

GEORGIAN COLLEGE OPERATING PROCEDURES & PRACTICES

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Responsible
Department: Academic

Procedure
Number: 1-132

Research Integrity Procedure

PURPOSE: This policy outlines the expectations for ethical conduct in all scholarship and research initiatives, principles of research integrity and describes procedures for misconduct. Research is defined as an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.

SCOPE: College wide

RATIONALE: Research integrity is a commitment to intellectual honesty and personal responsibility for one's actions. Researchers must follow research practices that characterize the responsible and ethical conduct of research. As an institution accountable to the public, we must foster an environment that promotes integrity in the conduct of research. In order to maximize the quality and benefits of research, a positive research environment is required. For researchers, this implies duties of honest and thoughtful inquiry, rigorous analysis, commitment to the dissemination of research results, and adherence to the use of professional standards.

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduction

Georgian College is committed to maintaining a culture of honesty and integrity in all of its research initiatives. Anyone conducting research that is in any way associated with the college will adhere to integrity principles in his or her research activities. Through this procedure, the College provides the integrity framework for such activities, and will provide education, guidance, and support on research and scholarly integrity as required. The Research Integrity practice will be posted on the College website and professional development workshops will be held as needed.

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 shall comply with applicable laws and regulations. At a minimum, researchers are responsible for the following:

- Using a high level of rigour in proposing and performing research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing data and findings.
- Keeping complete and accurate records of data, methodologies and findings, including graphs and images, in accordance with the applicable funding agreement, institutional policies and/or laws, regulations, and professional or disciplinary standards in a manner that will allow verification or replication of the work by others.
- Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs and images.
- Including as authors, with their consent, all those and only those who have materially or conceptually contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication or document, in a manner consistent with their respective contributions, and authorship policies of relevant publications.
- Acknowledging, in addition to authors, all contributors and contributions to research, including writers, funders and sponsors.
- Appropriately managing any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the institution's policy on conflict of interest in research, in order to ensure that the objectives of The Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (Link to the Tri-Agency Policy) are met.

2. Principles of Research Integrity

- Intellectual integrity in all research actions. College researchers will conduct research with honesty and integrity, ensuring intellectual competence in research initiatives.
- Stewardship of resources. College researchers will utilize facility, infrastructure, and other resources efficiently and honestly, ensuring good value for the use of such resources.

- Utilization of grant monies as outlined in grant agreements. College researchers will respect all requirements and guidelines in agreements for funds provided by funding organizations.
- Intellectual property protection. College researchers will respect the college policy on intellectual property, and respect privacy and confidentiality concerns in all research activities. Conflicts of interest (actual or perceived) will be disclosed as per the guidelines.
- Respect for human subjects where such subjects are part of research activities. Any research project which proposes the use of human subjects under any conditions must be approved by the Georgian College Research Ethics Board (REB).
- Maintenance of records and documentation. College researchers will maintain records related to activities and finances with responsibility for such records residing with the principal researcher or a department manager.
- Professional development for college community. The college will ensure appropriate training and support for college researchers and, where appropriate, student research assistants. The college will also provide on-going professional development activities in support of its research mandate.

3. Protection of Research Data and Intellectual Property

Issues of confidentiality will arise in some areas of research, and these will be addressed by the department or research unit involved. In some instances, individuals affiliated with Georgian College, including employees and students as well as external community, will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement to keep information associated with research data and/or intellectual property confidential. In any instance where confidentiality is violated by an individual affiliated with Georgian College, the College will take action to the extent deemed appropriate by the College.

Primary data or information related to research activities should normally remain in the school or department of origin at all times and should be preserved for as long as there is a reasonable need to refer to the data, normally for a period of no less than five years. In no instance should primary data be destroyed while there is reasonable expectation that investigators, colleagues or readers of published results may raise questions that would require referencing the original data.

Entitlement to ownership, reproduction, and distribution of intellectual property shall be governed by Georgian College policies, procedures and practices regarding Intellectual Property.

4. Authorship of Research Results

In order to ensure the publication of accurate scholarly reports, each author must verify and take responsibility for the part of the publication to which he or she has contributed. One author will be designated as the main author of the document, normally the principal researcher. Other authors must have made a substantial material contribution (other than a financial contribution) to be named as an author.

Students and research assistants must be given appropriate recognition for authorship or collection of data in any publication.

5. Responsibilities of Principal Researcher

- a. To ensure that all research is conducted to the highest possible ethical standard and with academic integrity.
- b. To provide collaborators, students, staff and assistants with information necessary to prevent misconduct as defined in this practice.
- c. To monitor the work of students, research assistants, etc. and oversee the designing of research methodology and the processes of acquiring, recording, and analyzing of research data.
- d. To hold regular meetings, discussions, etc. to ensure that all researchers are provided with timely information.
- e. To verify the validity of research results and all data when requested.

6. Conflict of Interest

It is important to recognize and deal with existing or potential conflicts of interest in the conduct of research and scholarly activities. A conflict of interest arises in the following circumstances:

- When the personal or business interests of the researcher, including the interests of his/her relations and associates, conflicts with the researcher's obligations to the College, students or staff under his or her supervision.
- When, without prior agreement, use is made of College resources, including secretarial, office, administrative, technical, laboratories, assistants, premises, logo or insignia, for the personal gain or benefit of researchers or for the gain or benefit of others related to or associated with the researchers.

- When the work of students is directed with a view to benefiting the personal or business purposes of the researcher, or his or her relations or associates, to the detriment of the student's academic progress or goals.
- When the personal or business interests of the researcher, his or her relations or associates, compromise the independence and impartiality necessary to perform required duties.
- When a researcher uses confidential information that is gathered in the course of his or her duties for personal or business gain or for the gain of his or her relations or associate.
- If, in the course of his or her duties, a researcher incurs an obligation to an individual or business that is likely to benefit from special treatment or favours granted by the researcher or the College.
- When a researcher influences or seeks to influence decision made by the College or an outside agency for personal or business benefit.
- When a researcher accepts an appointment, employment, or shares in any non-College organization which might reasonably expect him or her to disclose confidential or proprietary information to which he or she has access by virtue of a College appointment.
- When a researcher accepts, without written authorization of the College, a research grant or contract from any outside non-College organization from which he or she receives or may subsequently receive direct or indirect benefits.

7. Definitions of Misconduct in Scholarly Research

The following list contains examples of scholarly breaches of conduct.

7.1 Breaches of Tri-Agency Research Integrity Policy

- **Fabrication:** Making up data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.
- **Redundant publications:** The re-publication of one's own previously published work or part thereof, or data, in the same or another language, without adequate acknowledgment of the source, or justification.
- **Invalid authorship:** Inaccurate attribution of authorship, including attribution of authorship to persons other than those who have contributed sufficiently to take responsibility for the intellectual content, or agreeing to be listed as author to a publication for which one made little or no material contribution.
- **Inadequate acknowledgement:** Failure to appropriately recognize contributions of others in a manner consistent with their respective contributions and authorship policies of relevant publications.
- **Mismanagement of Conflict of Interest:** Failure to appropriately manage 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 of the Framework (Section 1.3) from being met.

7.2 Misrepresentation in an Agency Application or Related Document

- 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.
- Applying for and/or holding an Agency award when deemed ineligible by NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR or any other research or research funding organization world-wide for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies.
- Listing of co-applicants, collaborators or partners without their agreement.

7.3 Mismanagement of Grants or Award Funds

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.

7.4 Breaches of Agency Policies or Requirements for Certain Types of Research

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.

8. Allegations of Misconduct in Scholarly Research

Any allegations of scholarly research misconduct must adhere to the existing and related college policies and collective agreements for identification and resolution. This may apply to misconduct in scholarly research, data collection, gathering and retention, authorship, responsibilities of principal researchers, conflict of interest, or other misconduct.

- a. The allegation of misconduct must be made in writing (normally within six months of the alleged misconduct), signed and dated. The allegation must be forwarded to the Vice-President, Academic or designate at the VP level. The allegation must contain sufficient detail to enable the respondent to understand the allegation. The Vice-President, Academic may require that additional information be provided in the complaint. Anonymous allegations will not normally be entertained. However, if the evidence is compelling, the Vice-President, Academic may elect to initiate an investigation into the complaint.
- b. The Vice-President, Academic may resolve the allegation after meeting with the relevant parties and render a decision in writing. The respondent will be informed of his or her right to have a third party present at this meeting (and any future meetings). The Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with the appropriate divisional and research heads, may also determine that insufficient evidence exists for a complaint and may dismiss the allegation. Such a determination will be made in writing to all relevant parties. The complainant may appeal the dismissal of the complaint, in writing, to the Executive Committee of the College, whose decision to have the complaint investigated is final.
- c. The Vice-President, Academic will determine whether a formal investigation is warranted within two weeks of the allegation. The Vice-President, Academic will attend this and follow-up meetings to assist in the resolution of the allegation. The Vice-President will appoint a three person investigation committee of academics, one of whom with research

experience should be external to the College. A committee chair will be elected and will determine the process for obtaining and recording necessary evidence. While the Investigation Committee reports its findings to the Vice-President, Academic, the Vice-President does not participate in the investigation.

- d. The Investigation Committee will ensure the identification and gathering of all relevant documentation. Any and all persons relevant to the allegation will be offered the opportunity to present allegations and rebuttals. The privacy of all individuals will be protected at all times during the complaint process, and documentation and materials will be recorded and held confidential to the parties involved in the dispute process and determination, under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Vice-President, Academic. Access to the information must comply with Freedom of Information guidelines.
- e. The Investigation Committee may request additional documentation or external advice if relevant for the resolution of the allegation.
- f. The Investigation Committee will submit its report and recommendations in writing to the Vice-President, Academic with a copy to both the complainant and respondent within 60 days. The report should contain details of the complaint, selection of committee members and rationale for their appointment, methodology for the complaint investigation, evidence gathered, persons interviewed, and recommendations for action (including any sanctions and methods to restore reputations). Consistent with existing collective agreements, sanctions may include reprimand, suspension, or reparations made to the complainant or others. The investigative committee has the authority to rule on the allegation of misconduct and apply appropriate sanctions that are binding on the institution.
- g. An appeal to the Vice-President, Academic or designate may be made in writing within one week of the decision being communicated by either the complainant or the respondent. The Vice-President, Academic or designate will review the appeal and determine whether the investigation committee should review its recommendations.
- h. Should misconduct be found to have occurred in research projects supported by any of the Tri-councils, a report on the allegations, investigation, and resolution will be provided to the appropriate council within 30 days of the completion of the investigation. Should an investigation be requested by one of the Councils, a report will be provided to the Council, regardless of the outcome of the investigation. Agency funding will withheld until the investigation is complete. A refund of all of part of the funds to the funding agency may be warranted.

- i. Although the process of investigation should protect the privacy of individuals, the investigation committee may propose steps to restore the reputation of individuals for unfounded allegations, as well as actions to protect those who have made an allegation in good faith and all persons involved in an inquiry/investigation.

9. Research Involving Biohazards

Georgian College does not carry out research involving biohazards. Should the College in the future plan research activities involving the use of biohazards, it will notify relevant funding agencies and comply with the Health Canada Laboratory Biosafety guidelines.

10. Research Involving Animals

Georgian College has not carried out any research that involves the use of animals. Should the College in the future plan research activities involving the use of animals, it will notify relevant funding agencies and abide by CCAC guidelines for such research.

(Adapted with permission from the Niagara College Research Integrity Policy. The practice follows the guidelines of the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct Of Research)

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Academic

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