



POLICY No. 9

RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY¹

MODIFICATIONS

Adopted December, 2017
BG-10-009-001

NOTES

1. Through a partnership, TAV College applied Vanier College's Research Integrity Policy. With the College's permission, TAV has adapted and partially rewritten its policy for its specific needs. TAV College wishes to thank Vanier College for their partnership, contribution and generosity.

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1. SCOPE

College-wide; this policy applies to any employee of the College, any student enrolled and/or participating in research at the College or anyone engaged in research at the College.

2. PURPOSE

To promote a high standard of integrity and consistent and ethical practices in research done at TAV College whether by College faculty and staff or by others granted the right to conduct research at the College.

3. POLICY

TAV College affirms that all research activities done by members of the college community must be performed with the highest standards of integrity.

This expected behaviour is based on values such as honesty, reliability and rigour, objectivity, fairness and independence, justice (especially in recognizing the contributions of others), trust, accountability and benevolence, openness and transparency. All actors within the research community (researchers, awardees, research personnel, fund managers, research institutions, funding agencies) must adopt and defend these values while conducting research activities, regardless of their discipline. The common denominator of research in any discipline is the quest for knowledge through peer-recognized (or in the process of becoming so) methodological approach specific to the discipline in question.¹

Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be condoned and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the offending person(s). All researchers must adhere to the following principles:

- a) Ensure the well-being of all those involved in the research.
- b) Acknowledge the contribution of student-researchers, research assistants and co-researchers.
- c) Gain permission to use published or unpublished works of others as well as their data and acknowledge their use.
- d) Gather data and research materials with integrity and honesty, and never publish false data and the results obtained from them.
- e) Reveal any conflict of interest, material or financial, to granting agencies so that the latter are not influenced in their reviews of grants applications.
- f) Make use of funds, equipment and materials acquired for the support of research in an appropriate honest manner.
- g) Follow the rules, regulations and requirements of the granting agencies and the College.
- h) For any research project involving human subjects, researchers need to obtain the informed consent of participants and submit the research proposal for approval.

4. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

The non-compliance with the above-mentioned principles constitutes misconduct on the part of the researchers. Research misconduct also means the following:

- a) Fabrication or falsification of research data.
- b) Destruction of research records.
- c) Representing others' works as one's own.
- d) Failing to comply with federal, provincial and the College regulations for the protection of human beings i.e. researchers, research participants and the public in general, and the welfare of laboratory animals used in research, if any.

¹ "Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research", *Fonds de recherche*, September 2014, p. 10 [<http://www.frqnt.gouv.qc.ca/documents/10191/186005/Policy+for+the+RCR++FRQ+2014.pdf/c531b847-b95e-4275-a97d-421248178236>].

- e) Introducing computer viruses or using any other technique designed to interfere with, disrupt or harm other researches for one's own gain.

Honest mistakes in data collection, differences in the interpretation of research data or research design do not constitute research misconduct.

5. AUTHORSHIP STANDARDS

The need to ensure accuracy in the publication of research reports mandates that:

- a) Each author must verify that the manuscript reflects accurately his/her contribution to the research.
- b) One author must accept responsibility for the validity of the entire manuscript.
- c) Authorship must be the result of having contributed in a significant manner to the intellectual and practical work on which the report is based. There is no such status as "honorary author".
- d) The contribution of students must be appropriately and accurately recognized.

6. DATA RETENTION

- a) Data generated during the research should remain in the department where the research was done. A copy of all research data must also be stored in the files of the Research Office.
- b) Results should be maintained for a period not less than five years after publication or from the completion of the research. Results should be stored in a manner designed to facilitate easy access to data. Except when strong reasons for confidentiality are present, primary data should not be destroyed when such data are the only method of resolving questions of research validity, methodology and accuracy.
- c) Agreements on ownership, publication and reproduction of primary data should be agreed among researchers before research begins. The College's policy on Intellectual property² will apply to questions of copyrights and patents.
- d) In the absence of specific agreements among researchers, or other restrictions and limitations imposed by contract or by granting agencies, all researchers will have access to all original data and research results at all times. Members of the research team may make copies of original data for their own use as long as authorization has been obtained from the principal researcher.
- e) The Research Office must ensure that data and research results are safeguarded when researchers leave the College. Faculty will normally take the data with them; students will leave data in the College.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF OF THE COLLEGE

Researchers have the responsibility to uphold the principles listed above, to act with honesty and integrity at all times thus practicing a high standard of conduct in research and scholarship. They should show respect for the participants and maintain a level of professionalism in the management of resources pertaining to their research activities. Furthermore, researchers must not only scrupulously refrain from committing research misconduct; they must take all reasonable steps and provide guidance and information to their collaborators and those working under their supervision to prevent research misconduct.

The members of the staff including the researchers have the obligation to report any research misconduct to the College.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLEGE

² As of now, the College does not have a policy on intellectual property. However, the College does plan on providing itself with such a policy.

The College has the following responsibilities:

- a) Providing an environment that will encourage a high standard of integrity in research and scholarship.
- b) Investigating allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship and that any misconduct is dealt with as quickly as possible.
- c) Promoting greater understanding of research ethics and a commitment to research integrity **through workshops and seminars** and by making the College's research policies widely available to the members of the TAV community.
- d) Reporting promptly to granting agencies the allegations of misconduct and the results of the investigations.

9. PROCEDURES TO REPORT AND TO INVESTIGATE MISCONDUCT IN RESEARCH

The following procedures will ensure that fairness and equity are applied. They are applicable to all contraventions of the Research Integrity Policy.

9.1 ALLEGATIONS

- a) A formal complaint must be made in writing before the Coordinator of the Research Office will begin any investigation against the researcher or researchers who are the subjects of the allegations. Such complaints may be made by anyone with relevant information.
- b) Members or participants in research who hold well-founded suspicion of misconduct on the part of any researcher may seek informal assistance and may request a preliminary investigation from the Coordinator of the Research Office. The Coordinator of the Research Office must report such complaints in writing to the Dean of Studies. Such inquiries must be kept confidential.
- c) Any members and participants who have allegations of misconduct reported to them must report that in writing to the Coordinator of the Research Office or the Dean of Studies.
- d) The Coordinator of the Research Office and Dean of Studies must take reasonable steps to protect complainants, including students, staff and research assistants when they are supervised by the person against whom the complaint has been lodged.
- e) Anonymous allegations will not normally be entertained; however a preliminary investigation will be initiated if compelling evidence of misconduct is received from an anonymous source.
- f) Complaints should be sufficiently detailed to permit the Coordinator of the Research Office to understand and be able to evaluate in a preliminary manner the potential seriousness of the allegation. The Coordinator of the Research Office may require that the person making the complaint be identified if it is concluded that such identification is necessary to investigate the allegations. No one will be identified without their agreement.

Upon receiving an allegation,

9.2 INFORMAL AND CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRY

- a) Within ten working days of receiving an allegation, the Coordinator of the Research Office must meet with the researcher named in the complaint to inform the researcher of the complaint, provide him/her with an opportunity to respond to the charges or allegations and to understand whether information provided by the researcher resolves the issue or whether grounds exist for further action.
- b) The Coordinator of the Research Office may decide that the complaint has no merit and that no further action should be taken. In such a case the Coordinator of the Research Office must immediately inform the complainant of the result of the inquiry and provide written explanations for the decision not to proceed any further. The complainant may appeal the decision of the Coordinator of the Research Office to the Dean of Studies who will form a formal investigative committee (see article "Formal Inquiry").

- c) If as a result of the preliminary inquiry, the Coordinator of the Research Office decides that the complaint has merit but that it may be possible to resolve it through mediation, an informal process of mediation may be followed. The Coordinator of the Research Office will attempt to find through mediation a solution which is acceptable to all the parties concerned. If the mediation is successful, no further action will be taken and the file will be destroyed. The complaint will be deemed resolved through an informal mediation process when both the complainant and the researcher agree that it has been resolved. The complaint will be considered to have been formally withdrawn.
- d) If the mediation process fails to produce a resolution, or if the Coordinator of the Research Office decides that a formal investigation is required, the Coordinator of the Research Office must immediately inform the Dean of Studies. The Dean of Studies will appoint two members of the College ethics board for research to carry out the informal investigation.
- e) The Dean of Studies must ensure that the members of the informal inquiry committee are not collaborators with the complainant or the person charged. The members shall be unbiased and have appropriate background to judge the issues being raised.
- f) The members of the informal inquiry committee will meet and discuss, with confidentiality and with promptness, with the person or persons at the centre of the allegation (person charged) and try to reach a mutual agreement and solution. The members may have to carry out an informal investigation of the allegation, thus providing the person charged the opportunities to respond to the allegation and explain the situation. Within two weeks the members of the informal inquiry committee should provide a report to the Dean of Studies.
- g) Within five days of receiving the report of the informal investigative committee, the Dean of Studies must then decide what action should be taken. He may decide that there are no grounds to substantiate the allegation and conclude the procedure. He may determine that the allegation has merit, is sufficiently serious and make arrangements for a formal inquiry.

9.3 FORMAL INQUIRY

- a) The Dean of Studies will create a formal investigative committee after receiving the report of the informal investigative committee. This committee will consist of three individuals including the Coordinator of the Research Office, one member from outside the institution (free of any conflict of interest) and an expert from the research discipline of the respondent considered to be a peer). The formal investigative committee is authorized to decide on misconduct and its decision is binding on the institution.
- b) All the pertinent and relevant materials will be presented to the investigative committee.
- c) The person charged has the right to contest the nomination of any member in the investigative committee.
- d) Any member of the investigative committee also has the right to withdraw from the committee because of conflict of interest or professional competency.
- e) The investigative committee has the right to interview any appropriate person, consult experts in order to verify facts pertinent to the inquiry.
- f) The person charged will be provided with the evidence and will have the opportunity to be heard and respond to the allegations and to be accompanied by an Advocate of his/her own choosing. Until the matter has been brought to a resolution, disbursement of funds granted the research project from agency will be withheld.
- g) Based on all the evidence from both sides, the investigative committee will make a recommendation to the Dean of Studies concerning appropriate penalties or solutions.
- h) All the proceedings of the inquiry including any interviews of all parties involved should be recorded. Copies of these documents must be stored under tightly limited access in the files of the Research Office.
- i) The inquiry should not take more than 30 days from the receipt of the commission from the Dean of Studies. The committee should make its report no later than 15 days from the end of the inquiry.

- j) The person charged will be informed of the decision within one week. Both complainant and respondent must be provided with a draft of the committee's report. They will be permitted five working days to submit comments in writing to the committee. The committee will then make its final report to the Dean of Studies, who will provide copies to the Coordinator of the Research Office and to both complainant and Respondent within five working days.
- k) The report must include; a) the list of the members of the committee and why they were chosen b) the methods and materials used in the investigation c) a list of the persons interviewed or who provided information to the committee d) plans and steps to be taken to restore reputations that may have been damaged and to protect complainants who have acted in good faith. It should also include any other details that may shed light on the process that was followed to arrive at the conclusions of the report.

9.4 ACTION TAKEN

- a) If the allegations of misconduct are found to be groundless, no punitive action will be taken and all the records will be destroyed to protect the person's reputation. The College must take all reasonable steps to restore the reputation of those who have been unjustly accused. If the allegations have been deemed to have been unfounded, malicious and reckless, the complainant may be subject to sanctions.
- b) If there is evidence of misconduct, the Dean of Studies will take measures depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. The person charged will be informed in writing of the decision, as well as the measures to be taken. In some cases, the nature of the misconduct may require that law enforcement agencies be notified.
- c) The appropriate funding agencies will be notified of the investigation and the action taken and a copy of the report of the investigation committee must be forwarded to the funding agencies within 30 working days. If the investigation was requested by the agency, a full copy of the report should be sent to the agency within 30 days, whether or not the committee has concluded that misconduct has occurred.

9.5 RECOURSE

The person charged and found guilty of misconduct may file an appeal to the Director General within one week after being informed. An appeal may be requested only if:

- a) The procedures of the formal inquiry have not been followed, and
- b) New information, not previously presented, can be provided.