

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

Policy Category:	Research
Subject:	Responsible Conduct of Research
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Responsible Officers:	Vice-President (Research)
Responsible Offices:	Office of the Vice-President (Research)
Related Procedures:	Procedures for Addressing Breach Allegations
Related University Policies:	Scholastic Discipline Policy
Effective Date:	June 28, 2022
Supersedes:	September 24, 2013; July 1, 2008; March 27, 1998; June 29, 1995

I. PURPOSE

Research, scholarship, and creative activity are components of an intellectually vigorous university environment and are an integral part of the mission of Western University (the “University”).

The University is committed to providing an environment that supports and promotes the Responsible Conduct of Research and that fosters researchers’ abilities to act honestly, accountably, openly, and fairly in the search for, and dissemination of, knowledge. The University does this through the establishment of policy, procedure, and promotion of education on, and awareness of the importance of, the Responsible Conduct of Research. This Policy outlines the University’s expectations about Responsible Conduct of Research and defines what constitutes a Breach. This Policy is consistent with the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research* as required under the Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions between the University and the Tri-Agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)). This Policy is consistent with, and complementary to, existing University policies.

II. DEFINITIONS

Administrator – a member of the University appointed by the Vice-President (Research) who organizes and supervises the resolution of an Allegation.

Agency – funding body, foundation, organization, sponsor, or other entity, public or private, international, national, provincial, or foreign, which supports the Research in whole or in part, financially or otherwise, or which has oversight of any Research.

Allegation – a declaration, statement, or assertion communicated in writing to the effect that there has been, or continues to be, a Breach of this Policy, the validity of which has not been established.

Breach – as defined in Section 3.

Complainant – an individual who has notified the University of an Allegation. A Complainant may be a member of the University community or may be external to the University community.

Disciplinary Policy – a collective agreement, employment agreement, personnel policy, Senate or Board policy or other regulation under which a Respondent may be disciplined for a Breach.

Initial Inquiry – the process of reviewing an Allegation to determine whether the Allegation is a Responsible Allegation, the policy or policies that may have been breached, and whether an Investigation is warranted based on the information provided in the Allegation and other supporting evidence.

Investigation – a systematic process of examining a Responsible Allegation, collecting, and examining the evidence related to the Responsible Allegation, and deciding whether a Breach has occurred.

Investigator/Investigation Committee – an individual or a group of individuals appointed to investigate a Responsible Allegation.

Policy – refers to this Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Procedures – refers to the procedures associated with this Policy.

Research – an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation done in the context of academic activity on behalf of the University. Research involves some or all of the creation of new knowledge, including understanding of concepts; the creative application of existing knowledge;

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

the organization and synthesis of existing knowledge; and/or creative expression.

Respondent – an individual who is identified in an Allegation as having possibly breached this Policy. A Respondent must be a member of the University community at the time the Allegation is made, and the Allegation must relate to Research conducted by or associated with the member.

Responsible Allegation – an Allegation made in good faith and without malice that is based on facts which have not been the subject of a previous investigation; that falls within Sections 2 and 3 of the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research; and which would, if proven, have constituted a Breach of this Policy at the time the alleged Breach occurred.

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

Vice-President (Research) – the Vice-President (Research) or their designate.

III. POLICY

1. Application

This Policy applies to all faculty members, librarians, archivists, staff, postdoctoral scholars, and students at the University. It also applies to any person (including, but not limited to, affiliated faculty members, professors emeriti, visiting professors or students, adjunct professors, and postdoctoral scholars) appointed or invited to engage in Research at, or under the auspices of, the University.

It is understood that all Research and the review of an Allegation of a Breach of this Policy will be conducted within the framework of this Policy and its Procedures, and applicable University policies, relevant collective agreements, and laws. If there is a conflict between this Policy and the provisions of a collective agreement, the collective agreement prevails. If there is a conflict between this Policy or a collective agreement and the law, the law prevails.

In the case of an Allegation under this Policy against a student, the Dean or the Vice-Provost-Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (or their designates) shall decide if

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

the Allegation will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy, the relevant *Scholastic Discipline Policy* or the *Code of Student Conduct*. If the Allegation will be dealt with under this Policy, it shall be referred to the Vice-President (Research).

2. Expectations and Responsibilities

To support the Responsible Conduct of Research, the University will:

- establish and apply a Responsible Conduct of Research policy and related procedures that meet the requirements of the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research;
- report to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research (SRCR), when applicable;
- promote education on, and awareness of, the importance of the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The responsibilities of all members of the University community include not only fulfilling the integrity expectations of this Policy, but also reporting a suspected Breach of this Policy according to the Procedures.

The University expects all individuals engaged in academic work to conform to the highest standards of integrity in Research. Individuals are personally responsible for the intellectual and ethical integrity of their work and must ensure that in Research their conduct meets University standards and best practices, professional and disciplinary standards, applicable laws and regulations, and the integrity standards of any entities sponsoring any component of Research. Those undertaking academic work shall strive to follow the best Research, scholarship, and creative activity practices honestly, accountably, openly, and fairly in the search for, and in the dissemination of, knowledge.

At a minimum, researchers are responsible for:

- a. Using a high level of rigour in proposing and performing Research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing data and findings.
- b. 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.
- c. Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs, and images, in accordance with copyright and other intellectual property laws.
- d. Including as authors or creators, with their consent, all those and only those who have materially or conceptually contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication, academic presentation, document, or

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

- creation, in a manner consistent with their respective contributions, and relevant authorship policies or intellectual property rights.
- e. Acknowledging, in addition to authors and creators, all contributors and contributions to Research, including, but not limited to, writers, funders and sponsors.
 - f. Appropriately managing any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the University's policies and relevant collective agreement provisions on conflict of interest.
 - g. Providing true, complete, and accurate information in their funding applications and related documents and representing themselves, their Research, and their accomplishments in a manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field.
 - h. Certifying in applications that they are not currently ineligible to apply for, and/or hold, funds from any Research or Research funding organization world-wide for reasons of Breach of Responsible Conduct of Research policies such as ethics, integrity, or financial management policies.
 - i. When they are principal funding applicants, ensuring that others listed on the application have agreed to be included.
 - j. Using grant or award funds in accordance with the policies of the Agencies, including the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#) grants and awards guides; and providing true, complete and accurate information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.
 - k. Complying with all applicable Agency requirements, university policy and legislation for the conduct of Research, including, but not limited to:
 - [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#)
 - [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) -TCPS 2;
 - Specific guidance relating to [Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) (Chapter 9)
 - [Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines](#);
 - Agency policies related to the [Impact Assessment Act](#);
 - Licenses for Research in the field;
 - [Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines](#);
 - [Controlled Goods Program](#);
 - [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission \(CNSC\) Regulations](#);
 - Canada's [Food and Drugs Act](#);
 - [Western's Biosafety Policies and Procedure](#)
 - Research Involving Human Participants; and
 - Animal Ethics and Care Program.
 - l. Ensuring that all Research involving human participants, animals, or their data/or biological materials, is approved by the appropriate ethics review board.
 - m. Familiarizing themselves with principles of Responsible Conduct of Research and for the application of these principles to foster a positive and constructive

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

working environment.

- n. Providing appropriate oversight of, and guidance on Responsible Conduct of Research, to trainees and staff, ensuring individuals engaged in Research under their supervision are aware of this Policy, other relevant policies and associated training and education provided by the University.

Integrity in Research also includes the following:

- a. Recognizing the substantive contributions of collaborators and students; using unpublished work of other researchers, creators and scholars only with permission and with due acknowledgement; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;
- b. Obtaining the permission of the author or creator before using new information, concepts or data originally obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or Research funding applications;
- c. Using scholarly and scientific rigor and integrity in obtaining, recording and analyzing data, and in reporting and publishing results, including correcting or providing notice of work which is misleading or inaccurate;
- d. Using published work only in accordance with copyright law, and ensuring that authorship of published work includes all those who have materially contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication or presentation, and only those people;
- e. Revealing to sponsors, universities, journals or Agencies, any material conflict of interest, financial or other, that might influence their decision on whether the individual should be asked to review manuscript or applications, test or use products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources;
- f. Using appropriate referencing and citation of resources used in academic work;
- g. Not misrepresenting academic credentials or affiliations within or outside of the academic community;
- h. Making best efforts to correct material errors in publication.

3. Breaches

- a. A Breach of this Policy encompasses the following non-exhaustive list of actions that deviates from the commonly accepted ethics/integrity standards or practices of the relevant Research community throughout the life cycle of a Research project (i.e., from the formulation of the Research question, through the design, conduct, collection of data, and analysis of the Research, to its reporting, publication, and dissemination, as well as the management of Research funds). *Fabrication*: Making up data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images;
- b. *Falsification*: Manipulating, changing, or omitting data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, without appropriate

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

- acknowledgement, such that the Research, scholarship, or creative activity record is not accurately represented;
- c. *Destruction of Research data or records*: The destruction of one's own or another's Research data or Research, scholarship, or creative activity 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 Research, scholarship, or creative records to avoid the detection of wrongdoing;
 - d. *Misappropriation or denial of access to Research records*: The use of data or Research, scholarship, or creative activity records in a way that results in misappropriation of the materials, or a loss of access or right of another person with a claim of access or ownership;
 - e. *Plagiarism*: Presenting and using another's published or unpublished work, including theories, concepts, creations, data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, as one's own, without appropriate referencing and, if required, without permission;
 - f. *Redundant publication or self-plagiarism*: 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;
 - g. *Invalid authorship*: Inaccurate attribution of authorship or creatorship, including attribution 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 or creator of a work for which one made little or no material contribution;
 - h. *Inadequate acknowledgement*: Failure to appropriately recognize contributions of others in a manner consistent with their respective contributions and authorship policies of relevant publications, or other copyright or intellectual property laws;
 - i. *Mismanagement of conflict of interest*: Failure to appropriately identify and address any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the University's policies and relevant collective agreement provisions on conflict of interest;
 - j. *Misrepresentation in an Agency application or related document*: Providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information in a grant or award application or related document; applying for and/or holding an award for which one is ineligible; or listing co-applicants, collaborators or partners without their agreement;
 - k. *Mismanagement of grants or award funds*: Using grant or award funds for purposes inconsistent with the policies of the Agency and/or University; misappropriating grants and award funds; contravening funder financial policies or providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts;
 - l. *Breaches of Agency policies or requirements for certain types of Research*: Failing to meet Agency policy requirements, or to comply with relevant policies, laws, or regulations, for the conduct of certain types of Research;

POLICY 7.0 – Responsible Conduct of Research

failing to obtain appropriate approvals, permits or certifications before conducting these activities.

What constitutes a Breach may vary depending on the applicable Agency rules and expectations, or by virtue of negotiated collective agreements. In determining whether a breach has occurred, it is not relevant to consider whether a breach was intentional or a result of honest error; however, intent is a consideration in deciding on the severity of the response to a Breach.

4 Review

A review of this Policy shall be conducted by the Vice-President (Research) no more than three years from the date that this Policy is initially approved. Any review shall include consultation with University stakeholders who may be affected by its provisions.