

INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

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AUTHORITY	SENATE
PRIMARY CONTACT	REGISTRAR

POLICY

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) supports and encourages the maintenance of the highest standards of conduct in research and scholarship. Primary responsibility for high standards of conduct in research and scholarship rests with the individuals carrying out these activities.

REGULATIONS

TRU expects all faculty members, staff, students, post doctoral researchers and all other research personnel associated with TRU to adhere to the principles described in these regulations. Misconduct in research and scholarship is an offence 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 according to the rules of natural justice.

Other TRU policies with potential relevance include Academic Honesty (Policy ED 5-0), faculty grievance, faculty discipline, academic freedom (see Collective Agreement between TRU and the TRU Faculty Association) and Conflict of Interest (Policy ADM-4-2).

The University will actively promote understanding of research and scholarship integrity issues by means such as dissemination of written materials, and offering workshops and seminars.

1. PRINCIPLES

TRU expects all those conducting research and scholarship to adhere to ethical standards including but not limited to the following:

- 1.1 using scholarly and scientific rigour and integrity in obtaining, recording and analysing data and in reporting and publishing results;

- 1.2 recognizing the substantive contributions of all collaborators; using unpublished work of other researchers and scholars only with permission and due acknowledgment; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;
- 1.3 ensuring that authorship of published work includes only persons who have substantively contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication;
- 1.4 obtaining written permission of the author before using information, concepts or data obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or through applications for funds for research or training seen as a result of processes such as peer review.

2. APPROVALS

Researchers must seek and obtain approval from:

- 2.1 the Research Ethics Committee - Human Subjects (REC-HS) before engaging in research involving human subjects research protocols in the performance of the research. The committee has the authority to suspend and/or terminate research for failure to comply with the ongoing review process or on the basis of information from the review or other sources indicating the research should be halted on ethical grounds. Except in the case of a reversal following formal appeal, the institution may not reverse a Research Ethics Committee - Human Subjects decision reached on grounds of ethics.
- 2.2 Division/Faculty/School Ethics Review Committee (DFSERC). In the case of TRU students performing research as part of their course work, students must obtain approval from a Divisional/Faculty/School Ethics Review Committee (DFSERC) before engaging in research involving human subjects. This committee will only review research designated 'minimal risk' as defined in the Tri-council Policy Statement (TCPS). Projects rated higher than 'minimal risk' will be reviewed by the institutional REC:HS.

In the case where a number of students in a course are engaged in similar research activities, the instructor may apply to the DFSERC for course level approval on a yearly basis. The instructor may approve individual research projects that are considered to be included within the specified parameters of the application. The DFSERC may monitor the instructor decisions. Decisions of the DFSERC may be reviewed or reversed by the institutional REC:HS.

- 2.3 the Research Ethics Committee - Animal Subjects before engaging in any research involving animals and then comply fully with the approved research protocols in the performance of the research. The committee has the authority to suspend and/or terminate research for failure to comply with the ongoing review process or on the basis of information from the review or other sources indicating the research should be halted on ethical grounds. Except in the case of a reversal following formal appeal, the institution may not reverse a Research Ethics Committee - Animal Subjects decision reached on grounds of ethics.

- 2.4 the Occupational Health and Safety Department before engaging in research involving biohazards, ionizing radiation and any other potential health or safety hazards and then comply fully with the approved research protocols in the performance of the research.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Researchers and scholars must:

- 3.1 comply with Scholarly Activities Committee policy as it relates to the operational and financial terms of research grants and/or contracts awarded to the researcher;
- 3.2 reveal in writing, in a timely manner any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the University 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); and
- 3.3 reveal in writing, in a timely manner, to sponsors, TRU and other relevant universities/ colleges, journals or funding agencies, any material conflict of interest that might influence their decision on whether the individual should be asked to review manuscripts or applications, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.

4. MISCONDUCT

- 4.1 Misconduct in research and scholarship includes, but is not limited to, any deviation from these modes of behaviour. TRU is responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct involving its researchers and scholars. Such allegations may arise from sources within or outside the University. Whatever their source, motivation or accuracy, allegations of misconduct in research have the potential to cause great harm to the person accused, to the person making the accusation, to the University, and to research and scholarship in general. They, therefore, require prompt, effective action by the University.
- 4.2 Acts of scholarly misconduct may be committed with varying degrees of deliberateness. The borderline between carelessness, negligence and intentional dishonesty may be very narrow. The result is objectionable in any case, even if different degrees of discipline are appropriate.

5. ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT

Allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship may be made by any person.

5.1 Informal Consultation

Alleged misconduct may be resolvable through informal consultation; departments are encouraged to establish mechanisms for such informal resolution. Should a power imbalance exist in the relationship between parties (e.g. between student and teacher) which might

prevent an informal resolution, the accused/complainant has the right to request and receive a formal hearing.

If the complaint is not carried beyond the stage of informal consultation, TRU shall maintain no written record of the names of the parties or the precise particulars of the allegations.

5.2 Formal Investigation

- i. Should informal consultation fail to resolve the matter, a complaint may be made to the Vice President, Academic.
- ii. Allegations of misconduct must be submitted to the Vice President in writing, normally within six months of the alleged misconduct. If the Vice President was a party to the alleged misconduct, the President will assume the Vice President's role in applying this policy.
- iii. Allegations must detail and document the alleged misconduct.
- iv. Allegations normally must be dated and signed by the complainant. However, the Vice President may elect to initiate an investigation under this Policy upon receipt of compelling evidence submitted anonymously.

5.3 Upon receipt of an allegation of misconduct, the Vice President or designate will request in writing a meeting with the respondent. The request will:

- i. include a summary of the allegation;
- ii. inform the respondent that the purpose of the meeting is to establish whether a formal investigation is required; and
- iii. inform the respondent of the right to be accompanied by a person chosen by the respondent in this and any other future meetings.

5.4 Records are to be kept of all meetings by the Vice President.

5.5 The Vice President, or designate will inform the respondent in writing whether:

- i. the allegation has been dismissed;
- ii. a formal investigation is required.

5.6 Should a formal investigation be required, the Vice President or designate will inform the respondent in writing, including a full copy of the signed allegation and an invitation to respond to it in writing.

5.7 Upon commencement of an investigation, the Vice President, Academic shall consult with the

Chairpersons of relevant TRU research ethics committees.

- 5.8 Normally within 35 working days of the commencement of the formal investigation, and after considering all the evidence gathered by him/her, or the designate(s), the Vice President or designate shall reach a decision and prepare a draft written report.
- 5.9 The appropriate criterion for a decision is the presence of clear and convincing evidence. The report will include:
- i. a copy of the signed allegations, and the written response, if any, of the respondent;
 - ii. the findings of the Vice President or designate as to whether the allegation has been upheld or not; and
 - iii. a statement of the reasons for the finding.
- 5.10 The report shall also describe any actions to be taken including, but not limited to, those listed below:
- i. sanctions against a respondent found to have engaged in misconduct;
 - ii. actions to protect or restore the reputation of the respondent, if wrongly accused;
 - iii. actions to protect a complainant found to have made a responsible accusation;
 - iv. sanctions against a complainant found to have made an irresponsible or malicious allegation.
- 5.11 Sanctions will depend on the severity of the offense and may include (but are not limited to): reprimand, suspension and dismissal (employees) or reprimand, suspension and expulsion (students). If sanctions are to be imposed against either the respondent or complainant, the Vice President, Academic will meet with that person to discuss the case prior to his/her final decision and finalization of the report. If the investigation was carried out by the Vice President's designate, then the report of the designate(s) will be discussed with either the complainant or the respondent. A copy of the final report will be sent to the complainant and the respondent.