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|  ASSINIBOINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Policies and Procedures | Pages 6 | Number R-02 |
| | Originator Vice President Academic and Research | |
| Title Responsible Conduct of Research (Formerly: Integrity in Research and Scholarship) | Effective Date 2012-07-01 | Replaces 2008-09-01 |

Purpose

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

This policy applies to all Assiniboine Community College researchers engaged in research activities. This policy does not apply to ongoing information gathering activities deemed to be of minimum risk 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.

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

Policy

1. Definitions

- a. **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.
- b. **Respondent** means the researcher accused by the complainant of inappropriate conduct related to integrity or ethics of research.
- c. **Complainant:** An individual or representative from an organization who has notified the College of a potential breach of College policy
- d. **Agencies (The Agencies):** Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

2. Appropriate Ethics and Integrity While Conducting Research

- a. Appropriate conduct in research includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Using a high level of rigour in proposing and performing research, including, recording, analyzing and interpreting data. This also includes interpreting data, reporting and publishing data and findings.
 - ii. Recognizing the substantive contributions of all collaborators; using any work of other researchers and scholars, all contributors and contributions to research, including writers, students, funders and sponsors published or unpublished, only with permission and with due acknowledgment; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;

- iii. 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;
- iv. Seeking and obtaining approval by the appropriate committee or authority before engaging in any research involving biohazards or ionizing radiation, or any research involving animals and then complying fully with the approved research protocols in the performance of the research;
- v. Seeking and obtaining approval by the Research Ethics Board (REB) before engaging in any research involving human participants;
- vi. Keeping complete and accurate records of data, methodologies and findings, including graphs and images, in accordance with the applicable funding agreement, College policies and/or laws, regulations, and professional or disciplinary standards in a manner that will allow verification or replication of the work by others.
- vii. Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs and images.
- viii. 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.
- ix. Appropriately managing any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the College policy on Conflict of Interest (HR–H–VIII–4), in order to ensure that the objectives of the Framework (see Appendix 1) are met.
- x. Complying with the College regarding the operational and financial terms of research grants and/or contracts awarded to the researcher;
- xi. Revealing to the Vice President, Academic any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the College to undertake research (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);

3. Roles & Responsibilities

a. Responsibilities of the College

The College shall strive to provide an environment that supports the best research and that fosters researchers' abilities to act honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for, and dissemination of, knowledge.

The College shall do so by:

- i. The College is responsible for promoting integrity in research. The College will conduct workshops and post all related documents and processes on its intranet. New faculty will be made aware of research and other policies as part of their orientation. Updates and changes will be announced through e-mail or other announcement, and be available on the intranet.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Subject to any applicable laws, including FIPPA, the College shall advise the relevant Agency or Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research (SRCR) immediately of any allegations related to activities funded by the Agency that may involve significant financial, health and safety, or other risks.
- iv. The College shall write a letter to the SRCR confirming whether or not the College is proceeding with an investigation. If a breach is confirmed at the inquiry stage, a report will be sent that includes the following:
 - the specific allegation(s), a summary of the finding(s) and reasons for the finding(s);
 - the process and time lines followed for the inquiry and/or investigation;
 - the researcher's response to the allegation, investigation and findings, and any measures the researcher has taken to rectify the breach; and

- The investigation committee's decisions and recommendations and actions taken by the College.
- v. Promoting awareness of what constitutes the responsible conduct of research, including Agency requirements as set out in the College's policies, the consequences of failing to meet them, as well as the process for addressing allegations, to all those engaged in research activities at the College.
- vi. Communicating its policy on the responsible conduct of research within the College, and making public statistical annual reports on confirmed findings of breaches of that policy and actions taken, subject to applicable laws including FIPPA.
- vii. Communicating within the College, the central point of contact responsible for receiving confidential enquiries, allegations and information related to allegations of breaches of Agency policies.

b. Responsibilities of the Researcher

Researchers shall strive to follow the best research practices honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for and in the dissemination of knowledge. In addition, researchers shall follow the requirements of applicable College policies and professional or disciplinary standards and shall comply with applicable laws and regulations. At a minimum, researchers are responsible for the following:

- i. 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.
- ii. In planning any research activity dealing with human subjects, the researcher must be aware of and responsive to all pertinent ethical principles and ensure that the research problem, design, and execution are in full compliance with them.
- iii. In research with human subjects, participation must be voluntary. Researchers are responsible for the subjects' welfare throughout the experiment.
- iv. Researchers must take reasonable precautions to avoid causing injurious psychological, physical, or social effects on their subjects.
- v. All research subjects must be informed of the purpose of the study except where withholding information is essential to the investigation. In such research, the member must be responsible for offering the benefits of corrective action as soon as possible following completion of the research.
- vi. In research with animal subjects, researchers must comply with R-05, Care of Animals in Teaching & Research.
- vii. When reporting research results, explicit mention must be made of all variables and conditions known to the investigator that might affect the outcome of the investigation or the interpretation of the data.

viii. Authorship

- Authorship implies significant intellectual contribution to the work, and must include all those who have materially contributed to and share responsibility for content, and only those people.
- Students will be given appropriate recognition for authorship or collection of data in any publication.

ix. Research Data

- In any collaborative work, all members of a research team are responsible for ensuring proper acknowledgement of each contributing team member when the data are released in any form.
- A complete set of all original research data must be retained by the principal researcher for a period of seven (7) 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. Investigating and Responding to Complaints of Inappropriate Conduct in Research

- a. 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:
 - i. verbal warning;
 - ii. special monitoring of future work;
 - iii. letter of reprimand to the individual's permanent personnel file;
 - iv. withdrawal of specific privileges;
 - v. removal of specific responsibilities;
 - vi. suspension or steps to terminate the research appointment.

- b. In the case of students, expectations and sanctions are defined in policies A25 Student Honesty and Integrity, and A02 Student Conduct, Behaviour and Discipline.

- c. Informal Inquiry into Potential Misconduct
 - i. Anyone who believes that there has been a breach of this policy may seek clarification, informally through the Vice President, Academic. Anyone receiving a complaint is required to channel the complaint to the Vice President, Academic.
 - ii. Such inquiries shall be kept confidential and may result in no action or a shift to a formal investigation. The Vice President, Academic will review the allegations and documentation related to the potential misconduct to determine whether a shift to formal investigation is required. If the Vice President, Academic dismisses the informal complaint and the complainant wishes to pursue further, he/she must initiate a formal complaint.

- d. Formal Investigation of Complaints
 - i. A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Vice President, Academic. Anonymous allegations will not be entertained. Within ten days of receiving the complaint, the Vice President, Academic will establish an investigating 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 Vice President, Academic.
 - ii. 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 give lead to discipline for the individual making the allegation by the College.
 - iii. The Committee shall pay special attention to all issues of privacy and confidentiality and, if the complaint being investigated relates to research involving human subjects, the Committee shall take whatever steps are necessary to protect the identity of the persons who participated.
 - iv. To protect agency funding, if deemed necessary, the Vice President, Academic may direct that research funds be withheld until matters of misconduct are resolved.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. The Report will include:
 - A summary of the allegations;
 - Composition of the investigating Committee and explanation of selection process;

- Investigative methods;
 - Persons interviewed or supplying information;
 - Proposed plan to restore reputations and protect complainants that have acted in good faith;
 - Details on recommended sanctions; and
 - Other relevant details.
- vii. If upon reviewing the report the Vice President, Academic believes the complaint is without foundation, he 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 Vice President, 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 thirty days of receipt.
- viii. If the Vice President, Academic determine a breach to the integrity of the research, or that the researcher has acted unethically, he 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 provided 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 communication to the respondent and to the funding agency.

5. 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 enquiry 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, and an official letter of exoneration from the Vice President, Academic will be sent to the researcher.
- b. The Vice President, Academic will be responsible for keeping and controlling appropriate access to records relating to this policy. Such records will be kept in accordance with the College's policy P-i-1-Freedom of Information-Personnel Information and Records.
- 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).

Date

President

Appendix 1

Objectives: Tri-Agency* Framework Responsible Conduct of Research

The objectives of the Framework are to:

- a. ensure that the funding decisions made by the Agencies are based on accurate and reliable information;
- b. ensure public funds for research are used responsibly and in accordance with funding agreements;
- c. promote and protect the quality, accuracy, and reliability of research funded by the Agencies; and
- d. promote fairness in the conduct of research and in the process for addressing allegations of policy breaches.

*Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)