

# St. Francis Xavier University

## Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship May 2024

### 1. Preamble

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to promote integrity in research and scholarship at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), to provide a fair and timely process for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, and to adhere with the requirements of the federal *Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.
- 1.2 StFX recognizes that teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity are most likely to flourish in a climate of academic freedom. The exercise of academic freedom, however, is accompanied by ethical responsibilities. The StFX University community is committed to maintaining the highest degree of rigour, honesty, and ethical standards in the conduct of research and scholarly activities. Thus, all members of the StFX academic community are responsible for the responsible conduct of research.
- 1.3 This policy and procedures document describes the way in which integrity and misconduct in research are dealt with at StFX. This policy aligns with the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2021) and draws on similar policy and procedures documents at other Canadian universities. The policy incorporates language used in the Tri-Agency Framework specifically as it relates to research.

### 2. Applicability

This policy applies to all individuals employed by StFX, receiving research funding through (or administered by) StFX, or using StFX facilities to conduct research and scholarly work. Other university policies and procedures have been established to specifically address the ethical conduct of research involving humans and animals, and financial integrity in the use of research funds. This policy is primarily concerned only with research and scholarly integrity, and does not replace other policy statements and procedures pertaining to issues that may overlap with research and scholarly integrity.

### 3. Definitions

**Administrative Officer:** refers to any or all senior administrative appointments including the Deans, Assistant or Associate Vice Presidents, the University Librarian, the Academic Vice-President and Provost, and the President.

**Breach:** refers to any conduct, actions or omissions which are deliberate violations of integrity in research.

**Preliminary Committee of Inquiry:** refers to the Committee appointed to carry out a preliminary investigation to determine whether or not a breach has taken place and can be substantiated; the Committee shall consist of researchers with the necessary expertise and independence to carry out an inquiry under the University's policy.

**Complainant:** refers to any individual or group that alleges a member of the St. Francis Xavier University community has breached the policy on integrity in research and scholarship or the federal framework for the responsible conduct of research.

**Day:** refers to a calendar day, unless otherwise indicated.

**Disclosure:** refers to an allegation or complaint that a breach has been or is likely to have occurred.

**Funding Agency (or Agencies):** refers to any agency or organization that provides grants and/or contracts in support of research, including Canada's three federal granting agencies (the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council).

**Investigation:** refers to an investigation of an alleged breach.

**Research:** refers to research, scholarly and creative works, whether funded or not, and regardless of where that research takes place; research constitutes the systematic investigation of phenomena, the purpose of which is to discover, create or extend knowledge; included in research its dissemination. The routine development of teaching materials is not considered research, nor is administrative work considered research. (This policy does not apply to research conducted as part of student course work, which shall be addressed in accordance with the University's policies on academic integrity).

**Researcher:** refers to any member of the St. Francis Xavier University community, including faculty members (full- and part-time), professors emeritae/emeriti, senior research professors, adjunct appointees, visiting researchers, post-doctoral fellows, research associates, research assistants, laboratory assistants, students (undergraduate or graduate), or any other person in a similar position who is involved in research.

**Respondent:** refers to any individual accused of a breach.

#### 4. Promoting the Understanding of Integrity Issues

This policy, taken together with the University's other academic and research policies, provides the framework for the responsible conduct of research and scholarly activities at StFX. The University will also provide education and guidance to promote the understanding of integrity issues in research and scholarship. The Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship will be posted on the StFX website. The office of the Associate Vice-President Research Graduate and Professional Studies (AVPRGPS) may also hold

professional-development workshops or host expert guest-speakers on issues relevant to this topic.

Integrity in research simply means being honest and rigorous in the pursuit of new knowledge and creative expression while adhering to the specific policies, regulations, procedures, and laws applicable. The primary responsibility for research integrity rests with individuals carrying out these activities. Researchers at StFX shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. Scholarly competence and intellectual honesty;
- b. Rigour in the development and execution of all phases of research;
- c. Appropriate recognition of the contributors to research including, as appropriate, authorship credit or formal acknowledgement;
- d. Adherence to ethical standards when conducting research involving humans or animals;
- e. Adherence to University policies related to the management of research resources (i.e., financial, computer, and other administrative policies);
- f. Appropriate citation of the works of others, whether or not those works are published;
- g. Respect of the rights related to intellectual property;
- h. Adherence to requirements of research security provisions and data management requirements;
- i. Avoidance of any real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, and disclosure of same to sponsors, post-secondary institutions, journals, or funding agency (this shall apply in matters that include, but are not limited to, the review of manuscripts or applications, the testing of products, and carrying out work sponsored by outside sources).

It is understood that these principles shall guide all aspects of research, including but not limited to the conduct of research, the publication of original work, artistic creations, performance in the arts or in professional areas and other activities.

A breach of this Policy is the failure to comply with any aspect of responsible conduct of research throughout the life cycle of a research project – from application for funding, to the conduct of the research and the dissemination of research results.

In determining whether an individual has breached this Policy, it shall not be relevant to consider whether a breach was intentional or a result of honest error. However, intent will be a consideration in deciding on the severity of the recourse that may be imposed.

## **5. Obligations of the University**

StFX undertakes to ensure that all researchers are informed about the policies and procedures related to the responsible conduct of research. Specifically, StFX will provide an environment conducive to the best research practices, where researchers act honestly, accountably, openly, and fairly in the search for, and dissemination of, knowledge.

StFX will not tolerate any intentional breaches of policy in the conduct of research or its dissemination, and the University will take all necessary measures to promote and maintain research integrity. Where breaches of the policy are alleged to have occurred, the University has an obligation to determine as expeditiously as possible whether a breach has occurred, and the severity of the breach. The University shall apply and enforce this policy while guided by the following principles:

- a. Academic freedom in research, publication, and creative practice is fundamental to the work of the University, and is important for the common good of society;
- b. Effective procedures that ensure fairness to those whose integrity is brought into question shall be used; this includes giving a researcher a full opportunity to respond to the allegations in accordance with the principles of due process and natural justice; strict confidentiality for a person alleged to be guilty of a breach in order to minimize the potential damage that can be done if allegations are ultimately not substantiated; and
- c. Those who make an allegation of misconduct and those who may be involved in the investigation of an allegation that a breach has occurred shall be protected by the University; this involves assurances of confidentiality and an institutional commitment to prevent retaliation against those persons.

## **6. Obligations of Persons Conducting Research and Scholarly Activity at StFX**

### **6.1 Authorship and Publication**

The attribution of authorship for research publications must accurately reflect the intellectual contribution of those who helped to write them. Where publications arise from the activities of a research team, the attribution of authorship must accurately reflect the intellectual contributions of all the members of that team.

- a. The co-authors of a publication are all those persons who have made significant intellectual contributions to the results. An administrative relationship to the investigation does not, by itself, qualify a person for co-authorship. Authorship decisions should not be affected by whether participants were paid for their contributions, or by their employment status. The author who submits a manuscript or report for publication is responsible for including all appropriate co-authors, for sending each co-author a draft copy of the manuscript for comment, and for obtaining consent on co-authorship, including the order of names.
- b. Purely formal association with a research project, such as the directorship of a laboratory or an administrative position in a Faculty, does not constitute authorship, but may be recognized in an acknowledgement. General supervision of the research group, technical help, data collection, or critical reviews of manuscripts or reports prior to publication are not sufficient for authorship but may be acknowledged in a separate paragraph. There shall be no honorary co-authorship; authorship must be based entirely on significant intellectual, professional, or immediate supervisory contribution.

Other contributions should be indicated in a footnote or in an acknowledgements section.

- c. In student-professor collaborations, both should be listed as co-authors of a joint publication if and only if:
  - i) both make a significant scholarly contribution;
  - ii) both are integral to the completion of the paper or report.
- d. A student should be granted due prominence on the list of co-authors for any multiple-authored article or report that is based primarily on the student's own work, according to the commonly accepted practice in the field.

## **6.2 Supervision of Research Personnel**

The Principal Investigator has ultimate responsibility for the supervision of a research project, whether funded or unfunded; supervision includes consideration of the best interests of the research project, the research team, the institution, the research sponsor, the academic community, and the public. Accordingly, the Principal Investigator(s) must:

- a. Provide effective and appropriate supervision of all aspects of the project;
- b. Ensure effective communication during all aspects of the project, and an appropriate ratio of research personnel, especially students, to the Principal Investigator(s).
- c. Review, edit, and approve the design of the research and the processes of acquiring, recording, examining, interpreting, and storing data;
- d. Edit all research reports prior to publication;
- e. Provide each new member of the research team with applicable governmental and institutional requirements for the conduct of studies involving human participants, animals, radioactive or other hazardous substances or recombinant DNA, the University's policies and guidelines for the ethical conduct of research, and any other information directly relevant to the research activity;
- f. Clarify the relationship among members of the research team, which may include a Memorandum of Understanding outlining roles and responsibilities;
- g. Hold regular discussions among all personnel in a research team in order to contribute to the scholarly efforts of its members, monitor progress, and provide informal review.

## **6.3 Data Recording, Ownership and Retention**

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. In no instance should primary data be destroyed while investigators, colleagues or readers of published results might raise questions requiring reference to original data. Researchers should ensure that they adhere to the provisions of the StFX Institutional Strategy for Research Data Management, which establishes the principles of research data management at StFX.

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 University's policy with respect to Copyrightable Works and Intellectual Property will govern these matters.

#### **6.4 Disclosure of Conflicts of interest**

All persons engaged in research or scholarly activities at StFX are required to follow the University's Conflict of Interest Policy. All such persons are required to disclose to sponsors, colleges, universities, journals or funding agencies any material conflicts of interest (financial or other) that might influence their ability to review manuscripts, review grant applications, or test products for sale or distribution to the public.

#### **6.5 Research Security**

Research security requirements have emerged as a federal government policy requirement for specific areas of research and collaboration with researchers based foreign institutions. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that their research activities comply with applicable research security provisions. Purposeful or deceitful efforts to evade applicable research security requirements, or not disclose research or research collaborations that violate research security requirements can be considered a form of research misconduct.

### **7. Misconduct in Research and Scholarly Activity**

#### **7.1 Definition of Misconduct**

Forms of misconduct include:

- a. Plagiarism: the attempt to claim credit in written scholarly works for ideas, writing, research results, or methods taken from someone else;
- b. Fabrication of research data: the invention or forging of research data or citations;
- c. Falsification of research data: the alteration, selective omission or misrepresentation of research data or citations;
- d. Material failure to recognize by due acknowledgement the substantive contributions of others, or the use of unpublished material of others without permission, or the use of archival materials in violation of the rules of the archival source;
- e. Material failure to obtain the permission of the author before making significant use of new information, concepts, or data obtained through access to manuscripts or grant applications during the peer review process;
- f. Attribution of authorship to persons other than those who have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for its intellectual content;
- g. Redundant publication or self-plagiarism. Submission for publication of articles originally published elsewhere, except where it is clearly indicated in the published work that the publication is a re-publication;
- h. Diversion of the research funds of the University, federal or provincial granting councils, or other sponsors of research;

- i. Failing to meet funding agency policy requirements or, to comply with relevant policies, laws or regulations, for the conduct of certain types of research activities (including research security); failing to obtain appropriate approvals, permits or certifications before conducting these activities;
- j. Material failure to comply with University policies or with relevant federal or provincial statutes or regulations for the protection of researchers, human participants, or the health and safety of the public, or for the welfare of laboratory animals;
- k. Material failure to meet other relevant legal requirements that relate to the conduct or reporting of research;
- l. Failure to appropriately identify and address any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, in accordance with the StFX Policy on Conflict of Interest;
- m. Non-compliance with the [\*Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy of the Federal Research Funding Organizations\*](#) or participating in a funding agency review process while under investigation;
- n. Failure to reveal material conflict of interest to sponsors or to those who commission work, or when asked to undertake reviews of research grant applications or manuscripts for publication, or to test products for sale or for distribution to the public;
- o. Failure to reveal to the University any material financial interest in a company that contracts with the University to undertake research, particularly research involving the company's products, or to provide research-related materials or services. Material financial interest includes ownership, substantial stock-holding, a directorship, and significant honoraria or consulting fees, but does not include routine stock-holding in a large, publicly traded company;
- p. Deliberate destruction of one's own research data in order to avoid the detection of wrongdoing, or tampering with or destroying the research of another person, either for personal gain or out of malicious intent, such as the introduction of contaminants or computer viruses;
- q. Misrepresentation in any research application or related document by 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; applying for and/or holding a research award when deemed ineligible by any research funding organization world-wide for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies; or listing of co-applicants, collaborators or partners without their agreement;
- r. Mismanagement of research grant, contribution agreement or award funds by using such funds for purposes inconsistent with the policies of the research funding agencies; misappropriating grants and award funds; contravening funding agency financial policies (i.e. [\*Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration\*](#)), funding agency grants and awards guides; or providing incomplete, inaccurate or false information on documentation for expenditures from grant or award accounts.
- s. Other practices that deviate significantly from those which are commonly accepted as appropriate within the scholarly communities.

Factors intrinsic to the process of academic research such as honest error, conflicting data, or differences in interpretation or assessment of data or experimental design do not constitute fraud or misconduct.

## 7.2 Exploitation of Students

In addition to the breaches of policy outlined above, researchers (whether they be faculty, staff, or students) have a responsibility to ensure that there will be no exploitation of students. Specific examples of exploitation would be:

- a. Engaging students as research assistants or as research participants where they might reasonably fear that to refuse would be detrimental to their interests;
- b. Failure to give proper recognition to the ideas, work, or assistance of individuals or to obtain, where appropriate, prior permission for the work to be done; and/or
- c. Encouraging graduate students to prolong research beyond the point where an acceptable thesis could be submitted, in order solely to further the interests of the faculty member.

## 8.0 Application of Procedures

### 8.1 Scope

**The procedures described below apply to all allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship against any non-student member of the university community including faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, assistants, students, and visiting scholars, irrespective of the present source of their salary or stipend. Allegations against students regarding research imbedded in coursework are governed by the University's Policy on Academic Integrity.**

#### 8.1.1 Responsibilities of the Associate Vice-President Research Graduate and Professional Studies

The Associate Vice-President Research Graduate and Professional Studies (AVPRGPS) may delegate any function specified in these procedures but is ultimately responsible for ensuring that they are followed and that all allegations and complaints are properly investigated, documented and disposed of.

Where the AVPRGPS makes a written allegation of research misconduct, the Academic Vice-President and Provost (AVP) shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with these procedures.

#### 8.1.2 Authority of the Associate Vice-President Research Graduate and Professional Studies and the Academic Vice-President and Provost

In the event that the University undertakes the investigation of a written allegation of research misconduct, the AVPRGPS and the AVP both have the authority to:

- a. Close or suspend use of the relevant research facilities;

- b. Protect the administration of the University and any outside funds involved in the research;
- c. Obtain and retain documentation (e.g., lab notes, computer disks, hard drives) relevant to the investigation;
- d. Request that members of the University community appear before a committee of inquiry or investigation and answer its questions or supply materials to it.

## **8.2 Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct**

A person may make an allegation and do so in writing. An allegation which has been dated shall contain the following information:

- a. The name and contact information of the person making the allegation;
- b. The description of the alleged breach and the approximate date(s) when the alleged breach occurred; and
- c. The name(s) of the individual(s) suspected in the breach.

No formal actions will be taken in cases where an allegation is made anonymously, is not in writing, or does not include all the required information.

Although disclosures may be made to any Administrative Officer, the ultimate responsibility for the policy and procedures rests with the AVPRGPS. All disclosures shall be relayed to the AVPRGPS for appropriate action. All allegations will be treated as confidential to protect the individual making the allegation.

An allegation made by an external party (e.g., a journal editor, a funding agency) will be treated formally and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document. Where a respondent is the AVPRGPS, all allegations shall be forwarded to the AVP, who shall then be responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed with such variations as are necessary.

In cases where the AVP is the complainant, it shall be the responsibility of the President to appoint a replacement administrative officer of the university to serve any functions normally undertaken by the AVP under this policy.

The investigation of a written allegation of research misconduct consists of two parts: an informal Preliminary Inquiry, and a Formal Process of Investigation.

## **8.3 Preliminary Inquiry**

As a first step and within 10 days of receiving an allegation the AVPRGPS shall undertake to determine if the allegation:

- a. Was made in good faith;
- b. Is not frivolous or vexatious;
- c. Deals with a breach of the policy; and

d. Is not a matter being dealt with under another University policy or procedure.

This initial review may involve confidential consultation with appropriate officers at the University (e.g., the Chair of the Animal Care Committee, the Chair of the Research Ethics Board, staff in Financial Services etc.). If the initial review of an allegation leads to a conclusion that no breach has occurred, the Complainant shall be advised of this conclusion and that no further action is to be taken. The individual alleged to have breached the policy (the Respondent) shall also be informed that an allegation was received, the essential nature of the allegation, and the reasons why no further action is to be taken.

If the allegation is not rejected after preliminary review, the AVPRGPS shall follow the procedures outlined in this policy to investigate the matter. The AVPRGPS shall inform the Complainant that the matter will be the subject of the procedures outlined in this policy. The Respondent will also be notified of the allegation, and informed of the process to be undertaken to determine the nature and seriousness of the allegation.

In the event that the allegation relates to research funded by a Tri-Council Agency, and is a serious breach of policy involving financial, health, safety or other risks, the AVPRGPS shall report (in writing) the nature of the allegations to the Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and whether or not an investigation will proceed in accordance with the University's policy and procedures. Normally, such reports shall be made within 30 days after an allegation has been received.

The AVPRGPS may take actions to protect the administration of research funds either by freezing a grant account or requiring oversight of expenses charged to a grant account. Where a potential breach involving Agency funds is found to have occurred, this shall be communicated to the Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

As soon as possible after an allegation has been formulated in writing and, in any event, within ten (10) days of receipt of a written allegation, the AVPRGPS shall send a copy of the allegation to the respondent, to the AVP, and to a Preliminary Committee of Inquiry.

- 8.3.1 Upon sending an allegation to a Preliminary Committee of Inquiry, the AVPRGPS shall simultaneously advise the respondent of the composition of that Committee and shall also so advise any person who is identified in the allegation.
- 8.3.2 The Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall consist of three persons with the expertise required to address the issues involved, and all at arms-length from both the person(s) alleging misconduct and the respondent. The Committee shall elect one of its members as Chair.
- 8.3.3 Any objection to the composition of the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall be made to the AVPRGPS within seven days. The disposition of any such objection by the AVPRGPS shall be final.

- 8.3.4 The Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall proceed informally and in complete confidentiality to determine whether the allegation warrants a formal process of investigation.
- 8.3.5 The Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall advise the respondent in sufficient detail of the evidence being considered by the Committee and shall invite the respondent, accompanied by an advisor if the respondent so desires, to meet with it and respond to that evidence orally or in writing.
- 8.3.6 Prior to receiving evidence from any person not already identified in the written allegation, the Committee shall advise that person that it may be necessary in the interests of justice to reveal that person's identity to the respondent and that the person's identity may have to be revealed according to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 8.3.7 Within thirty days of being appointed, the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall complete its informal inquiry and shall determine whether it finds that the allegation warrants a formal process of investigation. The Committee may recommend to the AVPRGPS a way to resolve the situation that does not involve a formal investigation. Its decision shall be reported in writing to the AVPRGPS and the AVP. The Committee shall also provide the AVPRGPS with the information used to reach its decision.
- 8.3.8 If the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry reports that the complaint does not warrant a formal investigation, the AVPRGPS shall advise the respondent and any person identified in the allegation that the allegation is dismissed.

#### **8.4 Formal Process of Investigation**

If the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry recommends a formal investigation of the allegation, within fourteen days of receiving the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry's report, the AVPRGPS shall convoke a Committee of Investigation and convey to that committee all materials arising from the initial inquiry.

##### **8.4.1 Committee of Investigation**

A Committee of Investigation will be composed of a minimum of three (3) individuals. The individuals selected shall have the requisite knowledge and expertise to conduct the investigation and be without a conflict of interest (real or perceived). The Committee of Investigation shall include:

- a. At least one (1) individual holding an academic appointment at StFX; and
- b. At least one (1) individual who has no current employment relationship with StFX.

The Chair of the Committee of Investigation shall be designated by the AVPRGPS . If an individual appointed to serve on a Committee of Investigation is unable or unwilling to fulfill their duties, the Committee may continue its work if it has at least three (3)

members. If necessary, the AVPRGPS may add a replacement member to a Committee of Investigation.

All members of a Committee of Investigation are bound by the University's Conflict of Interest Policy. No person directly affiliated with the same department as that of the respondent may sit on a formal Committee of Investigation. If a member of the Committee of Investigation cannot hear an allegation because of a conflict of interest, that committee will name a replacement to the Committee of Investigation. With the agreement of the respondent, the replacement can be named from the academic community outside the University.

#### **8.4.2 Procedures**

The Committee of Investigation shall decide on its own process for determining whether an allegation can be substantiated and whether such an allegation constitutes a breach under the terms of this policy. The Committee shall be provided with any documentation known to exist concerning the allegation, and the University will enable the Committee to conduct a fair and thorough investigation. The Committee of Investigation may also, as appropriate:

- a. Interview witnesses in person;
- b. Gather information in writing (including by e-mail) from witnesses;
- c. Review documents and other relevant exhibits;
- d. Examine physical evidence;
- e. Arrange for the testing of physical evidence; and/or
- f. Request access to electronic systems that may contain relevant evidence. In all cases, the Committee shall consider the credibility and reliability of evidence.

The Complainant shall have an opportunity to explain and provide evidence in support of the allegation. The Respondent, who will have been provided with information on the essential nature of the allegation, shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegation. Any witnesses (including the Complainant and the Respondent) shall be able to consult with an advocate (including legal counsel or a union representative, as may be appropriate).

The Committee of Investigation shall undertake its investigation within a reasonable time period. Normally, an investigation shall be completed within 60 days of the allegation being assigned to the Committee of Investigation. The Committee of Investigation may seek an extension of its deadline through a request to the AVPRGPS.

In the course of its investigation, should the Committee of Investigation discover other breaches of the policy and/or the involvement of other individuals in the breach of the policy, the Committee of Investigation (through the Chair) shall request to the AVPRGPS that the scope of the investigation be enlarged.

#### **8.4.3 Report of the Committee of Investigation**

Once the Committee of Investigation has completed its analysis, it will submit a report of its findings to the AVP within 10 working days. The report shall include the following:

- a. A copy of the allegations;
- b. A summary description of the investigation process;
- c. A written response (if any) of the Respondent(s);
- d. A summary of the key evidence obtained through the investigation, including the response(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have breached the policy;
- e. A statement of the Committee's findings as to whether or not an allegation has been upheld, and the reasons for the finding;
- f. A summary of any remedial measures taken in regard to the breach; and
- g. Recommendations regarding mitigation steps, remedial measures, and due diligence against future breaches.

The report must be supported by a majority of the members of the Committee of Investigation. If the Committee of Investigation is unable to reach a majority decision, the Chair shall inform the AVPRGPS, who may constitute a new Committee of Investigation to initiate a new investigation or abandon the investigation. The AVPRGPS may request that the Chair of the Committee of Investigation prepare a redacted version of the report to protect confidentiality and to protect the identity of persons involved in the investigation. Redactions shall be in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and these procedures.

The report in its entirety (including all documents and materials examined by the Committee of Investigation) shall be retained by the AVPRGPS for a period of seven (7) years, after which the report in its entirety shall be destroyed.

The AVPRGPS will provide an appropriate version of the report (either in original or redacted form), within 10 days of the conclusion of the investigation to all persons accused of causing or contributing to a breach of the policy.

The University and the respondent may not enter into confidentiality agreements or other agreements related to an inquiry or an investigation that prevent the University from reporting to funding agencies or to the Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

If the Committee of Investigation concludes that the allegation is not upheld, no reference to the allegation shall be placed in the official file of the Respondent. Where a Committee of Investigation finds that a researcher has been wrongfully accused of a breach of the policy, the University shall take reasonable steps to restore the individual's reputation. If an allegation is upheld, a letter of discipline shall be placed in the official file of the Respondent in accordance with the relevant collective agreement.

## **8.5 Unfounded Allegations**

- 8.5.1 The University will take such steps as may be necessary and reasonable to protect and restore the reputation and credibility of members of the University community who are wrongfully accused of scholarly or research misconduct, including written notification of

the decision to all agencies, publishers, collaborators, or individuals who were informed by the University of the investigation.

- 8.5.2 The University may take disciplinary action against individuals who have been found to have made allegations of scholarly or research misconduct pursuant to this Policy where such allegations were not made in good faith.

## **8.6 Protection of Complainants**

- 8.6.1 In consultation with the AVP, it shall be the responsibility of the University President to take any action necessary to protect from retaliation persons who have made an allegation of research and scholarly misconduct in good faith, as well as all persons involved in an inquiry or investigation.
- 8.6.2 No person to whom this policy applies may retaliate against a person making such allegations or providing such information in good faith. Employees should immediately report any alleged or apparent retaliation to the AVP.
- 8.6.3 The University will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of the persons making an allegation, so long as this does not compromise public health or safety, is permitted under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and disclosure is not required in the interests of justice.

## **8.7 Appeals**

If the Committee of Investigation concludes that a breach has occurred, was intentional and not the result of innocent error or oversight, the individual shall have an opportunity to appeal the decision through the Office of the AVP. Any appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the notice of the Committee's findings. Appeals may be made on either procedural or substantive grounds. The appellant shall submit in writing the case for appeal, outlining the reasons and evidence to support the appeal. The AVP shall be provided a copy of the complete report prepared by the Committee of Inquiry as well as the appeal and accompanying documentation. The AVP shall have the discretion to interview any individuals involved in the case, including members of the Committee of Inquiry and the AVPRGPS. Normally within 10 days, the AVP shall inform the appellant as to whether the appeal is granted or denied.

In cases where an appeal on procedural grounds is granted, the AVPRGPS shall refer the case back to the Committee of Investigation so that the procedural error is corrected. Alternatively, the AVPRGPS may decide to establish a new Committee of Investigation. Whether or not a new Committee of Investigation is established shall be at the discretion of the AVPRGPS, and informed by the nature and severity of the procedural error. In cases where an appeal on substantive grounds is granted, the AVPRGPS shall proceed as in the case of an allegation having been rejected. In cases where an appeal on procedural or substantive grounds is not granted, there shall be no further appeals.

## 9.0 Retention of Documentation

The process and its outcomes shall be fully documented. All records will be retained as a confidential file in the Office of the AVPRGPS. Until an allegation is substantiated, all proceedings are to take place in strict confidentiality.

## 10. Reporting on the Outcome of an Investigation

In cases where an individual who was found to have breached the policy does not appeal the Committee's decision, or if any such appeal is denied, then within 60 days of the Committee's report, the AVPRGPS will provide a summary or an appropriate version of the report (either in original or redacted form) to:

- a. The Complainant;
- b. If relevant, any collaborators of the researcher(s) who are accused of causing or contributing to a breach (including individuals at other institutions);
- c. All such individuals (including individuals at other institutions) who may be involved in deciding upon discipline, mitigation steps, remedial actions, or due diligence to prevent similar or related breaches in the future;
- d. All such individuals who may protect or restore the reputation of those wrongfully accused of causing or contributing to a breach; and
- e. Any other person required to comply with legal, regulatory, or contractual obligations.

Also, within 60 days of the receipt of the Committee of Investigation's report on the investigation, the AVPRGPS shall submit a summary of the investigation and any steps to be taken to the Funding Agency (if appropriate) and (if appropriate) to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research.

The summary shall include:

- a. The specific allegation(s), including the names of any researcher(s) alleged to have breached the policy, a summary of the finding(s) and reasons for the finding(s);
- b. The process and timelines followed for the investigation;
- c. The researcher's response to the allegation, investigation and findings, and any measures the researcher has taken to rectify the breach; and
- d. The Committee's decisions and recommendations and actions taken by StFX.

If an individual is found to have breached the policy, notice will be provided as follows:  
Category of Individual Found to Have Breached the Policy — [Administrative Officer to be Provided Notice of a Breach of the Policy]

- a. Faculty member or librarian — [Dean of the Faculty or University Librarian]
- b. Non-academic employee (including post-doctoral fellows) — [Director, People and Culture]
- c. Students — [Vice-President, Students]

## 10.1 Discipline

Disciplinary measures may be applied to:

- a. Individuals who have breached the policy;
- b. Individuals who have made an allegation found to be frivolous or vexatious; and/or
- c. Individuals who refuse to co-operate with the Committee of Inquiry.

Any discipline will be implemented pursuant to and in accordance with the relevant collective agreement or University policy. Breaches of the policies and regulations of a Funding Agency may result in additional discipline or penalties imposed by the Funding Agency.

## 10.2 Informal Resolution

Provided that the breach does not involve a significant financial, health and safety, or other risk, and if there are no legal, contractual, or Funding Agency requirements to pursue a formal process, an informal resolution may be sought if and only if both the Complainant and the Respondent agree to pursue such a course of action. An informal resolution may occur prior to or during a formal investigation process. If a formal investigation is underway, the AVPRGPS may pause that process in order that an informal resolution takes place. If an informal resolution is not achieved, the formal process shall proceed in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document.

## **SUMMARY OF PROCESS**

Process steps and timelines for the StFX Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy process is summarized as follows:

- a. Within 10 working days, an initial assessment of the allegation is made by the AVPRGPS.
- b. If a Preliminary Committee of Inquiry is established by the AVPRGPS, it shall normally have 30 days from the date of being constituted to carry out its preliminary review of the allegation.
- c. The Preliminary Committee of Inquiry shall submit a report to the AVPRGPS within 10 days after the conclusion of its review, determining whether the allegation should proceed to a Formal Committee of Investigation or be dismissed.
- d. Within 14 days of receiving the report of the Preliminary Committee of Inquiry recommending Formal Investigation, the AVPRGPS shall establish a Formal Committee of Investigation.
- e. The Committee of Investigation shall normally have 60 days from the date of being constituted to carry out its formal review of the allegation.
- f. The Committee of Investigation shall submit a report to the AVPRGPS within 10 days after the conclusion of its investigations. (Upon receipt of the Committee of Inquiry's

report, the discipline provisions of the collective agreements shall be initiated, if appropriate.)

- g. Within 10 days of receiving the report of the Committee of Inquiry, the AVPRGPS shall provide an appropriate version of the report to the individual accused of causing or contributing to a breach of the policy.
- h. The individual accused of the breach shall exercise their right to appeal the decision of the Committee of Inquiry within 30 days of the notice of the Committee's findings.
- i. The AVP shall render a decision to grant or deny the appeal within 10 days of receiving an appeal.
- j. If the individual found to have breached the policy does not appeal, or if the individual's appeal is denied by the Provost, the AVPRGPS shall (within 60 days of receiving the report of the Committee of Inquiry) report on the findings to the appropriate persons (outlined in the policy) and to the Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research (if appropriate). Cases involving Agency-funded research shall be reported to the relevant Funding Agency.
- k. If the allegation relates to research funded by a Tri-Council Agency, the AVPRGPS shall, within 30 days, report the nature of the allegations to the Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and whether an investigation will proceed in accordance with the University's policy and procedures.
- l. In circumstances where discipline is imposed in response to a breach of this policy, the timelines shall conform to the provisions of the relevant collective agreement.