

## **Nova Scotia Community College**

### **Research Integrity Policy**

**(Wednesday, July 11, 2001)**

The Nova Scotia Community College community has an important role to play in maintaining high standards of research integrity. Such integrity requires careful supervision of research, including that conducted by students; competent use of methods; adherence to ethical standards of discipline; and the refusal to engage in or to condone instances of fraud or misconduct.

This policy applies to any employee of the NSCC, any student enrolled in the NSCC and/or partaking in research, or anyone else engaged in research in the institution in any capacity whatsoever.

#### **A. Definition of Misconduct in Scholarly Research**

1. Fabrication, falsification of research data.
2. Plagiarism, theft of ideas or intellectual property, or appropriation of another's work.
3. Failure to acknowledge or recognize the contribution of others, including:
  - a. co-researchers
  - b. students;
  - c. research assistants
4. Use of the unpublished works of others without permission.
5. Use of archival material in violation of the Copyright Act.
6. Abuse of supervisory power affecting collaborators, assistants, students and others associated with the research or any behaviour contrary to the Harassment and Discrimination Policy of the College.
7. Financial misconduct: failure to account for or misapplication or misuse of funds acquired for support of research, including, but not limited to:
  - a. failure to comply with the terms and conditions of grants and contracts
  - b. use of College resources, facilities and equipment without approval of Nova Scotia Community College.

8. Material failure to comply with relevant federal or provincial statutes or regulations for the protection of researchers, human participants, or the health and safety of the public, or for the welfare of laboratory animals.
9. Material failure to meet other relevant legal requirements that relate to the conduct of research, or, for grant holders, material failure to comply with regulations of the relevant agency or agencies concerning the conduct of research.
10. Failure to reveal any material conflict of interest, as defined in Section E, to sponsors or to those who commission work. Failure to reveal any material conflict of interest when asked to undertake reviews of grant applications or manuscripts for publication, or to test products for sale or distribution to the public.

## **B. Data Collection Gathering and Retention**

The retention of accurately recorded and retrievable results is of the utmost importance for the progress of scholarly inquiry. A researcher must have access to his/her original results in order to respond to questions regarding their research. Errors may be mistaken for misconduct when the primary experimental results are unavailable.

1. Primary data should normally remain in the school or department at all times and should be preserved as long as there is a reasonable need to refer to them. Results should be recorded accurately and be retrievable for five years following publication where the medium permits. Original primary research data should be recorded, when possible, in bound books with numbered pages or on appropriately protected electronic media. An index should be maintained to facilitate access to data. In no instance should primary data be destroyed while investigators, colleagues or readers of published results may raise questions answerable only by reference to the data except in the case where there is a bona fide requirement for confidentiality.
2. Entitlement to ownership, reproduction and publication of primary data, software and other products of research will vary according to the circumstances under which research is conducted. A common understanding of ownership should be reached among collaborators, supervisors, graduate students and the College before the research is undertaken. Nothing in this document on the matter of patents and copyrights supersedes the terms and conditions of the current Collective Agreement.
3. Issues of confidentiality will arise in some disciplines and areas of research and these must be appropriately addressed by the department or research unit involved. The Tri-Council document on the Ethics of

Research Involving Human Subjects provides guidelines for researchers in this area.

4. Subject to any limitations imposed by the terms of grants, contracts or other arrangements for the conduct of research, the principal investigator and all co-investigators must have free access to all original data and products of the research at all times. With the knowledge and authorization of the principal investigator, a member of the research team may make copies of the primary data for his/her own use.
5. When a principal investigator (either faculty member or student) leaves the College, arrangements for the safekeeping of records, data and products of research must be made. In the case of students, the data stays in the College; in the case of a faculty member, they normally would take the data with them.

### **C. Authorship**

1. In order to ensure the publication of accurate scholarly reports, two requirements must be met:
  - a. the active participation of each author in verifying and taking responsibility of the part of the manuscript that they have contributed;
  - b. the designation of one author who is responsible for the validity of the entire manuscript.
2. The principal criterion for authorship should be that the author(s) has/have made a significant intellectual and practical contribution. The concept of "honorary authorship" is unacceptable.
3. Students must be given appropriate recognition for authorship or collection of data in any publication.

### **D. Responsibilities of Principal Investigators and Supervisors**

1. Are to ensure that all research is conducted:
  - a. to the highest possible ethical standard;
  - b. with scholarly and academic integrity.
2. To provide their collaborators, students, staff and assistants with all reasonable information necessary to prevent misconduct as defined in this policy.

3. To monitor the work of students, research assistants, and others, and oversee the designing of research methodology and the processes of acquiring, recording, examining, interpreting and storing data. Simply editing the results of a research project does not constitute supervision.
4. Collegial discussions among all research personnel in a research unit should be held regularly to contribute to the scholarly efforts of group members and to provide informal review.
5. A faculty member listed as the principal investigator or co-investigator should be able to verify the authenticity of all data or other factual information generated in his/her research.

#### **E. Conflict of Interest**

1. It is essential to recognize situations of existing, potential or apparent conflict of interest promptly.
2. A conflict of interest arises in the following circumstances:
  - a. When the personal or business interests of the researcher, including the interests of his/her family or business associates conflicts with the researcher's obligations to:
    - i. the College, including respect for the College's policies;
    - ii. students, or staff, under his/her supervision;
  - b. When, without prior agreement, use is made of College resources, including secretarial, office and administrative services, technical services, laboratories, assistants, premises, logo, insignia, for the personal gain or benefit of faculty or for the gain or benefit of others related to or associated with the faculty.
  - c. When the work of students is directed with a view to benefiting the personal or business purposes of the researcher, his/her associates or relations, to the detriment of the student's progress of scholarly academic endeavors.
  - d. When the personal or business interests of the researcher, his/her associates or relations compromise the independence and impartiality necessary to perform his/her duties.
  - e. When a researcher uses confidential information that is gathered in the course of his/her duties for personal or business gain or for the gain of his/her associates or relations.

- f. If, in the course of his/her duties a researcher incurs an obligation to an individual or business that is likely to benefit from special treatment or favors granted by the researcher or the College.
- g. When a researcher influences or seeks to influence a decision made by the College or an outside agency for personal or business benefit.
- h. When a researcher accepts an executive appointment, employment, or shares in any non-College organization which might reasonably expect them to disclose confidential or proprietary information to which they have access by virtue of their College appointments.
- i. When a researcher accepts, without written authorization of the College, a research grant or contract from any outside non-College organization from which they receive or may subsequently receive direct or indirect benefits as an executive officer or shareholder.
- j. When a researcher employs students in any commercial venture related to the student's study or research or proceeds to commercialize the student's work in such a way as to restrict the student's ability to complete their academic program or their ability to communicate their findings.

## **F. Procedures for Investigation and Resolution of Complaints in Respect of Alleged Breaches of Research Integrity Policy**

This policy is applicable to all allegations of breach of the Research Integrity Policy, including without limitations:

- a. Misconduct in Scholarly Research;
- b. Data Collection, Gathering and Retention;
- c. Authorship;
- d. Responsibilities of Supervisors;
- e. Conflict of Interest.

## **G. Complaint Procedure**

1. Anyone who believes that there has been a breach of the research integrity policy may seek informal assistance and may request a preliminary investigation from the Director of Research at any time.
2. Such inquiries shall be kept confidential by the Director of Research.
3. All faculty researchers, students, research assistants and staff have an obligation to report to the Director of Research, any circumstances which they believe involve a breach of the Research Integrity Policy of Nova Scotia Community College.
4. The Director of Research shall take such steps as may be reasonable to protect against retribution or coercion of complainants, including students, staff and research assistants under the supervision of faculty members whose conduct is the subject of misconduct allegations.
5. A formal complaint must be made in writing before the Director takes any steps against the individual whose conduct is the subject matter of the complaint. Such a complaint may be formulated by any person who has reviewed the relevant information.
6. Complaints shall contain sufficient details to enable the respondent to understand the matter that is to be investigated. A complaint in writing shall identify the person or persons who made the allegations if the Director deems that such identification is necessary to evaluate the complaint. No such person shall be identified unless that person has expressly so agreed.
7. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Director shall, in a timely fashion, conduct an investigation into the allegation and discuss with the faculty member whose conduct is in question, the nature of the complaint and the circumstances surrounding it.
8. In the event the Director, at his/her discretion, determines that the formal complaint is without foundation, then the Director may dismiss the complaint and immediately advise the complainant accordingly providing written justification for the decision.
9. If, in the opinion of the Director, a satisfactory resolution of a formal complaint is possible, the Director shall attempt such a resolution.
10. In the event the Director is unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution, or if the Director determines that an investigation is required, he/she will refer the complaint to a committee for investigation.
11. The Director of Research, in consultation with the appropriate Vice President, will strike a committee of three independent persons with

relevant experience in the area of research and scholarship involved in a particular case, to conduct an investigation. No member of the department/school involved shall be among the three persons appointed. The committee will conduct interviews as they deem appropriate to discern the fact. Persons external to the College may be appointed if necessary. During any meeting with the researcher, the researcher is entitled to be accompanied by an advocate of the researcher's choosing. The researcher has the right to know the allegations against him/her and has the right to answer the allegations both orally and in writing.

12. The committee will address the allegations made and determine if they have merit and in doing so will act fairly and conduct its proceedings in a manner consistent with the principles of natural justice.
13. The committee shall make its final decision within two calendar months from its appointment and will report in writing to the Vice-President , who will provide a copy of the report to the individuals named and to the Director of Research within five working days.
14. In cases where the committee determines that misconduct or breach of Research Integrity Policy has occurred, such a determination shall be cause for discipline in accordance with either the appropriate Collective Agreement, or the academic regulations in place.
15. In the case of unfounded allegations, efforts will be made by the Institution to protect or restore the reputation of those unjustly accused.
16. Reports and records will be kept by the Director of Research for a period of 10 years, and access to such records will be by application to the Director of Research. The College will conform to the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information Act in such applications.
17. Where misconduct is found to have occurred, the College will inform any granting agencies involved in cases where the research is funded by one of the granting agencies.