

Integrity in Research

Category: Research	Policy Number: 6600	Effective Date: 01-06-19	Related Policies:
Approved By: Board	Maintained By: VP, Research and International	Amended:	Review Due: 04-06-20

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote integrity in research at BCIT. It provides guidance for researchers in how to maintain the highest ethical standards by providing examples of actions that would breach such standards. It also identifies the special responsibilities that are undertaken by principal investigators. Finally, this document describes the processes the Institute will follow to promote integrity in research and to prevent and address misconduct in research.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in funded research activities at BCIT. In particular, it applies to full and part-time employees, including management, faculty and students, conducting research that is supported or sanctioned by the schools, program groups, or by Institute departments engaged in applied research, such as the BCIT Technology Centre.

This policy does not apply to BCIT students engaged in studies that are not part of a funded research project. In such cases, student misconduct in research shall be dealt with through BCIT Policy 5002 “Student Regulations”.

Policy

General

BCIT supports and encourages the maintenance of the highest ethical standards in research. Primary responsibility for high standards of conduct in research rests with individuals carrying out these activities. BCIT expects all researchers to adhere to the principles described herein. Misconduct in research is an offense which, depending on its severity, shall be subject to a range of disciplinary measures up to termination of employment, or expulsion. Allegations of misconduct shall be dealt with in a fair, unbiased and timely manner.

Examples of Misconduct in Research

The following are examples of failure to respect the principles of integrity in research, and accordingly are proscribed for all individuals who engage in research and related activities at BCIT:

1. Falsification, distortion, or fabrication of research data.
2. Failure to use scientific integrity in obtaining, recording and analyzing data, and in reporting and publishing results.
3. Use of research funds for purposes other than those for which they are granted, taking into account the freedom of action which may be permitted by the contracting or granting agency.
4. Plagiarism, theft of ideas, or appropriation of another's work. This includes failure to recognize adequately the contribution of a co-researcher, student or other person who has collaborated on research, and failure to obtain permission from another researcher before using that person's data, concepts, new information and/or unpublished work, and/or using such work without due acknowledgement.
5. Giving recognition to anyone who has not made a material contribution to the research. The concern is not with necessary acknowledgements of assistance, but with giving recognition where it is not deserved, such as "honorary authorship".
6. Complicity in the misconduct of others.
7. Lack of objectivity in the evaluation of other researchers' grant applications, publications, or in giving expert testimony or advice in regulatory matters, or court cases.
8. Failure to reveal any material conflict of interest to external parties, that might influence such external parties' decision on whether one should be asked to conduct or review research work.
9. Any measure taken to oppose or block the work of another researcher for the purpose of benefiting oneself directly or indirectly.
10. Acquisition of items under the pretense of research in order to benefit personally.

11. Failure to seek and obtain approval from BCIT's Research Ethics Committee according to BCIT Policy #6500 before engaging in any research involving human subjects, and then to comply fully with the approved research protocols in the performance of the research.
12. Material failure to comply with relevant federal or provincial statutes or regulations for the protection of researchers, human subjects, or the health and safety of the public, or for the welfare of laboratory animals, or material failure to meet other legal requirements that relate to the conduct of research.
13. Use of one's status as a BCIT researcher to promote a product, process, or technology, for profit or other benefits, without the knowledge of BCIT. This includes failure to reveal to BCIT any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the Institute to undertake research, particularly research involving the company's products, and failure to comply with BCIT Policy 1504 "Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest".

Duties of the Principal Investigator to Ensure Compliance

Each major funded research project at BCIT shall have a Principal Investigator (or co-Principal Investigators) designated by the Technology Centre or other responsible manager. Notwithstanding that responsibility for maintaining high ethical standards rests with all individuals involved in research activities, Principal Investigators assume additional responsibilities that include:

1. Overseeing the planning and design of the research project and the process of acquiring, recording, examining, interpreting and storing research data; i.e. simply editing reports prepared by other investigators is generally inadequate.
2. Holding regular collegial discussions involving all research personnel engaged in a project, to promote awareness of integrity issues, and to integrate the scholarly efforts of all group members.
3. Taking primary responsibility for reporting research results to the client or sponsor of the project, and responding to the client or sponsor's questions or concerns.
4. Retaining all essential research data associated with the project for the period of time required to comply with the client or sponsor's requirements.
5. For research projects involving human subjects, ensuring compliance with the requirements of BCIT Policy #6500 "Research Ethics for Human Subjects".

Procedures for Promoting Integrity and for Preventing and Addressing Misconduct in Research

A. Promoting Integrity in Research

- A.1 Promoting integrity in research is a duty of all senior managers at BCIT, but in particular, it is a duty of senior managers and staff in the BCIT Technology Centre, who deal with research issues on a day-to-day basis. Senior managers and staff in the Technology Centre should therefore make themselves available to advise and mentor other BCIT staff as required.
- A.2 Promotion activities shall include one-on-one supervision and guidance of BCIT faculty members and staff as required, and the development and delivery of seminars or workshops on this topic to groups, as necessary. Particular emphasis shall be placed on informing, supervising and guiding new faculty, staff and students who become engaged in research activities.
- A.3 The Institute shall promote awareness of the importance of care and competence in research, as well as awareness of misconduct and its consequences. It is recognized that the borderline between scholarly incompetence, carelessness and negligence, on the one hand, and intentional misconduct, on the other, may be very narrow. It is also recognized that errors of negligence or incompetence, while objectionable, are not usually regarded as scientific misconduct.
- A.4 Primary research data should be recorded in clear, adequate, original and chronological form and be retained in the unit of origin for at least five years after the project has been completed to the satisfaction of the client or sponsor. Responsibility for retention of research data shall reside, in the first instance, with the Principal Investigator for the project in question. If the Principal Investigator is not able to keep the research data in the unit of origin, it shall be turned over to the BCIT Technology Centre for archiving, unless otherwise specified by the client or sponsor.
- A.5 A shared understanding about ownership of research data should be reached among collaborators before research is undertaken.
- A.6 In regard to publications and reports, all authors listed should have been involved in the research and each is expected to have made material contribution, understand the significance of the conclusions, and be able to share responsibility for the content and reliability of the reported data. Each author listed should have seen and approved a manuscript before submission.

- A.7 A copy of this policy shall be provided to all persons who become involved with research projects at BCIT. It shall also be available through the Institute's online information system.

B. Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research

- B.1 Allegations of misconduct in research may come from sources inside or outside BCIT. The allegation (the Complaint) must be in writing, must clearly identify the person who is the subject of the allegation (the Respondent), the nature of the alleged misconduct, and be accompanied by all available documentation and refer to any evidence that may support the allegation. The person making the allegation (the Complainant) must identify herself or himself. Anonymous allegations will not be accepted.
- B.2 The Complaint containing allegations of misconduct in research shall be forwarded to the Dean, Applied Research, or, if the Dean, Applied Research is the Respondent, to the Vice-President responsible for the Technology Centre, in which case the Vice-President shall then be responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed with such appropriate variations as are necessary.
- B.3 On receipt of a Complaint alleging misconduct in research, the Dean, Applied Research shall determine whether the allegations fall within the scope of this Policy and whether the form of the Complaint complies with Paragraph B.1 of this Policy. Where the Complaint does not fall within the Policy or does not comply with Paragraph B.1 of this Policy, the Dean, Applied Research shall notify the Complainant as soon as possible that Complaint will not proceed.
- B.4 Where a Complaint falls within the scope of this Policy and the form of the Complaint complies with Paragraph B.1 of this Policy, the Dean, Applied Research shall immediately notify the Respondent that a Complaint has been received and send a copy of the Complaint and any documentation provided with the Complaint to the Respondent ; and in addition, if the Respondent is from a BCIT unit outside the Technology Centre, shall similarly notify the Respondent's Dean or Director. If the Respondent is a member of a BCIT bargaining unit, the Dean, Applied Research shall also send a copy of the Complaint and any documentation provided with the complaint to the bargaining unit of which the Respondent is a member.
- B.5 Instances of alleged misconduct in research may be resolvable through informal consultation. The Dean, Applied Research shall attempt to initiate an informal and confidential consultation process within ten working days from the receipt of the Complaint. The Dean, Applied Research may personally conduct this process or may appoint a senior

manager, faculty or staff member in a unit other than that of the Respondent and Complainant to do so. This informal consultation process can continue for as long as both the Complainant and the Respondent agree. The Complaint will be considered resolved through this informal process when the Complainant and Respondent confirm that it has been resolved to their satisfaction (resolution, in this context, implies that the Complaint is withdrawn, and the Complainant and Respondent unreservedly accept any additional resolution measures). A Complainant or a Respondent who is a member of a BCIT bargaining unit may request upon representation in the informal consultation process.

B.6 If the Complaint is not resolved through informal consultation, then, at the request of the Dean, the Complainant, or the Respondent, the Dean, Applied Research shall initiate the following process without delay.

B.6.1 The Respondent shall be invited to make a written submission responding to the Complaint accompanied by any relevant documents. The submission must be made to the Dean, Applied Research within 15 days of the initiation of the formal process.

B.6.2 The Dean, Applied Research shall receive submissions and consult with whatever other parties he/she deems necessary, and within 30 days of receiving the Respondent's submission shall submit a report to the Vice-President recommending whether or not the Complaint should proceed to a formal Board of Inquiry. Copies of the Dean's report shall be made available to the Complainant and Respondent.

B.6.3 Based on the report submitted by the Dean, Applied Research, the Vice-President shall decide whether to assemble a Board of Inquiry. The Vice-President shall forward his/her decision to the Complainant and the Respondent within 15 days of receiving the Dean's report. The Vice-President's decision may be appealed to the President of BCIT.

B.6.4 If the Vice-President decides to assemble a Board of Inquiry, it shall be comprised as follows:

- Two members appointed by the Vice-President from outside the Institute, selected on the basis of their expertise in issues of research conduct and integrity.
- If the Complainant or Respondent is a member of a BCIT bargaining unit, one member shall be appointed by each relevant bargaining unit.
- If the Complainant or Respondent is a BCIT student, one member shall be appointed by the BCIT Student Association.

- One member shall be appointed by the Vice-President from the BCIT Management group, from a school or department that has no direct connection with Complainant or Respondent. This member shall be appointed Chair of the Board of Inquiry.

B.6.5 The Board of Inquiry shall conduct a fair, objective and thorough investigation of the Complaint.

B. 6.6 In the course of its investigation of the Complaint, the Board of Inquiry shall ensure that the Complainant and Respondent are given a fair opportunity to speak to the allegations in the Complaint.

B6.7 The Board of Inquiry shall determine its own procedures and may gather and consider any facts and evidence it deems necessary.

B.6.8 The Board of Inquiry shall, after gathering and considering all the facts and evidence it deems appropriate, issue a written report within 10 working days of the conclusion of its investigation that summarizes the facts and evidence considered, the determination of the Board of Inquiry as to whether misconduct in research occurred, and the reasons for that determination.

B.6.9 The Board of Inquiry shall forward its written decision to:

- the Complainant
- the Respondent
- the President of BCIT
- where any of the parties is an employee, the Director of Labour Relations
- where any of the parties is a member of a BCIT bargaining unit, to the relevant Union
- where any of the parties is a student, the Registrar and the Student Association representative

B.6.10 The President shall decide on appropriate measures, based on the Board of Inquiry's report, to be carried out as follows:

- For a member of BCIT's management group, the President's decision shall be final and binding.
- For a member of a BCIT bargaining unit, the President may take disciplinary action against the employee in accordance with the applicable collective agreement.

- For a student who is not an employee, the President shall request the Board of Inquiry's recommendation on measures to be taken, and shall act accordingly. Disciplinary measures shall be in keeping with the appropriate BCIT education policy (e.g. Policy 5002, Student Regulations).

B.6.11 The Board of Inquiry shall ensure that all material/records pertaining to the hearing of the Complaint shall be held in strictest confidence at all times, in order to protect the privacy of the Complainant and Respondent.

B.6.12 In the event that Board of Inquiry decides that the Complaint is unfounded, the Institute shall take steps to protect or restore the Respondent's reputation, such as issuing letters or making public statements, and to either destroy or maintain in strictest confidence documentation provided to the Board of Inquiry.

B.6.13 The Institute shall report the process and findings of Board of Inquiry to the relevant Research Councils, where such Council's funding is involved.

Acknowledgement

In the preparation of this policy, BCIT gratefully acknowledges its reliance on Research Integrity policies at universities in British Columbia, in particular, the University of Northern BC and the University of Victoria.