



NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE

Responsible Conduct of Research

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POLICY

The College is committed to high standards of integrity, accountability and responsibility in the conduct of any College-sanctioned research that is done by College faculty, staff or students, or by any other scholars that have a formal association with the College. The College supports and encourages the maintenance of the highest ethical standards in research by adopting the principles outlined in this policy.

The College also recognizes and endorses the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2016)*¹. The College expects all researchers to adhere to the principles described herein. Misconduct in research is an offense which, depending on its severity, is subject to a range of disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal or expulsion. Allegations of misconduct shall be dealt with in a fair, unbiased and timely manner.

PURPOSE

This policy establishes principles and procedures 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 ethics and integrity of research.

SCOPE

Applies to all 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.

¹ <http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/>

PROCEDURE**A. APPROPRIATE ETHICS AND INTEGRITY WHILE CONDUCTING RESEARCH**

Appropriate conduct in research includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Obtaining, recording, analyzing, storing, reporting, and publishing data or results without fabricating or falsifying;
2. Recognizing the substantive contributions of all collaborators (including students); using unpublished work of other researchers and scholars only with permission and with due acknowledgment; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;
3. Ensuring that authorship of published work includes all those who have materially contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication, and only those persons;
4. Obtaining the permission of the author before using new information, concepts or data originally obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or applications for funds for research or training that may have been seen as a result of processes such as peer review;
5. 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;
6. 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; (note: currently the college does not undertake these forms of research. Should this change, the appropriate funding agency will be notified);
7. Seeking and obtaining approval by the appropriate authority (College) before engaging in any research;
8. Complying with the College regarding the operational and financial terms of research grants and/or contracts awarded to the researcher;
9. Revealing as early as possible in writing to the appropriate authorities responsible for overseeing the research project at the College any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the College to undertake research, particularly research involving the company's products. 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;
10. Revealing as early as possible in writing to the sponsors or the research project, this and other institutions, journals or funding agencies, any material conflict of interest, financial or other, that might influence their decision on whether the individual should be asked to review

manuscripts or application, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.

B. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Responsibilities of the College

- a. The College is responsible for promoting integrity in research. The College will conduct workshops and post all related documents and processes on the web. New faculty will be made aware of research and other policies as part of their orientation. Updates and changes will be announced through our electronic newsletter and be available on the College's website.
- b. 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.

2. Responsibilities of the Researcher

- a. The researcher is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct in research.
- b. The College holds researchers responsible for ensuring that they maintain the appropriate level of integrity and ethics while conducting research under this policy, and that they meet the standards for conducting research (*See above, 1. Appropriate Ethics And Integrity While Conducting Research*)

3. Authorship

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

4. Research Data

- a. Research is conducted and data is acquired in different manners. In the case of collaborative work, all members of the research team are responsible for ensuring proper acknowledgement of each team member when the data are released in any form.
- b. A complete set of all original research data must be retained by the principal researcher for a period of 5 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.

C. INVESTIGATING AND RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT IN RESEARCH

1. 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:
 - a. verbal warning;
 - b. special monitoring of future work;
 - c. letter of reprimand to the individual's permanent personnel file;
 - d. withdrawal of specific privileges;
 - e. removal of specific responsibilities;
 - f. suspension or steps to terminate the research appointment.

In the case of students, sanctions are defined in the *Policy, A-5.04 Student Non-Academic Code of Conduct*.

1. Informal Inquiry into Potential Misconduct

- a. Anyone who believes that there has been a breach of this policy may seek clarification, informally through the Office of the Vice President Academic and Research (VPAR) (or his/her designate named for this purpose). Anyone receiving a complaint is required to channel the complaint to the VPAR.
- b. Such inquiries shall be kept confidential and may result in no action or a shift to a formal investigation. The Office of the VPAR (or his/her designate named for this purpose) will review the allegations and documentation related to the potential misconduct to determine whether a shift to formal investigation is required. If the VPAR dismisses the complaint and the complainant wishes to pursue further, he/she must initiate a formal complaint.

2. Formal Investigation of Complaints

- a. A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Office of the VPAR. Anonymous allegations will not be entertained. Within ten days of receiving the complaint, the VPAR will establish an ad hoc committee ("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 or regional campuses involved will be part of the Committee. Persons external to the college may be appointed at the discretion of the VPAR.
- b. 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.
- c. To protect agency funding, if deemed necessary, the VPAR may withhold research funds until matters of misconduct are resolved.
- d. 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. The Committee will keep written records of all meetings and interviews. All information gathered will be stored by the office of the VPAR.
- e. The Committee will report its findings and recommendations to the VPAR only, within 60 days of being established. The Committee's decision regarding misconduct is final and binding on the College. The Report will include:
 - i. A summary of the allegations;
 - ii. Composition of the investigating Committee and explanation of selection process;
 - iii. Investigative methods;
 - iv. Persons interviewed or supplying information;
 - v. Proposed plan to restore reputations and protect complainants that have acted in good faith;
 - vi. Details on recommended sanctions; and
 - vii. Other relevant details.
 - f. If upon reviewing the report the VPAR believes the complaint is without foundation, he/she will dismiss the complaint and immediately advise the complainant and the respondent with a written response outlining the reasons for this decision. The VPAR will communicate his/her decision within 10 working days of receipt of the report. Based on the findings, the VPAR 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.
 - g. If the VPAR determines a breach to the integrity of the research, or that the researcher has acted unethically, the VPAR 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, within ten working days. Such information will be imparted 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 communiqué to the respondent and to the funding agency. Appeals processes will be completed before the report is sent to the funding agencies. The VPAR will have the final word on appeals.

3. 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.
- b. The Office of the VPAR will be responsible for keeping and controlling appropriate access to records. Such records will be kept in accordance with the College's Records Management and Retention Policy and Student Records and Privacy Policy.
- 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).

DEFINITIONS

College	Northern Lights College
College-sanctioned Research	Research that has received formal endorsement of the College (e.g. through the Research Ethics Board), and/or that is being funded on the basis of an association with the College (e.g. through an NSERC grant) and/or that uses significant College resources (e.g. faculty release time, financial or human resources for data collection or analysis). The fact that an employee makes occasional or minor use of College resources (e.g. searching the Internet for information that may be used for personal research) does not constitute "College-sanctioned research."
Complainant	The person making an allegation of inappropriate conduct related to integrity or ethics of research. The complainant may or may not be directly affected by the alleged misconduct.
Research	A systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge
Researcher	Any College employee or any scholar who has a formal association with the College, and who is involved in research that is carried out at, and sanctioned by, the College.
Respondent	The researcher accused by the complainant of inappropriate conduct related to integrity or ethics of research.

STAKEHOLDERS

Northern Lights College Board of Governors
 Northern Lights College Executive
 Northern Lights College Faculty and Staff
 Northern Lights College Students

RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

Applied Research Policy
 Conflict of Interest Policy
 Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy (UD²)
 Intellectual Property Policy (UD)
 Records Management and Retention Policy
 Student Records and Privacy Policy
 Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy
 Student Non-Academic Code of Conduct Policy
 Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research <http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/>
 Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014) <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/>

² UD denotes policy is under development

History

Created/Revised/Reviewed	Date	Author	Approved By
Created	August 1, 2017	Vice President Academic & Research	Policy Committee

Next Scheduled Review Date

April 2022

Northern Lights College would like to thank the College of New Caledonia for granting permission to use wording from their Policy *Integrity in Research and Scholarship*.