

Policy:
Approved by Executive:
Supersedes Policy:

Responsible Conduct of Research
September 12, 2012
Integrity in Research and Scholarship (June 8, 2011)

1.1 Introduction:

Sault College is committed to serving our regional communities and industries through the pursuit of opportunities for networking, mentoring, research and collaboration. To enhance its capacity as a regional partner, Sault College is dedicated to cultivating a positive research environment by establishing the necessary accreditations, principles and practices, and by encouraging faculty research opportunities that contribute to excellence in teaching and scholarship.

A positive research environment is one in which personnel involved in research or scholarship activities use professional standards to ethically conduct honest, quality research involving rigorous methods and analysis and are committed to the dissemination of results. As an institution, Sault College will foster and maintain such an environment by supporting and promoting the responsible conduct of research and by providing a framework within which research will be conducted that is compliant with the Tri-Agency policies and all other applicable requirements. However, the primary responsibility for the adherence to these principles rests with the researchers.

1.2 Purpose:

The primary purpose of this policy is to establish a code of conduct to promote a positive research environment at Sault College that ensures and maintains the responsible conduct of research.

It sets out the responsibilities of researchers with respect to research integrity, applying for and managing Agency funds, performing research, disseminating results, requirements for conducting certain types of research, and defines what constitutes a breach of Agency policies. Additionally, it details the process for addressing allegations of all types of policy breaches, and reporting them to the Agencies.

All Sault College staff will be made aware of this policy and it will be posted on the Sault College's intranet. Sault College faculty and staff conducting research must make all reasonable efforts to ensure non-employees involved in research activities at the College are aware of, and comply with this policy.

1.3 Scope:

This policy applies to all research that is funded by the Tri-Agencies and is conducted under the auspices or jurisdiction of Sault College and to all researchers who apply for or hold agency funding as required by the provisions of the **Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2011)**. The provisions of this policy are subject to the specific terms and conditions of individual funding agreements and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards between the Agencies and Sault College.

1.4 Definitions:

Please see Glossary in Appendix B.

2. Responsibilities of Researchers

2.1. Compliance With the Tri-Agency Research Integrity Policy

2.1.1. Promoting Research Integrity

Researchers shall strive to follow the best research practices honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for and in the dissemination of knowledge. Additionally, researchers shall follow the requirements of all applicable Sault College policies and professional or disciplinary standards and shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations. At a minimum, researchers are responsible for the following:

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Referencing and, where applicable, obtaining permission for the use of all published and unpublished work, including data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs and images.
- d) 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.
- e) Acknowledging, in addition to authors, all contributors and contributions to research, including writers, funders and sponsors.
- f) Appropriately managing any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with Sault College's policy - *Conflict of Interest in Research*, in order to ensure that the objectives of the Tri-Agency Framework are met.

2.2. Applying for and Holding Agency Funding

- a) Applicants and holders of Agency grants and awards shall provide true, complete and accurate information in their funding applications and related documents and represent themselves, their research and their accomplishments in a manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field.
- b) Applicants shall not apply for, and/or hold, funds from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), (the Agencies), or any other research or research funding organization world-wide if they are not currently eligible for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies.
- c) Principal funding applicants shall ensure that others listed on the application have agreed to be included.

2.3. Management of Agency Grant and Award Funds

Researchers are responsible for using grant or award funds in accordance with the policies of the Agencies, including the *Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide* and Agency grants and awards guides; and shall provide true, complete and accurate information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.

2.4. Agency Requirements for Certain Types of Research

Researchers shall comply with all applicable Agency 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;
- 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
- The Occupational Health & Safety Act

2.5. Rectifying a Breach of Agency Policy

Researchers in breach of an Agency policy shall be proactive in rectifying a breach, for example, by correcting the research record, providing a letter of apology to those impacted by the breach, or repaying funds.

3. Breaches of Agency Policies by Researchers

3.1 Breaches of Agency Policies

Researchers are responsible to follow all requirements of applicable Agency policies. Breaches of Agency policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

3.1.1. Breaches of Tri-Agency - Research Integrity Policy

- 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 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.
- f) *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.
- g) *Inadequate acknowledgement*: Failure to appropriately recognize contributions of others in a manner consistent with their respective contributions and authorship policies of relevant publications.
- h) *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 Tri Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct Of Research (Section 1.3) from being met.

3.1.2. Misrepresentation in an Agency Application or Related Document

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Listing of co-applicants, collaborators or partners without their agreement.

3.1.3. 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.

3.1.4. 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.

3.2. Roles of Individuals in Addressing Allegations of Policy Breaches

Researchers and others play important roles in the process for addressing allegations of policy breaches and in helping to ensure that allegations are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. The following are guidelines for those making or involved in an allegation:

- a) Responsible allegations, or information related to responsible allegations, should be sent directly to the the Vice-President, Academic and Research, in writing.

Individuals are expected to report in good faith any information pertaining to possible breaches of Agency policies by a researcher that is currently employed by the College, is enrolled as a student or has a formal association with the College.

- b) Individuals involved in an inquiry or investigation must follow this policy as a complainant, a respondent or a third party, as appropriate.

4. Responsibilities of Institutions

4.1. Memorandum of Understanding on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards sets out the minimum roles, responsibilities and requirements that Sault College and all other eligible institutions must meet as a condition of eligibility to apply for, and hold, Agency funding. This document can be found on the NSERC website and is a formal agreement, a copy of which has been signed by the highest authority for each party.

4.2. Promoting Responsible Conduct of Research

Sault College strives to provide an environment that supports the best research and that fosters researchers' abilities to act honestly, accountably, openly and fairly in the search for, and dissemination of, knowledge by:

- a) Establishing and applying responsible research conduct policies and procedures that meet the requirements of the Tri-Agency Framework
- b) Reporting to the *Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research* (SRCR) as required in section 4.4
- c) Promoting education on, and awareness of, the importance of the responsible conduct of research

4.3. Addressing Allegations of Policy Breaches

This section addresses the procedure for managing allegations of all types of policy breaches by researchers conducting research under the auspices or jurisdiction of Sault College and ensures that they are handled appropriately and in a timely manner.

4.3.1. Definitions

The definitions of researchers' responsibilities and breaches of Agency policies as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of this Policy.

4.3.2. Confidentiality

Sault College will strive to protect the privacy of the complainant(s) and respondent(s) to the extent that is possible subject to the applicable privacy laws.

4.3.3. Receiving Allegations

- a) All confidential enquiries, allegations of breaches of policies, and information related to allegations must be made within six months of the alleged misconduct, be in writing, signed and dated, and forwarded to the Vice-President, Academic and Research.
- b) Anonymous allegations will not normally be entertained. However, if the evidence is compelling, the Vice-President, Academic and Research may elect to initiate an investigation into the complaint.
- c) Individuals making an allegation in good faith or providing information related to an allegation will be protected, to the extent possible, from reprisals, in a manner consistent

with relevant legislation. To facilitate this, information that is brought forward will be kept confidential and the privacy of individuals will be protected while allowing due process to the extent possible.

- d) The College may independently, or at the Agency's request in exceptional circumstances, take immediate action to protect the administration of Agency funds. Immediate actions could include freezing grant accounts, requiring a second authorized signature from a College representative on all expenses charged to the researcher's grant accounts, or other measures, as appropriate.

4.3.4. Investigating Allegations

- a) An allegation of misconduct will be initially reviewed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research to establish whether it is a responsible allegation and if an investigation is required. Additional information may be requested in confidence from the complainant and from appropriate staff such as the Deans to assist in the inquiry. The determinations of the initial inquiry will be made in writing and communicated to the parties and may include one of the following outcomes:
 - I. The allegation may be dismissed where it is determined that it is not a breach of policy or insufficient evidence exists
 - II. The allegation may be resolved after a meeting with the parties
 - III. A formal investigation by an Investigation Committee will be initiated within 4 weeks
- b) If an allegation is not immediately dismissed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research after the initial review and is deemed to be a responsible allegation, the following process for an inquiry will be followed:
 - I. The allegation shall be disclosed to the respondent, within 10 business days, who will then have 10 business days to respond to the allegation. The information that is brought forth will be kept in confidence to the extent possible to protect the privacy of the individuals.
 - II. After reviewing the information from the respondent, the Vice-President, Academic and Research may dismiss or resolve the allegation and notify both parties in writing.
 - III. The validity of an allegation may be determined after a meeting with the complainant and respondent that provides them with an opportunity to be heard as part of an inquiry. A decision on the outcome of this meeting will be rendered in writing to both parties.
 - IV. If the allegation is related to activities funded by the Agency and involves significant financial, health and safety, or other risks the Vice-President, Academic and Research Agency must notify the *Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research* (SRCR) immediately (as per section 4.4) and special measures may be necessary under exceptional circumstances.
 - V. If a breach of policy did not occur, a letter indicating that an investigation is not required will be sent by the Vice-President, Academic and Research to the SRCR, within 2 months of the receipt of the initial allegation as per section 4.4.
 - VI. If a breach of policy is confirmed by the inquiry, a formal investigation will be required and the allegation will be forwarded to an *Investigation Committee*. A report of the committee findings will be sent by the Vice-President, Academic and Research

to the SRCR, within 7 months of the receipt of the initial allegation as per section 4.4.

- c) The Vice-President, Academic and Research will determine whether a formal investigation is warranted within 4 weeks of the allegation and will appoint an ad-hoc, three-person Investigation Committee with the authority to decide on misconduct and whose decision is binding on the College. The committee members shall have the necessary expertise, be without conflict of interest, whether real or apparent, and one of the committee members shall be external with no current affiliation with the College. The following process will be followed for the investigation:
- I. A committee chair will be appointed and will determine the process for obtaining and recording necessary evidence. The Vice-President, Academic and Research does not participate in the investigation.
 - II. 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.
 - III. 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 under the jurisdiction of the Vice-President, Academic and Research. Access to the information must follow Freedom of Information guidelines.
 - IV. The Investigation Committee may request additional documentation or external advice if relevant for the resolution of the allegation.
 - V. The Investigation Committee will submit its report and recommendations in writing to the Vice-President, Academic and Research with a copy to both the complainant and respondent within 3 months of the initial notification to the respondent that a committee will be formed.
 - VI. The report should contain details of the complaint, a list of the committee members, methodology used for the investigation, evidence gathered, persons interviewed and details of interview, and recommendations for action (including any sanctions and methods to restore reputations).
 - VII. An appeal to the President of Sault College may be made in writing within one week of the decision being communicated by either the complainant or the respondent. The president will review the report and upon completion of the appeals proceedings, the decision rendered will be final.
 - VIII. Reports and records will be kept by the Vice-President, Academic and Research office in a confidential file for a period of 10 years and access to such records will be by application to the President's office. Access to reports and records are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

4.3.5. Recourse

- a) The investigation committee's report, including its final decision, shall be provided to the Vice-President, Academic and Research within 3 months of the initial notification to the respondent that a committee will be formed.
- b) The Vice-President, Academic and Research will take into account the recommendations of the Investigation Committee and the severity of the breach to determine the recourse that will be taken by the College. Such recourse can include, but is not limited to:

- I. Issuing a letter of concern to the researcher;
- II. Request that reparations be made to the complainant or others;
- III. Requesting that the researcher correct the research record and provide proof that the research record has been corrected;
- IV. Reprimand, suspension or termination of employment. The rights of the accused under any existing collective agreement will be protected;
- V. Terminating access to remaining installments of the grant or award;
- VI. Seeking a refund within a defined time frame of all or part of the funds already paid;
- VII. Advising the researcher that the Agency may not accept applications for future funding from him/her for a defined time period or indefinitely and may not consider him/her to serve on agency committees (e.g. peer review, advisory boards); and/or
- VIII. Such other recourse available by law.

4.3.6. Accountability

- a) The Vice-President, Academic and Research will inform all affected parties of the decision reached and of any recourse to be taken by the Institution, within 30 days of receiving the final decision from the Investigation Committee or from the College President in the event of an appeal. All applicable privacy laws and regulations will be followed by the College to protect the privacy of individuals.
- b) In the event that the allegations are deemed to be unfounded, the College will make every reasonable effort to protect and restore the reputation of those unjustly accused, persons who have made an allegation in good faith and others involved such as witnesses. In these cases, all documentation provided to the Investigation Committee will be destroyed.

4.4. Reporting Requirements

- a) Subject to any applicable laws, including privacy laws, the Vice-President, Academic and Research shall advise the relevant Agency or SRCR immediately of any allegations related to activities funded by the Agency that may involve significant financial, health and safety, or other risks.
- b) The Vice-President, Academic and Research shall write a letter to the SRCR confirming whether or not the Institution is proceeding with an investigation where the SRCR was copied on the allegation or advised of an allegation involving significant risks as in part (a) above.
- c) If a breach is confirmed at the inquiry stage, the Vice-President, Academic and Research shall prepare a report for the SRCR on each investigation it conducts in response to an allegation of policy breaches related to a funding application submitted to an Agency or to an activity funded by an Agency. Subject to any applicable laws, including privacy laws, each report shall include the following information:
 - o the specific allegation(s), a summary of the finding(s) and reasons for the finding(s);
 - o the process and time lines followed for the inquiry and/or investigation;
 - o the researcher's response to the allegation, investigation and findings, and any measures the researcher has taken to rectify the breach; and
 - o the institutional investigation committee's decisions and recommendations and actions taken by the Institution.

The submitted report should not include:

- o information that is not related specifically to Agency funding and policies; or

- o personal information about the researcher, or any other person, that is not material to the Institution's findings and its report to the SRCR.
- d) Inquiry letters and investigation reports should be submitted to the SRCR within two and seven months, respectively, of receipt of the allegation by the Institution. Please refer to section 4.3.4 (b) V and VI for timeline details. These timelines may be extended in consultation with the SRCR if circumstances warrant, and with monthly updates provided to the Agency until the investigation is complete.
- e) The College and the researcher shall not enter into confidentiality agreements or other agreements related to an inquiry or investigation that prevents the College from reporting to the Agencies through the SRCR.
- f) In cases where the source of funding is unclear, the SRCR reserves the right to request information and reports from the College.

4.5. Promoting Awareness and Education

- a) Sault College will promote awareness of what constitutes the responsible conduct of research, including Agency requirements as set out in the College's related policies, the consequences of failing to meet them, as well as the process for addressing allegations, to all those engaged in research activities at the College.
- b) The College policy on the responsible conduct of research will be posted on the College web site, and the College will make public, statistical, annual reports on confirmed findings of breaches of that policy and actions taken, subject to applicable laws, including the privacy laws.
- c) The College will communicate that the Vice-President, Academic and Research office is the central point of contact responsible for receiving confidential enquiries, allegations and information related to allegations of breaches of Agency policies.

5. Breaches of Agency Policies by Institutions

In accordance with the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards* (MOU) signed by the Agencies and Sault College, the Agencies require that each Institution complies with Agency policies, as a condition of eligibility to apply for and administer Agency funds.

The process, followed by the Agencies to address an allegation of a breach of an Agency policy by an Institution, and the recourse that the Agencies may exercise, commensurate with the severity of a confirmed breach, are outlined in the MOU.

6. Responsibilities of the Agencies

For details on the responsibility of the Agencies, the Tri-Agency Process for addressing allegations of policy breaches by researchers, recourse, measures for exceptional circumstances and a summary of process, please refer to the Tri-Agency Framework: *Responsible Conduct of Research* (Section 6).

Related Policies and Directives

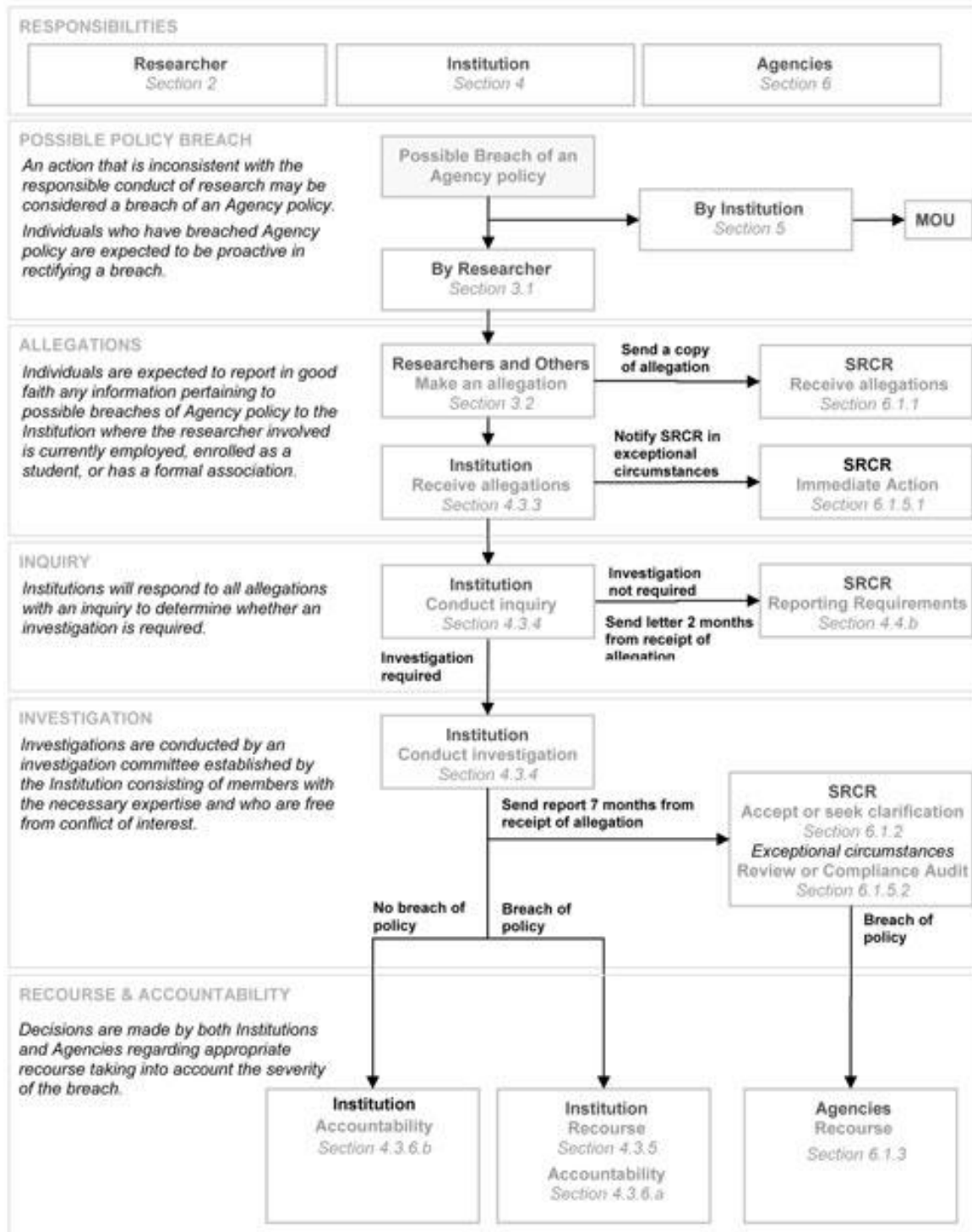
- Sault College - *Conflict of Interest in Research Policy*
- Sault College - *Intellectual Property Policy*
- Tri-Agency Framework: *Responsible Conduct of Research (2011)*
- Tri-Council Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition (2010)*
- Tri-Agency - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards

References

- Tri-Agency Framework: *Responsible Conduct of Research (2011)*

Appendix

A. Summary of Process*



* Source: Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research

B. Glossary *

This glossary is intended to assist readers in their understanding of the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*, also referred to as "the Framework." Terms are defined in accordance with the purposes and objectives of the Framework.

Accountability: Being responsible for one's actions.

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 published by an individual Agency or jointly by 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.

Complainant: An individual or representative from an organization who has notified an Institution or Agency of a potential breach of an Agency policy.

Conflict of interest: A conflict of interest may arise when activities or situations 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 the individual, their family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates.

Eligible institution: An Institution that (a) meets the eligibility requirements to receive funding set out in guidelines issued by the Agency; and (b) has signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Roles and Responsibilities in the Management of Federal Grants and Awards*.

Fairness: Being impartial and using sound judgment free of prejudice or favouritism.

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.

Honesty: Being straightforward, and free of fraud and deception.

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.

Investigation: A systematic process, conducted by an Institution's investigation committee, of examining an allegation, collecting and examining the evidence related to the allegation, and making a decision as to whether a breach of a policy(ies) has occurred.

Institution: The universities, hospitals, colleges, research institutes, centres and other organizations eligible to receive and manage Agency grant funds on behalf of the grant holders and the Agencies.

Institutional policy: The set of rules, directives and guidelines published by an individual Institution that meet the requirements of *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The agreement between the Agencies and Institutions eligible to receive and manage research funding from the Agencies.

Non-eligible institution: An Institution other than an eligible Institution.

Openness: Being transparent in process and practice, as characterized by visibility or accessibility of information.

Research: An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation. The conduct of research in the context of this Framework includes applying for and managing Agency funds, performing research, and disseminating results.

Researcher: Anyone who conducts research activities.

Respondent: 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 this Policy.

Serious breach: In determining whether a breach is serious, the Agency 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

* Source: *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*