance studies, performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements.

2. Principles:

- 2.1 The College expects that all research and scholarly activities involving the College will be conducted with the highest level of integrity and ethics.
- 2.2 The researcher holds the primary responsibility for maintaining a high level of integrity and ethics while conducting research.
- 2.3 Inappropriate conduct while undertaking research is unacceptable and may be cause for disciplinary action or sanctions.

3. Appropriate Conduct

Appropriate and mandatory conduct in research includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- 3.1 Obtaining, recording, analyzing, storing, reporting, and publishing data or results without fabricating or falsifying;
- 3.2 Recognizing the substantive contributions of all collaborators (including students); using unpublished work of other researchers and scholars only with permission and with due acknowledgment; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;
- 3.3 Ensuring that authorship of published work includes all those who have materially contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication, and only those persons;
- 3.4 Obtaining the permission of the author before using new information, concepts or data originally obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or applications for funds for research or training that may have been seen as a result of processes such as peer review;
- 3.5 Seeking and obtaining approval by the Research Ethics Board (REB) before engaging in any research involving human subjects, and then complying fully with the approved research protocols in the performance of the research;
- 3.6 Seeking and obtaining approval by the appropriate committee or authority before engaging in any research involving biohazards, ionizing radiation, or any research involving animals;
- 3.7 Complying with the College regarding the operational and financial terms of research grants and/or contracts awarded to the researcher;
- 3.8 Revealing as early as possible in writing to the appropriate authorities responsible for overseeing the research project at the College any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the College to undertake research, particularly research involving the company's products. Material financial interest includes ownership, substantial stock holding, directorship, significant honoraria or consulting fees, but does not include minor stock holding in a large, publicly traded company (see also Policy 2.13: Conflict of Interest – Breach of Trust); and
- 3.9 Revealing as early as possible in writing to the sponsors of the research project, this and other institutions, journals or funding agencies, any material conflict of interest, financial or other, that might influence their decision on whether the individual should be asked to review manuscripts or application, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES.

4.1. Responsibilities of the College

- a. The College is responsible for promoting integrity in research. The College will conduct workshops in support of research and research practices and will post related documents and processes on the intranet. New faculty will be made aware of research and other policies as part of their orientation. Updates and changes will be announced through our electronic newsletter and be available on the College's website.
- b. The College is responsible for investigating and responding, in a timely manner, to allegations of misconduct in research, including informing the appropriate funding council(s) of conclusions reached and actions taken.
- c. The College is responsible for creating and maintaining an active Research Ethics Board, as per Policy 1-12.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Researcher

The researcher is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct in research. The College holds researchers responsible for ensuring that they maintain the appropriate level of integrity and ethics while conducting research under this policy, and that they meet the standards for conducting research, some of which are noted in this policy.

4.3. Authorship

- a. Authorship implies significant intellectual contribution to the work which, when recognized, must include all those and only those people who have materially contributed to and share responsibility for content.

Students will be given the appropriate recognition for authorship or collection of data in any publication.

4.4 Research Data

- a. Research is conducted and data is acquired in different manners. In the case of collaborative work, all members of the research team are responsible for ensuring proper acknowledgement of each team member when the data are released in any form.
- b. A complete set of all original research data must be retained by the principal researcher for a period of 5 years from the date of publication of results based on the data. All collaborators must have free access to the relevant data at all times and authorization to copy may not be withheld by any team member without valid reason.

4.5 Investigating and Responding to Complaints of Inappropriate Conduct in Research

Inappropriate conduct while undertaking research is unacceptable and may be cause for disciplinary actions. Disciplinary actions will reflect the severity and nature of the inappropriate conduct and may include but not be limited to:

- a. verbal warning;
- b. special monitoring of future work;
- c. letter of reprimand to the individual's permanent personnel file;
- d. withdrawal of specific privileges;
- e. removal of specific responsibilities; and/or
- f. suspension or steps to terminate the research appointment.

In the case of students, sanctions are defined in the *Student Conduct Policy* (see link).

4.6 Informal Inquiry into Potential Misconduct

- a. Anyone who believes there has been a breach of this policy may seek clarification, informally through the Office of the Vice President, Academic (or his/her designate named for this purpose). Anyone receiving a complaint is required to channel the complaint to the Office of the Vice President, Academic (VP, Academic).
- b. Such inquiries shall be kept confidential and may result in no action or a shift to a formal investigation. The VP, Academic (or his/her designate named for this purpose) will review the allegations and documentation related to the potential misconduct to determine whether a shift to formal investigation is required. If the VP, Academic dismisses the complaint and the complainant wishes to pursue further, he/she must initiate a formal complaint.

4.7 Formal Investigation of Complaints

- a. A formal complaint must be made in writing to the VP, Academic. Anonymous allegations will not be entertained. Within ten days of receiving the complaint, the VP, Academic will establish a committee of three independent persons, with relevant experience in the area of research involved in the particular case, to conduct an investigation. No member of the department/school involved will be part of the committee. Persons external to the College may be appointed at the discretion of the VP, Academic.
- b. In all proceedings and subsequent to a final decision, the College will undertake to assure that those making an allegation in good faith and without demonstrably malicious intent are protected from reprisals or harassment. False allegations made purposefully will lead to discipline by the College for the individual making the allegation.
- c. To protect agency funding, if deemed necessary, the VP, Academic may withhold research funds until matters of misconduct are resolved.
- d. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the complaint, the Committee will meet with the complainant and respondent(s) and discuss the nature of the complaint and the circumstances surrounding it. Additional interviews will be held, and documentation reviewed depending on the circumstances. Complainants as well as respondents will be given an opportunity to give their version of the facts to the investigating committee, and both will be available to ensure a timely resolution to the complaint.
- e. The Committee will report its findings and recommendations to the VP, Academic only, within 60 days of being established. The Committee's decision regarding misconduct is final and binding on the College.

The Report will include:

- a. A summary of the allegations;
- b. Composition of the investigating Committee and explanation of selection process;
- c. Investigative methods;
- d. Persons interviewed or supplying information;
- e. Proposed plan to restore reputations and protect complainants that have acted in good faith;
- f. Details on recommended sanctions; and
- g. Other relevant details.

If upon reviewing the report the VP, Academic believes the complaint is without foundation, he/she will dismiss the complaint and immediately advise the complainant and the respondent with a written response outlining the reasons for this decision. Based on the findings, the VP, Academic may require the complainant, or others, to take action to protect or restore the reputation or credibility of a wrongly accused researcher. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the funding agency within 30 days of receipt.

If the VP, Academic determines a breach to the integrity of the research, or that the researcher has acted unethically, the VP, Academic will determine any actions or sanctions to be taken and will communicate these in writing to the respondent and to others as may be appropriate given the circumstances. Such information will be imparted to the funding agencies as soon as possible, but not later than 30 days following receipt of the Committee's report. Any related collective agreement issues or appeals open to the respondent through the collective agreement will be noted in the communiqué to the respondent and to the funding agency.

4.8 Privacy and Confidentiality

- a. The privacy of both the complainant and the respondent will be protected as far as is possible given the need for due process in pursuing an inquiry and reporting the findings. In the case of a researcher being wrongly accused, all documents or files provided to a third party will be destroyed at the conclusion of the investigation.
- b. The Office of the VP, Academic will be responsible for keeping and controlling appropriate access to records. Such records will be kept in accordance with the College's *Record Retention Policy* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy* (see links below).
- c. If the investigation is at the request of the funding agency, all findings and actions taken will be reported to the funding agency (within 30 days).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Researcher** means, for the purposes of this policy, any College staff or students, or any other person or organization engaged in conducting research involving the College.
2. **Complainant** means the person making an allegation of inappropriate conduct related to integrity or ethics of research. The complainant may or may not be directly affected by the alleged misconduct.
3. **Respondent** means the researcher accused by the complainant of inappropriate conduct related to integrity or ethics of research.
4. **Minimal Risk** is defined by Tri-Council Policy Statement 2:C1.

CROSS REFERENCE

NIC Policy 2-12: Progressive Discipline: Misconduct or Inappropriate Behaviour

NIC Policy 2-13: Conflict of Interest: Breach of Trust