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**PRACTICE TYPE:      Research****PRACTICE TITLE:     Research Integrity**

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*(Sections of this practice have been adapted with permission from the Nova Scotia Community College Research Integrity Policy. The practice follows the guidelines of the Framework for Tri-Council of Institutional Policies Dealing with Integrity in Research)*

### **1. Introduction**

Niagara College is committed to ethical conduct in all of its scholarship and research initiatives. All College personnel involved in research will adhere to ethical principles in their research activities. The College will provide the ethical framework for such activities, and will provide education, guidance, and support on research and scholarly integrity. The Research Integrity practice will be posted on the College website; professional development workshops will be held annually, and will include expert guest speakers on issues relevant to college researchers.

### **2. Principles of Research Ethics**

- 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. Conflict of interest (actual or perceived) will be disclosed to the Director, Research and Innovation, or to the Applied Research Council at any time such conflict may become apparent during research activities.
- 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 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. Selection of Research Projects**

Projects selected for applied research activities will be selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Quality of research proposal
- Alignment with overall mandate and priorities of the College
- Educational merit for students and professional development merit for faculty and staff
- Availability of essential resources: human, facilities, space, equipment, fiscal, expertise
- Feasibility of completion related to time constraints, risk exposure, impact on business and communities, impact on the environment, level of corporate expertise and support, and the overall viability of the project (combination of all factors that affect project success)
- Company financial support
- Intellectual property considerations

### **4. Collection and Retention of Research Data**

Primary data related to research activities should normally remain in the school or department of origin at all times and should be preserved 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 investigators, colleagues or readers of published results may raise questions requiring reference to original data.

Entitlement to ownership, reproduction and publication of primary data, software and other products of research will vary according to the circumstances under which the research was conducted. Intellectual property guidelines as per the College practice on Intellectual Property will govern these issues.

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, staff will sign a non-disclosure agreement to keep information confidential. In any instance where confidentiality is violated by a Niagara College employee, the College will take action to the extent deemed appropriate by the College.

### **5. 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.

## **6. Responsibilities of Principal Researcher**

- To ensure that all research is conducted to the highest possible ethical standard and with academic integrity
- To provide collaborators, students, staff and assistants with information necessary to prevent misconduct as defined in this practice
- 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
- To hold regular meetings, discussions, etc. to ensure that all researchers are provided with timely information
- To verify the validity of research results and all data when requested

## **7. 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 associates
- 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 a 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
- 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 his or her academic program or communicate his or her findings.

## **8. Definitions of Misconduct in Scholarly Research**

The following list contains examples of scholarly misconduct.

- Fabrication, falsification of research data
- Plagiarism, theft of ideas or intellectual property, or appropriation of another's work
- Failure to acknowledge or recognize the contribution of others including co-researchers, students, research assistants
- Use of the unpublished work of others without permission
- Use of archival material in violation of the Copyright Act
- Abuse of supervisory power affecting collaborators, assistants, students and others associated with the research
- Financial misconduct: failure to account for or misapplication or misuse of funds acquired for support of research
- Material failure to comply with relevant federal or provincial statutes or regulations for the protection of researchers or human participants, or failure to comply with the regulations of the relevant agency concerning the conduct of research.
- Material failure to meet other relevant legal requirements that relate to the conduct of research.
- Failure to reveal any material conflict of interest to sponsors or to those who commission the research

## **9. Allegations of Misconduct**

Any allegations of misconduct must adhere to the following process for identification and resolution. The misconduct may apply to misconduct in scholarly research, data collection, gathering and retention, authorship, responsibilities of principal researchers, conflict of interest, or other misconduct.

1. 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. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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 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.
4. 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.
5. The Investigation Committee may request additional documentation or external advice if relevant for the resolution of the allegation.
6. 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. 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). Sanctions may include reprimand, suspension, or reparations made to the complainant or others. The rights of the accused under any existing collective agreement, such as the right to legal representation, will be respected, but the Investigation Committee maintains the right to impose sanctions as appropriate to the offense.
7. An appeal to the Vice-President, Academic may be made in writing within one week of the decision being communicated by either the complainant or the respondent.
8. 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.

## **10. Research Involving Biohazards**

Niagara 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.

## **11. Research Involving Animals**

Niagara College does not carry 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.