



Senate

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Committee on Research & Publications

POLICY ON RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) is committed to the highest standards of responsible conduct of research as a community, departmental/program, and individual duty and responsibility. This document is designed to promote responsible conduct of research at MSVU by providing information about the meaning of responsible conduct of research and how to foster and achieve research integrity.

Background

For purposes of consistency and clarity, the language of this document generally reflects that used in the revised [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research \(TAF-RCR\)](#). The wording of this policy also draws from other Canadian institutional policies and documents publicly available (see Appendix C in this document) as well as federal research councils.

MSVU's Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) does not supersede or replace any provisions concerning similar matters that may be incorporated within existing collective agreements or University policies. This document is concerned only with research and scholarly integrity and does not replace any other statements from the University on other areas with which this issue may overlap (6.2). The provisions contained herein are intended to provide appropriate clarity, specifications and guidance. Principles of RCR overlap with other areas, such as financial integrity in the use of research funds and the ethical issues involving the use of human participants or animal subjects in research, for which MSVU has established policies, guidelines and requirements.

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1. Scope

- 1.1. MSVU requires responsible conduct of research (RCR) from all members of its research community, including Mount researchers, research staff, and students at all levels. This policy applies to all research, scholarship, or creative work conducted under the auspices or within the jurisdiction of MSVU.
- 1.2. The University Research Ethics Board and the Animal Care Committees have respective responsibilities for overseeing the protection of humans and animals in research. The Lab Safety Committee and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee are responsible for managing and controlling health and safety risks to researchers in laboratories. For cases under their jurisdiction, additional review by those bodies may be required.
- 1.3. If any provision of this Policy is found to be inconsistent with the provisions of a Collective Agreement at MSVU, the Collective Agreement will prevail **except** where said provision is required by the Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research.
- 1.4. In the event that the Respondent to an allegation of research misconduct is a student of the University, and the allegation does not involve research ethics, animal care or financial mismanagement, any investigative process and educative or disciplinary actions pursuant to allegations related to students' academic work will be referred to the appropriate Department Chair or Graduate Program Director. The allegation will then be addressed according to MSVU's Academic Offices (Section [2.2.23](#) MSVU Undergraduate Academic Calendar; Section [2.2.16](#) MSVU Graduate Academic Calendar).
- 1.5. The Chair, Graduate Program Director, or appropriate Dean(s) must report the outcomes of any investigations involving Students' Academic Work related to any activities funded by the Tri-Agency to the University Research Integrity Officer who will then report to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research.
- 1.6. Faculty members that supervise student research are required to ensure that research is conducted responsibly, competently, and ethically during all stages of the research life cycle. Therefore, the Faculty Supervisor may be considered a **Respondent** under this policy when allegations involve student research conducted under their supervision, especially an undergraduate student. The Faculty Supervisor may be called on in an investigation when required.
- 1.7. Notwithstanding the MSVU Academic Regulations, any allegations involving potentially significant financial, health and safety, or other risks associated with Students' Academic Work funded by an Agency, **must** be reported, by the Chair or Graduate Program Director, to the University Research Integrity Officer, and the appropriate Dean(s). The University Research Integrity Officer will report such allegations to the [Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

2. Standards of Practice

Mount Saint Vincent University expects all members of the University community to comport themselves with respect to the highest standards of behaviour in the conduct of research and scholarship. These standards would include, but are not limited to:

- 2.1. Appropriate use of research funds and resources (e.g. Tri-Council standards on space, equipment, and employment of staff, post-doctoral fellows and students);

- 2.2. Ethically appropriate and respectful relations with human or animal participants in research;
- 2.3. Adherence to the peer assessment confidentiality practices on any review documents. Confidentiality extends to the ideas, plans, identities, representation (e.g. graphs and/or images) contained in manuscripts, research proposals, and funding applications that one may be asked to review and assess;
- 2.4. Adherence to the University's research regulations, as well as the various research ethics and administrative requirements associated with accessing and utilizing funds from granting agencies in support of research;
- 2.5. Complete representation of all contributions to research and publication, including student contributions, through authorship credit and/or formal acknowledgement;
- 2.6. Use of work of others only with formal permissions for unpublished work /appropriate acknowledgement of published sources;
- 2.7. Development and planning of all research protocols including methods of data collection, sharing, and storage of same, methods of analyses and collaborative oversight are specified and appropriate to the research to be undertaken;
- 2.8. Scholarly rigour in recording, analyzing, interpreting and publishing research-based material;
- 2.9. Adherence to any memorandum of understanding (MoU) or memorandum of agreement (MoA) or research contracts undertaken with other University collaborators or other industry or partnerships; and,
- 2.10. Adherence to established ethical research conduct principles.

3. Responsible Conduct of Research

Each member of the University community must be prepared and accept responsibility for assuring adherence to the highest standards of academic integrity in research and scholarly activity. 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 institutional policies and professional or disciplinary standards and comply with applicable provincial or federal laws and regulations. At a minimum, researchers are responsible for the following:

- 3.1. **Rigour:** Scholarly and scientific rigour in proposing and performing research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing data and findings.
- 3.2. **Record keeping:** Keeping complete and accurate records of data, methodologies and findings, including graphs and images, in accordance with the applicable funding agreement, institutional policies, laws, regulations, and professional or disciplinary standards in a manner that will allow verification or replication of the work by others.
- 3.3. **Accurate referencing:** Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including theories, concepts, data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs and images.
- 3.4. **Authorship:** Inclusion of authors who have made a substantial contribution to a publication or document. Authors need to both be aware of the publication or document and provide consent to the Principal Investigator or primary author (See Appendix C).

- 3.5. Acknowledgement:** Acknowledging appropriately all those and only those who have contributed to research, including funders and sponsors.
- 3.6. Conflict of interest management:** Appropriately identifying and addressing any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the institution's policy on conflict of interest in research are met. Regulations, policies, and guidelines relating directly or indirectly to conflicts of interest can be found within the Conflict of Interest Policy (CRP.POL.003).

Each member of the MSVU community is expected to invoke the approved procedures, specified in the RCR Procedures (CRP.SOP.001), in any case where there is a reasonable suspicion and evidence of a breach of policy on research and/or scholarly conduct. To do so, reporting to the University Research Integrity Officer is the first step. In so doing, this process must be both confidential (in terms of who needs to know) and be a specific allegation that adheres to the breach criterion.

4. Research Data Management

- 4.1.** Data recording should follow the normative procedures established within disciplinary research practice and expectations, and comply satisfactorily with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS) as well as the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*, and as verified by the University Research Ethics Board (UREB).
- 4.2.** Ordinarily, research data are operationally controlled and available for the exclusive use by the individuals and/or teams who generate them through the course of research processes. Research teams are encouraged to develop formal 'Researcher Protocols' from the outset of their collaboration.
- 4.3.** All terms and conditions pertaining to access and use of data gathered throughout any research collaboration need specification.
- 4.4.** Mount-affiliated researchers and research teams engaging in contract or contract services research need follow any contract provisions pertaining to data sharing, release, and ownership which may compromise intellectual property rights and provisions of collective agreements.
- 4.5.** Research data generated with the support of public funds, such as awards from the Tri-Council, are subject to the expectation that once the researcher or research team is finished with the data they may be placed within a data archive or repository that provides public accessibility. Such public release of data requires that researchers and research teams must prepare the data respecting the UREB and Tri-Council provisions concerning attributes such as participant consent, confidentiality, and risk. Researchers and research teams must comply with any provisions respecting data storage, retention, and sharing that may be specified within the terms and conditions of research funding.

5. Promoting Integrity in Research and Scholarship

- 5.1.** The University fosters research and scholarship integrity, through the office of the Associate Vice-President, Research by promoting awareness of what constitutes the responsible conduct of research, including Agency requirements as set out in the

MSVU'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 MSVU.

- 5.2. The MSVU RCR contact for responsible conduct of research shall be the University Research Integrity Officer. Details regarding questions, process or procedures for receiving confidential enquiries, allegations and information related to allegations of breaches of Agency policies can be found within RCR.SOP.001.
- 5.3. The RESO will communicate its policy on the responsible conduct of research within the institution and posting annually on its Web site information on confirmed findings of breaches of its policy (e.g., the number and general nature of the breaches), subject to applicable laws, including the privacy laws).
- 5.4. MSVU is required to report annually to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research on the total number of allegations received involving Agency funds, the number of confirmed breaches and the nature of those breaches, subject to applicable laws, including privacy laws.
- 5.5. The Research Office will draw attention to the University's guidelines, policies, and procedures for responsible conduct of research through various communication channels. All departments and programs are encouraged to engage faculty, students and staff in educational processes respecting discipline and professional standards of practice for, and understanding of, responsible conduct of research. Materials pertaining to and information concerning responsible conduct of research integrity are circulated within the University community, and available on the Research Office website (www.msvu.ca/research), as well as an internal research resources site.

6. Related Documents

6.1 Mount Saint Vincent University

- Allegation Report Form – [REB.FORM.013](#)
- Allegation Procedures
The process and procedures that the University shall use when an allegation of a breach in responsible conduct of research are outlined in RCR.SOP.001.

6.2. Agency Requiements

Researchers must comply with all applicable Tri-Council requirements and legislation for the conduct of research, including, but not limited to:

- [2nd edition of Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans \(TCPS 2\)](#);
- [Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines](#);
 - Agency policies related to the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#);
 - Relevant Licenses for research in the field;
 - [Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines](#);
 - [Controlled Goods Program](#);
 - [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission \(CNSC\) Regulations](#); and
 - Canada's [Food and Drugs Act](#).

Appendix A – Definitions

Agencies: Canada's three federal granting agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC); and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Agency policies: The set of rules, directives and guidelines issued by an individual Agency or jointly by the Agencies.

Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions (the Agreement): The agreement between the Agencies and institutions eligible to receive and manage research funding from the Agencies.

Allegation: A declaration, statement, or assertion communicated in writing to an institution or Agency to the effect that there has been, or continues to be, a breach of one or more Agency policies, the validity of which has not been established.

Applicant (including co-applicant): An individual who has submitted an application, individually or as part of a group or team, for funding from the Agencies.

Author (including co-author): The writer, or contributing writer, of a research publication or document.

Breach: A breach of responsible conduct of research is the failure to comply with any Agency policy throughout the life cycle of a research project – from application for funding, to the conduct of the research and the dissemination of research results. It includes all activities related to the research, including the management of Agency funds.

Complainant(s): refers to any individual or group accusing one or more members of the Mount community of a breach of policy on scholarly/research conduct.

Compliance: According with or meeting the rules and standards of research integrity.

Conflict of interest: refers to activities or situations which place an individual in a real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional or other interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, business, commercial or financial interests pertaining to individuals, their family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates.

Funding agreement: A written agreement that sets out the terms and conditions that an Agency and a researcher agree to for a particular grant or award. It defines the researcher's responsibilities, what constitutes a breach of the agreement, and the consequences of a breach.

Inquiry: The process of reviewing an allegation to determine whether the allegation is responsible, the particular policy or policies that may have been breached, and whether an investigation is warranted based on the information provided in the allegation.

Investigative Committee: refers to the Committee appointed by the University Research Integrity Officer for and tasked with the responsibility of determining whether or not responsible allegations of a breach of policy on scholarly/research conduct are substantiated. The Committee is to be composed of at least 3 scholars/researchers with necessary expertise and without conflict of interest. At least one member will be external to the University. The Committee is chosen by the University Research Integrity Officer.

Investigation: A systematic process, conducted by an institution's investigation committee, of examining an allegation, collecting and examining evidence related to the allegation, and deciding whether breach of policy has occurred.

Institution: Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU)

Institutional policy: The set of rules, directives and guidelines issued by MSVU that meet the requirements of the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research.

Panel on the Responsible Conduct of Research (PRCR): The Agencies established a Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research (PRCR) that will ensure a coherent and uniform approach to promoting the responsible conduct of research and addressing allegations of breaches of Agency policies.

Research: is defined in this policy as a systematic investigation for purposes of developing perspectives, creating knowledge, gaining insights, developing generalizations, informing policy or practice, or otherwise making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and/or communities. For the purpose of this policy, research includes all forms of funded and unfunded research and creative scholarly work, representing a diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives and approaches, conducted by and within the Mount community and by people who use the Mount facilities for the creation, representation and publication of scholarly work. Only breaches of Tri-Council funded research will be reported to PRCR.

Researcher: is defined in this policy as any Mount faculty member, emeritus faculty, staff, part-time academic employees, administrators, students, visiting or adjunct scholars, post-doctoral fellows and chairs, paid and unpaid research associates and assistants, and any person in a like position, who conducts, engages with, or advances research in any capacity, or who accesses University students or staff as human research participants, and/or; any other person who conducts, engages with or advances research as connected with the University, and/or; any person who conducts research using University resources (for instance, research space, materials, equipment, or human resources).

Respondent(s): an individual who is identified in an allegation as having possibly breached Agency and/or institutional policy.

Responsible allegation: a substantially novel allegation made in good faith, confidentially and without malice, that is based on facts which have not been the subject of a previous allegation, and which falls within one or more breaches set out in [Section 3](#) of the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Scholarship: intellectual or creative contributions as understood and expressed through academic discipline or professional field normative criteria that also ordinarily value and employ independent peer review evaluations in determining publication merit.

Serious breach: In determining whether a breach is serious, the institution will consider the extent to which the breach jeopardizes the safety of the public or brings the conduct of research into disrepute. This determination will be based on an assessment of the nature of the breach, the level of experience of the researcher, whether there is a pattern of breaches by the researcher, and other factors as appropriate. Examples of serious breaches may include:

- recruiting human participants into a study with significant risks or harms without Research Ethics Board approval, or not following approved protocols;
- using animals in a study with significant risks or harms without Animal Care Committee approval, or not following approved protocols;
- deliberate misuse of research grant funds for personal benefit not related to research;
- knowingly publishing research results based on fabricated data;
- obtaining grant/award funds from the Agencies by misrepresenting one's credentials, qualifications and/or research contributions in an application.

University community: all full-time and part-time faculty; all full-time and part-time staff; all full-time and part-time administrators; all full-time and part-time students (both undergraduate and graduate); and all people hired on term positions and/or casual employment positions at Mount Saint Vincent University and any person in a like position, who conducts, engages with, or advances research in any capacity affiliated with the Mount.

University Research Integrity Officer: Refers to the AVP Research or Mount designate tasked to do an initial inquiry to determine if mutually agreeable resolutions to responsible allegations of breach of policy on scholarly/research conduct against any member or members of the Mount Community can be reached. An independent Committee of Investigation will be established if necessary.

Appendix B- Breaches of Research Policy

A conscious and deliberate breach of policy is a violation of the principles of intellectual honesty and academic freedom, and includes activities such as the misappropriation of writings, research, and discoveries.

A breach of the RCR Framework is the failure to comply with any Agency and/or Institutional policy throughout the life cycle of a research project – from application for funding, to the conduct of the research and the dissemination of research results. In determining whether an individual has breached an RCR policy, 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 recourse that may be imposed. Breaches of RCR and/or Institutional policies include the following:

- A) 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 acknowledgement and which results in inaccurate findings or conclusions.
- C) Destruction of research records: The destruction of one's own or another's research data or records to specifically avoid the detection of wrongdoing or in contravention of the applicable funding agreement, institutional policy and/or laws, regulations and professional or disciplinary standards.
- D) Plagiarism: Presenting and using another's published or unpublished work, including theories, concepts, data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, as one's own, without appropriate referencing and, if required, without permission.
- E) Redundant publication or self-plagiarism: The re-publication of one's own previously published work or part thereof, including data, in any language, without adequate acknowledgment of the source, or justification.
- F) Invalid authorship: Inaccurate attribution of authorship, including attribution of authorship to persons other than those who have made a substantial contribution to, and who accept responsibility for, the contents of a publication or document.
- G) Inadequate acknowledgement: failure to appropriately recognize contributors.
- H) Management of conflict of interest: Failure to appropriately identify and address any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the institution's policy on conflict of interest in research, preventing one or more of the objectives (TAC-RCR 1.3) from being met.

Misrepresentation in Agency Application or Related Documents

- I) Providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information in a grant or award application or related document, such as a letter of support or a progress report.
- J) Applying for and/or holding an Agency award when deemed ineligible by NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR or any other research funding organization world-wide for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies.
- K) Listing of co-applicants, collaborators or partners without their agreement.

Mismanagement of Grants or Award Funds

- L) Using grant or award funds for purposes inconsistent with the policies of the Agencies; misappropriating grants and award funds; contravening Agency financial policies, namely the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide, Agency grants and awards guides; or providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.

Breach of Agency Policies or Requirements for Certain Types of Research

- M) Failing to meet Agency policy requirements or, to comply with relevant policies, laws or regulations, for the conduct of certain types of research activities; failing to obtain appropriate approvals, permits or certifications before conducting these activities.

Appendix C - Duties Pertaining to Authorship

This section is intended to provide clarification and guidelines respecting the meaning of authorship and the assignment of authorship credit. It must be understood that the right to authorship is based on an intellectual or creative contribution that is definitive and attributable to the research work. Research and scholarly collaborators should establish, as early as possible, how the attribution of authorship and allocation of copyright are to be assigned. There are some considerations that should be taken into account when determining the entitlement to and the order of authorship attribution, such as:

- one author should be identified as being responsible for the validity of the entire manuscript or authored object;
- all authors listed must have been involved actively in the research activities leading to the production of the authored work. Each is expected to have made a significant intellectual or practical contribution, understand the significance of the work presented, and be able to share responsibility for the content of the authored work;
- all authors listed should have seen and approved a manuscript or other research-based material before presentation or submission;
- the concept of “honorary authorship” is not a valid category.

Duties of the Principal Author(s)

The author who submits a manuscript for publication or presentation at scholarly meetings accepts the responsibility of having included as co- authors all persons who are entitled to co-authorship, and none who is inappropriate. Additionally, the submitting author(s) must make a reasonable attempt to send a draft copy of the manuscript and obtain consent from each co-author, including the order of names. Other contributions must be indicated in a footnote or an “Acknowledgements” section, in accordance with the standards of the discipline and/or the publisher.

Attribution of Authorship

The following rules govern the attribution of authorship:

- authorship is attributed to all those persons who have made significant intellectual contributions to the work and who share responsibility and accountability for the results;
- an administrative relationship to the investigation does not, in itself, qualify a person for authorship credit;
- the order of the names in a journal publication represent the importance and quality of the respective contributions of the signatories unless the rules of the journal or the custom of the discipline or author partnership specify otherwise;
- the attribution of authorship is not affected by whether researchers were paid for their contributions or by their employment status.

Acknowledgement

All public and private funding sources (e.g., grants, contracts and gifts, including endowed income supporting themed research chairs) used in the conduct of research must be acknowledged in resulting publications and dissemination.

Copyright

The allocation of copyright is governed by University policy, collective agreements, and the law.

Student-Professor Collaborations

Researchers should discuss with students and research assistants the nature of the collaboration, including conditions of authorship, before the research has begun or before they become involved in it.

- The student research trainee shall be informed of the Mount *Policy and Procedures for Integrity in Research and Scholarship*.
- A student must be granted due prominence on a list of co-authors of any multiple-authored presentation and/or article that is based primarily on the student's own dissertation/thesis/project, according to the normative practice in the discipline.

Appendix D – Resources Used to Formulate this Policy

- <http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/research/researchintegrity-proc.pdf>
- Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2016) - <http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/framework-cadre.html> (retrieved September 2016)
- Brock University – Responsible Conduct of Research - <https://brocku.ca/research-at-brock/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/Brock-RCR-Policy-1.pdf> (retrieved October 2019)
- HEC Montreal – Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research https://www.hec.ca/direction_services/secretariat_general/juridique/reglements_politiques/documents/policy-for-the-responsible-conduct-of-research.pdf (retrieved September 2019)
- McMaster University – Research Integrity Policy - <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Research-Integrity-Policy.pdf> (retrieved October 2019)
- Noury, C., Cloutier, M. and Roy, M.-C. (2018). *Toolkit for RCRC: Summary of Issues in Responsible Conduct in Research-Creation and Proposed Tools for Reflection*. Montréal, Québec: Research Project on Responsible Conduct in Research-Creation: Providing Creative Tools to Meet the Challenges of an Emerging Field. <http://hdl.handle.net/1866/20924>
- Olds College – Responsible Conduct of Research - <https://www.oldscollege.ca/Assets/external/about-us/governance/policies/d-student-academic/D38%20Responsible%20Conduct%20of%20Research.pdf> (retrieved October 2019)
- Queen’s University – Responsible Conduct of Research Policy - <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslclwww/files/files/senate/Senate%20Policy%20on%20Integrity%20in%20Research%20-%20Revised%20January%202018.pdf> (Retrieved September 2019)
- University of Guelph – Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and Procedures - <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/researchers-ethics-and-regulatory-compliance-other/responsible-conduct-research-policy-and> (retrieved September 2019)
- University of Ottawa – Responsible Conduct of Research - <https://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/policy-115-responsible-conduct-research> (retrieved September 2019)
- University of Winnipeg – Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship Policy - <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/Responsible-Conduct-of-Research-and-Scholarship-Policy.pdf> (retrieved September 2019)
- York University – Responsible Conduct of Research - <https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/misconduct-in-academic-research-policy/> (retrieved October 2019)
- Northwestern University – Institutional Responsibility for Research Compliance - https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.northwestern.edu/dist/4/1207/files/2016/10/ORI_News_Fall_2018_FINAL-x28123.pdf (retrieved November 2019)
- Panel on Research Ethics - [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition](#) (TCPS 2 – 2018)