

POLICY FOR THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Effective Date: September 11, 2015

Originating Office: Office of the Vice-President,
Research and Graduate Studies

Supersedes /Amends: May 18, 2012

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PREAMBLE

Research is one of the components of an intellectually vigorous university environment and is an integral part of the mission of Concordia University (the “University”). The University is committed to providing an environment that supports research and that fosters researchers’ abilities to act honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for and dissemination of knowledge.

It is understood that all research activity will be conducted within the framework of relevant collective agreements and all relevant University policies, including but without limitation, the *Code of Ethics and Safe Disclosure Policy Applicable to Employees of Concordia University* ([BD-4](#)), *Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans* ([VPRGS-3](#)), *Policy on Conflicts of Interest in Research* ([VPRGS-5](#)) and *Policy on Intellectual Property* ([VPRGS-9](#)).

The University expects of its members conducting research (whether funded or not), the highest standards of ethical conduct in every aspect of research. These standards are consistent with the requirements of funding agencies and others who sponsor research at the University. A component of these standards is the need to have a process that addresses allegations of Research Misconduct, as defined below. This Policy and its related Procedures for the Inquiry and Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct (the “[Procedures](#)”) have been developed to comply with the requirements of the relevant funding agencies including the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the *Politique sur la conduite responsable en recherche* adopted by *Les Fonds de recherche du Québec*

This Policy, which is approved by Senate and administered by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, is intended to ensure the integrity of research conducted throughout the University.

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PURPOSE

The purposes of this Policy and its related [Procedures](#) are:

- to promote research integrity by ensuring that all Researchers, as defined below, employ the highest standards of ethical conduct in every aspect of research including funding applications, the research itself and its dissemination
- to specify the responsibilities of Researchers with respect to research integrity
- to outline the University's responsibilities for promoting responsible conduct of research
- to define what constitutes a breach of policy of the University or funding agency(ies)
- to address how allegations of all types of policy breaches will be treated by the University, and
- to ensure compliance with standards of granting agencies and report accordingly.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Researchers, as defined below. This Policy takes precedence over any provision of any University code, policy or directive which is inconsistent with this Policy.

However, nothing in this Policy shall replace or supersede any provision set out in any collective agreement to which the University is a party nor shall this Policy be applied in such a way as to detract from the rights of unions to defend the interests of their members and to exercise their rights under a collective agreement.

For greater certainty, the provisions of this Policy do not replace or supersede the provisions of the collective agreement in force between the University and the Concordia University Faculty Association dealing with Misconduct in Academic Research and Scholarship.

DEFINITIONS

"Agency" means the funding agency, foundation, organization, sponsor or other entity, public or private, international, national or provincial, which supports the research in whole or in part, or which has oversight of any research activities.

"Affiliated Institution" means an institution working on a common research project with a member of the University.

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“Designated Investigator” means a senior academic administrator, appointed by the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS) who shall assess, at the inquiry stage, all allegations of research misconduct made under this Policy;

“Infrastructure” means major equipment and/or research centers financed by the Agency.

“Researcher” means a member of the University conducting research (whether funded or not), including but not limited to faculty members, undergraduate students taking part in research, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and other personnel involved directly or indirectly in research, research associates, technical staff, adjunct professors, visiting professors, and administrators and officials representing the University.

“Research Integrity Officer” (the “RIO”) refers to a person appointed by the VPRGS whose role is to provide information, support, training and assistance to the community in fulfilling all obligations related to research integrity as outlined in all the relevant policies and procedures. The RIO shall also be responsible for implementing an educational campaign to inform Researchers of best research practices, requirements of the Policy and Agencies and avoidance of Research Misconduct and for overseeing and modifying said campaign as required over time. The RIO shall also have the roles set out in the *Procedures for the Inquiry and Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct*.

“Research Misconduct” means, but is not limited to the definitions of the Agency for such misconduct, for example: fabrication, destruction of research records, falsification, plagiarism, redundant publications, misappropriation of intellectual property rights of another, failure to report a conflict of interest, misrepresentation in an Agency application or related document, failure to comply with relevant legislation as well as relevant University policies, or failure to meet other legal requirements that relate to the conduct of research including the intentional misuse of funds designated for research purposes, or any other conduct that constitutes a significant departure from the standards that are commonly accepted within the relevant research discipline.

POLICY

1. Researchers are responsible for employing best research practices by following the requirements of applicable University policies and ethical, professional or disciplinary standards and complying with applicable laws and regulations. At a minimum, Researchers are responsible for the following:

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- using a high level of rigour in:
 - proposing and executing research
 - accurately recording, analyzing, and interpreting data in a manner that allows verification or replication of the work by others; and
 - reporting and disseminating data and findings
 - acknowledging all material or conceptual contributions to research, including authors (with their consent), funders and sponsors
 - sharing responsibility for the contents of any publication or document in a manner that is consistent with University policies, authorship policies of relevant publications or the contributions of the relevant contributors
 - reporting any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest in accordance with the University's *Policy on Conflicts of Interest in Research* ([VPRGS-5](#))
 - providing true and accurate information in funding applications and related documents and representing themselves, their research and their accomplishments in a manner consistent with the relevant research discipline
 - complying with all applicable Agency policies and requirements for the conduct of research and the administration of awarded funds.
2. No Researcher shall engage in Research Misconduct.
 3. Any individual who has reasonable grounds to believe that Research Misconduct is occurring or has occurred in the University or by a collaborator at an Affiliated Institution shall immediately report the matter to the relevant Faculty Dean, per the [Procedures](#). The relevant Faculty Dean shall immediately report any such allegation to the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies who will provide guidance on the application of this Policy.
 4. Where a person is unsure whether a suspected incident constitutes Research Misconduct he/she should seek guidance from the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.
 5. Allegations of Research Misconduct will be taken seriously by the University. The submission of allegations of Research Misconduct and the inquiry and investigation of such allegations shall be undertaken in accordance with the [Procedures](#) or when applicable, the provisions outlined in the relevant collective agreement.
 6. No individual shall make an allegation of Research Misconduct that is not in good faith.

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7. In accordance with Section 15 of the University's *Code of Ethics and Safe Disclosure Policy Applicable to employees of Concordia University* (BD-4), the University will not threaten to or retaliate or discriminate, and will not permit any threat of or retaliation or discrimination against any individual making an allegation, in good faith, under this Policy. This protection is also extended to anyone providing information in connection with an investigation.
8. The University shall take all reasonable measures to ensure that the standing of a member of the University, who is not directly implicated but is directly affected by an allegation of Research Misconduct, is not prejudiced by such allegation, subsequent investigation, or any administrative action(s) and/or disciplinary proceedings that may be instituted as a result.
9. All members of the University shall cooperate in any inquiry or investigation related to Research Misconduct.
10. Subject to any applicable legislation, including privacy legislation, the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies shall:
 - advise the relevant Agency of any allegation of Research Misconduct related to activities funded by the Agency that may involve significant financial, health and safety, or other risks
 - in accordance with the requirement of the relevant Agency, report to the Agency, in writing, a decision to initiate an investigation of Research Misconduct
 - provide on-going reporting to the relevant Agency, as required, throughout the course and at the conclusion of the investigation of Research Misconduct
 - make public statistical annual reports on confirmed findings of Research Misconduct and actions taken.

Adopted by Senate at its meeting of September 11, 2015