

## RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

This procedure is governed by its parent policy. Questions regarding this procedure are to be directed to the identified Procedure Owner.

<b>Category:</b>	H. Research
<b>Parent Policy:</b>	H05
<b>Approval Date:</b>	February 12, 2018
<b>Effective Date:</b>	February 12, 2018
<b>Procedure Owner:</b>	Vice President, Research

<b>Overview:</b>	<p>This section describes the mechanisms for filing allegations of breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy. It details the minimum requirements for addressing allegations of policy breaches, including point of contact, the mechanism for investigating and reviewing alleged breaches, and rectifying breaches.</p>
<b>Procedures:</b>	<p><b>Confidentiality:</b></p> <p>The confidentiality of any researcher being investigated for breach of policy is assured. Researchers accused of breach of policy who have been subsequently cleared will maintain the privacy afforded all researchers. Researchers who submit formal allegations of breach of policy will have their identities protected and will not be identified to the accused.</p> <p><b>Allegations of Breaches of Olds College Responsible Conduct of Research Policy:</b></p> <p><b>1. Roles of Individuals and Committees in Addressing Allegations</b></p> <p>Individuals involved in an inquiry or investigation must follow this policy as a complainant, respondent, or third party, as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>First Point of Contact: Vice President responsible for Applied Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The VP is the first point of contact for receiving allegations and is responsible for referring allegations to the investigating committee.</li> <li>○ Responsible allegations, or information related to responsible allegations, should be submitted in writing directly to the Vice President responsible for Applied Research.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Individuals are expected to report in good faith any information pertaining to possible breaches of policy.
- **Receiving Allegations: Vice President responsible for Applied Research and Responsible Conduct of Research Committee (RCRC)**
  - After reviewing the allegation, the VP will refer it to the RCRC for further evaluation. The VP will ensure that the RCRC receives, reviews, and decides on the allegation within a reasonable period of time.
  - In exceptional cases, the VP may deem it necessary to also inform relevant funding agencies, government agencies, or law enforcement agencies of the allegation.
- **Initial Assessment of Allegations (RCRC)**
  - Upon receipt of an allegation from the VP, the RCRC performs an initial inquiry process, which establishes if an allegation is responsible and if an investigation is required. The RCRC will evaluate whether the allegation was made in good faith and via the proper procedure in order to determine whether or not to investigate the allegation.
  - The RCRC will inform the VP of its decision to investigate or not investigate an allegation within two business days.
- **Full Investigation of Allegations (RCRC and VP Responsible for Applied Research)**
  - The RCRC will perform what investigations it deems necessary to assess if a breach of policy has occurred and will determine any necessary remedies, recourse, or recommendations.
  - The RCRC will submit a written report for each investigation to the VP. Upon review, the VP will inform the researcher and any other parties involved in the allegation of the outcome of the investigation in a timely manner, and will inform them of any remedies, recourse, or recommendations made by the RCRC.
  - If the investigating committee and VP agree that an allegation has merit, the College shall advise any relevant funding agencies of allegations related to activities funded by the agency. This disclosure will be made subject to any applicable laws, including privacy laws.
    - The VP shall immediately send a letter to the affected funding bodies informing them of the allegation and notifying them that Olds College is proceeding with an investigation.
    - The VP and RCRC shall prepare a report for the affected funding bodies that includes the following information:
      - The specific allegation(s), summary of finding(s), and reasons for the finding(s)
      - The process and timelines followed for the inquiry and/or investigation

- The researcher's response to the allegation, investigation, and findings, and any measures the researcher has taken to rectify the breach
- The RCRC's decisions and recommendations, and the actions taken by the institution.
- Note: this report should not include information that is not specific to the funding body's funding and policies, personal information about the researcher, or information about any other person who is not material to the findings.
- Olds College and its researchers may not enter into confidentiality agreements or other agreements related to an inquiry or investigation that prevents the institution from reporting to the funders.
- In situations where the source of funding is unclear, Olds College acknowledges the right of funders to request information and reports from the institution.
- Olds College will immediately notify the appropriate authorities if at any time in the investigation process it becomes aware of possible fraud or other unlawful activity.

- **Timelines for Investigation of Allegations**

The RCRC shall complete their investigation, report their findings, make a decision on what action should be taken, and communicate with the parties involved in a timely manner. Inquiry letters and investigation reports must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the allegation by the College.

- **Finding of No Fault**

In situations where allegations are determined to be unfounded, every effort will be made by Olds College to protect or restore the reputation of those wrongly subjected to an allegation. Strict adherence to protecting the privacy of researchers under investigation will minimize the possibility that unfounded accusations will harm the reputation of the researchers or Olds College.

## 2. Recourse

- **Minor Breaches:**

For minor breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy, a staff member found in breach of any Olds College policy will be given a verbal warning, followed by a written warning. Continued breaching of Olds College policies shall result in the suspension or termination of the offender.

- **Major Breaches:**

For major breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy, the RCRC may recommend to the VP that action be taken, commensurate with the severity of the policy breach. In exercising the appropriate recourse,

Olds College will give consideration to affected research personnel, including students, postdoctoral fellows, and research support staff. These actions may include:

- Issuing a letter of concern to the researcher
- Requesting that the researcher correct the research record and provide proof that the research record has been corrected
- Advising the researcher that Olds College will not sign off on future funding applications from the researcher for a defined time period or indefinitely
- Advising the researcher that Olds College will not consider him/her to serve on agency committees (i.e. peer review, advisory boards)
- Other recourse available by law

- **Rectifying a Breach of Policy**

Researchers in breach of policy are expected to be proactive in rectifying a breach. They are to take appropriate action in a timely fashion, such as correcting the research record, providing a letter of apology to those impacted by the breach, or repaying funds.

- **Reporting**

- The VP will inform the accused researcher of the decision and any recommended actions either of the researcher or Olds College in writing within two (2) business days of receiving recommendation from the RCRC. The content of this communication will be subject to any applicable laws, including privacy laws.
- The VP will inform the complainant of the decision and, at the VP's discretion, recommend actions either of the researcher or Olds College in writing within two (2) business days of receiving recommendation from the RCRC. The content of this communication will be subject to any applicable laws, including privacy laws.
- The VP will inform relevant funding agencies of findings of fault, as well as the recommended actions, if no appeal is sought at the expiration of the appeal period. If an appeal is sought, VP will inform relevant funding agencies if fault is upheld. No notification will be made to funding agencies in findings of no fault or no fault upon appeal.
- Olds College will notify the appropriate authorities if at any time it becomes aware of possible fraud or other unlawful activity.
- In cases of a serious breach of policy, as determined by the VP, Olds College may publicly disclose the name of the researcher subject to the decision, and the nature of the breach. In determining whether a breach is serious, VP will consider the extent to which the breach jeopardizes the safety of the public or would bring the conduct of research or Olds College into disrepute.

- **Appeals**

- If an appeal of the RCRC decision is sought, the appellant must inform the VP within five (5) business days of receipt of the formal decision from the VP of intention to appeal. This notification must identify the grounds for appeal and provide any supporting documentation. After reviewing the allegation, the VP will refer it to the Chair of the Appeals Committee for further evaluation. The VP will ensure that the Appeals Committee receives, reviews, and decides on the allegation within a reasonable period of time.
- If the appeal is accepted, the Chair of the Appeals Committee will schedule an Appeals Committee Hearing to take place within ten (10) business days.
- The appellant may be asked to appear at a hearing to present their case directly to the Appeals Committee. The appellant may be subject to cross-examination regarding information presented to the committee.
- The Appeals Committee will come to a decision and will provide a recommendation to the VP within two (2) business days of the Hearing.

- **Appeals Reporting**

- The VP will inform the appellant of the Appeals Committee decision and any recommended actions either of the researcher or Olds College in writing within two (2) business days of receiving recommendation from the Appeals Committee.
- The VP will inform the respondent of the Appeals Committee decision and, at the VP's discretion, recommended actions either of the researcher or Olds College in writing within two (2) business days of receiving the recommendation from the Appeals Committee.

### 3. Committee Representation

- **Responsible Conduct of Research Committee Composition (RCRC)**

- Chair (or alternate)
  - To be assigned by VP
  - Responsible for receiving allegations from VP and communicating RCRC decision to VP
  - Responsible for selecting Public representative
  - Not in a conflict of interest position

- **Appeals Committee Composition**

- Chair (or alternate)
  - President or delegate
  - Responsible for receiving appeals from VP and communicating Appeals Committee decisions to VP
  - Responsible for selecting Public representative
  - Not in a conflict of interest position
- Faculty representative (or alternate)



**Definitions:**

- Selected annually at the first Fall meetings of Academic Council
  - Member of the Academic Council, not in a conflict of interest position
- Public representative
  - Selected annually by the Chair
  - Not in a conflict of interest position

**Related Information:**

A08 Course Development & Revision Policy

**Review Period:**

3 years

**Revision History:**

New: 2012  
Revised: 2018