

Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

University of Calgary



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Policy and Procedure

- Research Integrity Policy
 - Outlines expectations of researchers*
 - Defines breaches
- Investigating a Breach of Research Integrity Procedure
 - outlines the process for investigating alleged breach of Policy
- Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research

Investigating a Breach of Research Integrity Procedure

1. Allegation
2. Assessment
3. Inquiry
4. Investigation
5. Reporting
 - Dean
 - SRCR (Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research)
 - Other agencies as appropriate



Allegation

- Written and signed complaint with supporting information
 - wsvoyna@ucalgary.ca
 - Disclose@ucalgary.ca
 - ConfidenceLine [1.800.661.9675](tel:18006619675) (available 24/7)
- [RCR Allegation Submission Template \[PDF \(168 KB\)](#)
- Retaliation prohibited (4.3)
- Confidentiality (4.4)
 - To protect the identity of Complainant and Respondent as far as possible given need for fairness and due process.

Assessment

- Scope (4.2)
 - This procedure applies to **Academic Staff Members, Appointees, Employees, Students, Postdoctoral Scholars, and any other person who conducts Research under the auspices of, or in Affiliation with, the University.**
 - This procedure applies regardless of the source of funding for the research.
 - This procedure will apply even if the allegation is submitted as a protected disclosure under the Procedure for Protected Disclosure.

Inquiry

- The Protected Disclosure Advisor will consult with the Dean and they may consult with others, to determine if:
 - a) an allegation is a Responsible Allegation;
 - b) immediate action is warranted to protect the administration of Research funds or to mitigate a health or safety risk. (4.5)
- Is the allegation a Responsible Allegation (RA)? (3 n)
 - Appears to be made in good faith
 - Based on facts which have not been the subject of a previous allegation
 - If the alleged facts are true, falls within one or more of the breaches set out in the Research integrity Policy
- 10 Business Days

Inquiry cont'd

- If not a Responsible Allegation, notify Complainant in writing
- If a Responsible Allegation,
 - Notify Complainant and Respondent, others as appropriate
 - Advise SRCR and other applicable Research funders or government agencies

Investigation

- Draw up Terms of Reference in consultation with Dean
 - **7 months** to complete investigation
 - **Article 24.7.2** of the Collective Agreement between the Board of Governors and the University of Calgary Faculty Association (CA) prohibits investigative meetings in the months of July and August
- Appoint an Investigation Committee

Investigation Committee

- Mandate
 - Conduct independent and impartial inquiry to determine if a breach of the Research Integrity Policy occurred
 - Intention not relevant to this determination but a consideration wrt to severity of action taken in response to the breach
- Composition
 - 3 academics (voting members)
 - Appropriate expertise; no real or apparent conflict of interest; and no perceived bias
 - At least one external member
 - no current affiliation with the University when allegation related to activities funded by an Agency
- Respondent: TUCFA, AUPE, PDAC, GSA
 - May have 4th person added to the Investigation Committee (non voting)
- Respondent: Five (5) business days to set out any objections to membership of the Investigation Committee



Due Process

- Procedural fairness WRT to the Respondent
- 4.19 a)
 - Know the allegation and the evidence being considered by the Inv. Committee
 - Opportunity to respond to the allegation and the evidence in person and/or in writing
- 4.19 b)
 - Contemplation of report with adverse finding
 - Respondent has opportunity to put forth additional information that may influence the outcome of the Final Report

5th and Final Stage: Reporting

- Inv. Committee provides their report to the Protected Disclosure Advisor (4.22); Advisor to Dean (4.25)
- The report will include:
 - a) the allegation;
 - b) an account of all relevant information received and, if the investigation committee has rejected evidence as being unreliable, the reasons for this conclusion;
 - c) the Respondent's response to the allegation, investigation and any measures the Respondent has taken to rectify any breach;
 - d) the conclusions reached and the basis for them; and
 - e) if the investigation committee finds the allegation to be true, the degree of seriousness of the breach.

Dean's Responsibilities (4.25)

- Provide copy of report to Respondent
- Advise Respondent and, where applicable, the Provost and Vice President (Academic) that the allegation is:
 - a) **dismissed**; or
 - b) **substantiated and will be dealt with under the existing disciplinary powers of the Dean**; or
 - c) is substantiated and due to the seriousness of the breach must be referred to the Executive Leadership Team for review of any non disciplinary issues.

Protected Disclosure Advisor's Responsibilities

- Inform affected parties of the decision reached by the Investigation Committee and of any recourse to be taken by the University
- Submit a report to the SRCR on the investigation

Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research (SRCR)

- SRCR submits the University's report to the Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research (PRCR)
- Panel reviews University's report and informs the Agency of their review and recommendations for recourse, if appropriate, consistent with the RCR Framework
- Agency informs University and Respondent of the Agency's decision wrt to the Panel's recommendations

Resources

- Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research
- CORE: Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2 2018) Online Tutorial, Panel on Research Ethics
- Responsible Conduct of Research Training, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)
- ORI, Office of Research Integrity, US
 - The Lab: Avoiding Research Misconduct
 - <https://ori.hhs.gov/infographics>

Thank you!

- Q & A

October 25, 2021

Health Research Platform Strategy Lunch & Learn



- Please ensure that your mic is muted & that your camera is turned off
- As we do provide certificate of attendance – please ensure that your name is correct. To do so:
 - click on participants at the bottom
 - Hover over you name and select more or tap your name (mobile)
 - Click Rename
- Comments & questions are welcome in the chat box throughout the presentation and we will answer at the end.

Research Integrity, Policy and Procedures



Lunch and Learn Seminar Series

Stacey Page, PhD
Chair, Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board
Associate Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences

October 25, 2021

Overview

- to further understanding of research and scholarly integrity
- to define research integrity, and what constitutes honest mistakes vs. research misconduct
- to describe the University of Calgary's research integrity policy and procedures for managing allegations of misconduct



Research

- “An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through disciplined inquiry and systematic investigation (TCPS 2.1)”
- A fundamental premise of the is that research can benefit human society.
- Public trust is central to the ongoing conduct
- of human participant research
- Integrity – honesty, fairness, openness and accountability



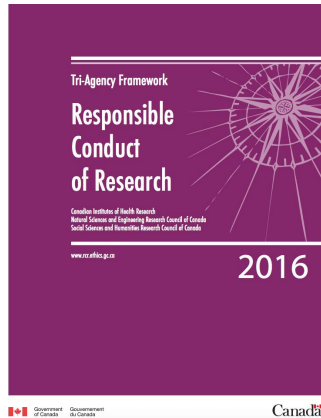
Research ethics and research integrity

- Research ethics – commitment to treating people with respect, with concern for their welfare, and fairly
- Research integrity – commitment to acting honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for and dissemination of knowledge
- A breach of research ethics (i.e., TCPS) is a breach of research integrity under the Responsible Conduct of Research framework, sometimes a breach of integrity may also be a breach of research ethics



Regulation of Research Conduct

- TriAgency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2016)
 - Research Integrity Policy
- requires that eligible institutions comply with RCR as well as all applicable laws and regulations (e.g., TCPS2, HC, privacy legislation, HIA, FOIP)
- allocates responsibility for conducting research with integrity to researchers
- RCR requires institutions to train researchers, and have policy and procedures to address (allegations of) breaches



UCalgary policies and standards

- Code of conduct
- Acceptable use of electronic resources and information policy
- Animal care and use policy
- Conflict of interest, procedure for
- Contracts for research policy
- Gifts, donations and sponsorship policy
- Information asset management policy
- Intellectual property policy
- Research integrity policy
- Research overhead policy
- Specific retention rule (data retention policy)

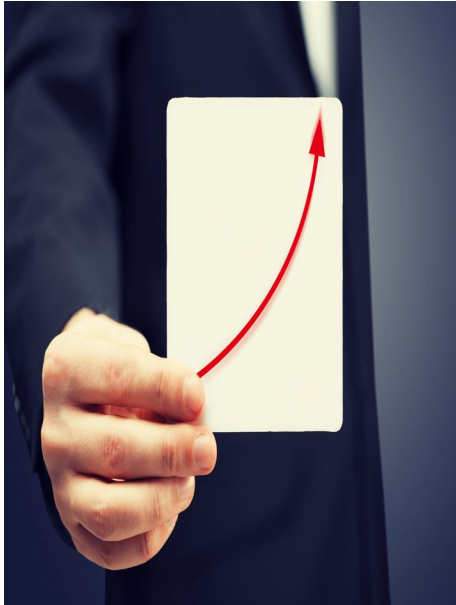


Breaches of research integrity

- Major scholarly breaches:
 - Fabrication – making up data
 - Falsification –manipulating, changing, omitting data
 - Plagiarism – presenting another’s work as ones own
- Other problems
 - Mis-managed funds
 - Mis-managed or undeclared COI
 - Flawed data management
 - Inappropriate authorship, research team membership
 - Breach of TCPS2, protocol deviations
 - Honest mistakes



Continuum of research integrity breaches



- context matters to how we think about breaches and what happens or should happen
- unintentional mistakes vs. bending the rules vs. lying cheating and stealing for self advancement
- while intent not relevant to determining if the action is a breach, it is relevant to reporting and penalties

Prevalence of misconduct - researchers

- Meta-analysis of 21 surveys, fabrication and falsification (D. Fanelli; <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0005738>)
 - Self-reported rate of serious misconduct – 2.0%
 - Self reported rate of “QRP” – 34%
 - Reporting others – serious misconduct - 14%
 - Reporting others – QRP – 72%
- Retraction watch (retractionwatch.com)
 - Close to 30000 posts, 176 retractions relating to covid studies
- Wiki – huge list of serious (i.e., FFP) scientific misconduct by discipline
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scientific_misconduct_incidents



Snapshot - Wiki page

- Anna Ahimastos-Lamberti (Australia), a former medical researcher, admitted to fabricating scientific results published in numerous international medical journals.^{[4][5][6]} As of 2020 Ahimastos-Lamberti has had nine of her research publications retracted.^[7]
- [Bharat Aggarwal \(US\), a former Ransom Horne, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Cancer Research at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center,](#)^[8] [resigned his position after fraud was discovered in 65 papers published by him in the area of curcumin as a treatment for cancer.](#)^[9] As of 2020 Aggarwal has had 29 of his research papers retracted, ten others have received an expression of concern, and 17 others have been corrected.^{[10][11]}
- [Elias Alsabti](#) (Iraq, US), was a medical practitioner who posed as a biomedical researcher. He plagiarized as many as 60 papers in the field of cancer research, many with non-existent co-authors.^{[12][13][14]}
- Joachim Boldt (Germany), an anesthesiologist formerly based at the Justus Liebig University Giessen, was stripped of his professorship and criminally investigated for forgery in his research studies.^[32] As of 2021 Boldt has had 153 of his research publications retracted.^{[33][34]}
- C. David Bridges (US), a researcher at Purdue University and formerly at Baylor College of Medicine, was found by a NIH investigation panel to have stolen ideas from a rival's manuscript that Bridges had been asked to review, and used that information to produce and publish his own research.^{[35][36]} The investigating panel described Bridges' conduct as "an egregious misconduct of science that undermines the entire concept and practice of scientific experimentation and ethical responsibility",^[37] with NIH later stripping Bridges of his funding.^[38]
- Ranjit Chandra (Canada), former nutrition researcher at Memorial University of Newfoundland and self-proclaimed "father of nutritional immunology",^[45] was in 2015 stripped of his Order of Canada membership following accusations of scientific wrongdoing in his research.^[46] In 2015 Chandra lost a \$132 million case against the CBC, which in 2006 presented a documentary in which 10 of Chandra's publications were identified as "fraudulent or highly suspicious";^[47] Chandra was ordered to pay the CBC \$1.6 million to cover the defendant's legal fees.^[48] As of 2020 four of Chandra's research publications have been retracted.^{[49][50]}
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scientific_misconduct_incidents

Misconduct consequences

- wasted time and resources
- harms to individuals where they may have been subject to unsafe practices/process
- harms to individuals, society should fraudulent findings lead to ongoing use of unsafe or ineffective products/processes
- negative impact on research environment within a lab or institution, damage to relationships
- reduces public's trust in research, institutions, science

Andrew Wakefield

- British medical researcher
- 1998 authored paper in which he advanced there was a link between MMR vaccine and autism
- paper based on falsified/fraudulent data
- motivation – COI, \$\$\$\$



Costs and consequences

- in 2010, Lancet retracted the 1998 article
- But, there has been an enduring worldwide decline in MMR vaccination uptake, corresponding rise in measles, mumps, rubella, resulting in serious illness and deaths
- **Aug 19 2021** – “New Study Sheds Light on the Roots of Today’s Vaccine Hesitancy (Kristen V Brown)

“The anti-vaccine movement that has helped stoke widespread resistance to Covid shots has long been traced back to a single, now-retracted 1998 journal article linking autism to childhood immunizations. “

www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-19/new-study-sheds-light-on-the-roots-of-today-s-vaccine-hesitancy

Why do people cheat?

- Career pressures – avoiding “failures,” publish or perish
- Personal gain - money/COI, advancement in positions or power
- Institutional failures of training and oversight, lack of consequences/deterrents
- Lack of understanding/appreciation of the standards, rationalization
- Situational stressors -family and other personal difficulties
- Personality factors - part of a larger pattern of social deviance, ego, narcissism



What can you do?

- Know the rules, model integrity
- Trust yourself, know that if you are feeling something is wrong, it is probably worth looking into – and there is an obligation to report
- Resources and avenues for consulting and reporting
 - to protected disclosure advisor
 - to Chair, REB (meetings, phone, email)
 - to professional college (e.g., CPSA, CARNA) and OIPC
 - legal reporting (fraud, civil suits)



Research integrity “whistle blowing” and the investigative process

- Over to Shirley!