

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND ARTISTIC WORK COMMITTEE  
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

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**PRESENTED BY:** Eric Lamb; chair, Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** January 30, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **Annual Report Regarding Responsible Conduct of Research Policy**

**COUNCIL ACTION:** **For Information Only**

**SUMMARY:**

The Tri-Agency Framework on Responsible Conduct of Research mandates annual reporting on the total number of allegations received involving Agency funding, the number of confirmed breaches and the nature of those breaches. Previously breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy were reported through the annual report of the Vice-President Research to RSAW, but starting in 2019 they have been reported separately.

The attached report outlines the number of breaches and allegations under the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy for the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. RSAW reviewed this report at its meeting on December 12, 2024.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Responsible Conduct of Research Policy: 2023-24 Report on Allegations and Breaches
2. Responsible Conduct of Research - Allegations, Investigations & Breaches 2013 to 2024

# ***Responsible Conduct of Research*** ***2023-2024 Update***

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Responsible Conduct of Research Institutional Lead; Associate Vice-President Research

**Trever Crowe**, PhD

Research Integrity Officer; Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies), College of Agriculture and Bioresources

**Diane Martz**, PhD

Senior Responsible Conduct of Research Specialist

**RSAW, December 12, 2024**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN**

## **Land Acknowledgement**

*As we gather here today, we acknowledge we are on Treaty 6  
Territory and the Homeland of the Métis.*

*We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this  
place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.*

# **New RCR Inquiries/Investigations: July 2023 to June 2024**

**Complaints / Allegations are at an all-time high, with 18 new complaints received during this period** (some complaints involve multiple allegations):

- Mismanagement of Grant and Awards funds - 5
- Failure to comply with relevant policies, laws or regulations for the conduct of certain types of research, specifically TCPS2 (3 complaints involving 6 respondents)
- Plagiarism (5)
- Inappropriate acknowledgement (2 separate complaints involving the same 2 respondents)
- Inappropriate Authorship (3)
- Falsification (1)
- Fabrication (1)

# **New RCR Inquiries/Investigations: July 2023 to June 2024**

## **Outcomes for the 24 respondents (as of June 30, 2024) include:**

- Confirmed breach - acknowledgement (5)
- Dismissed at Inquiry (4)
- Informal Resolution (7)
- Withdrawn (1)
- Ongoing (7)

## **New RCR Inquiries/Investigations: July 2023 to June 2024**

- **Two hearings** (ongoing cases from previous years) **resulted in findings of no breach**
  - 1 is currently in appeal
- The confirmed breaches include:
  - **Failure to comply with relevant policies, laws or regulations for the conduct of certain types of research, specifically TCPS2 (4)**
  - **Mismanagement of grants or award funds (1)**
- Recourse included:
  - **Requirement/recommendation for TCPS2 training (4)**
  - **Dismissal / retirement (1)**

# New RCR Inquiries/Investigations: July 2023 to June 2024

## **18 New Allegations:**

- External complainants (6)
- Students and former students (6)
- Audit and Risk Services (4)
- Employee (1)
- Research Participant (1)

## **24 Respondents Included:**

- In scope Faculty (16)
- Emeritus faculty (2)
- USask Contractor (1)
- Research Associate (1)
- Graduate Student (1)
- ASPA (1)
- Senior Administrator (1)
- No current affiliation with USask (1)

## **RCR Reporting**

- **Yearly report to University Council**
- **Yearly report to the Tri-Agencies** on the number of allegations proceeding to a Hearing and breaches of the RCR Policy involving Tri-Agency funding
- **Yearly report to the U.S. Office of Research Integrity** on any cases involving US government funding

**All reports were submitted**



## RCR Team Observations ...

- Complaints / allegations this past year is at an **all time high (and increasing ...)**
  - underlines **pressing need to be pro-active** – education, tools, resources
- **Complainants from external sources have increased**
- Number of mismanagement of grants or awards funds complaints suggests issues with **PI's knowledge of Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration and internal controls at USask**
  - 4 allegations from Audit and Risk Services involving mismanagement of grant or award funds
- Exploring ways of informal resolution
  - engaged with the USask Conflict Engagement Specialist to attempt **mediation in appropriate cases** and working with other complaint-based processes on campus to identify solutions to improve supports to access to these processes, especially for students; to dismantle silos; and to explore **effective ways of informal resolution (reconciliation)**
- **Confirmed (and alleged) breaches of RCR Policy influence USask's reputation ...**

## RCR Tools and Resources

1. RCR Team has worked with IT to assess **text matching software** for the use of Usask researchers (faculty, staff and students). A decision on a tool and supports is anticipated in the next few months
2. We will continue to monitor development of **tools for image duplication detection** and **improper use of AI**
3. With anticipated increased resources (and working/aligning with others), the RCR Team will augment **RCR training** for USask researchers
4. The **RCR Website** is available at <https://vpresearch.usask.ca/research-support/responsible-conduct-of-research/responsible-conduct-of-research.php>. Website is work in-progress - appreciate feedback and suggestions to improve the website
5. RCR Team participates in the **national RCR Forum** with other Canadian institutions receiving funding from the Tri-Agencies
  - forum provides opportunity to **share resources and solutions** and provides the SRCR with **advice/feedback regarding RCR guidance for institutions**

## RCR Personnel

- In the coming year the RCR Team will hire a **new full-time Director RCR** who will focus attention on RCR Education, evaluating/implementing tools to assist our researchers, and enhance understanding/practice of the responsible conduct of research
  - **Dr. Diane Martz has agreed to provide ongoing part-time guidance and expertise**
- **Dr. Trevor Crowe continues his work as Research Integrity Officer** as part of the team to promote and support the responsible conduct of research at the University of Saskatchewan
- RCR continues to serve as a resource and answer questions/situations that have not [yet] reached ‘allegation’ status
  - these **opportunities/interventions have significantly increased in frequency**
  - positive indication that the USask RCR support/resource is becoming more widely known, providing **opportunities to better support and inform the University research community, and potentially prevent breaches of the RCR Policy**

# Generative Artificial Intelligence

- Use of AI spans the full range of research activities from preparation of grant applications to thesis and report/manuscript writing
- Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - guidance issued from the Tri-Agencies on the **'Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Development and Review of Research Proposals'**
  - <https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/interagency-research-funding/policies-and-guidelines/use-generative-artificial-intelligence-development-and-review-research-proposals/guidance-use-artificial-intelligence-development-and-review-research-grant-proposals>
- **USask Provisional Research Scholarly, and Artistic Work Guidelines**
  - <https://leadership.usask.ca/initiatives/ai/research-guidelines-for-ai.php>
- Rapidly changing and evolving field ...

**Appendix 1: Responsible Conduct of Research - Allegations, Appeals, Investigations & Breaches 2013 to June 30, 2024**

Time Period	New Allegations Received	Appeals	# of Inquiries (individual respondents)	Breaches Acknowledged*	# Hearings	No Breach	Confirmed Breaches (# of Respondents)	# of cases involving breaches	# Respondents Reported to the Tri-Agencies	In Progress/Ongoing
07/2013 - 06/2014	3		N/R	N/A	3	1	3 plagiarism 1 redundant publication	2	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2014 - 06/2015	3		N/R	N/A	3	Not reported	3 plagiarism 1 redundant publication	Not reported	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2015 - 06/2016	9		N/R	N/A	2	7 plus 1 from 2015	Not reported	0	N/R	2 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2016 - 06/2017	1		N/R	N/A	1	0	Not reported	0	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2017 - 06/2018	6		N/R	N/A	2	2	Not reported	0	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2018 - 06/2019	4	1	N/R	N/A	3	3	Not reported	0	N/R	1 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2019 - 06/2020	12		11	5	1	1 from previous year	failure to comply with relevant policies (ethics) for the conduct of research (2), misrepresentation in a funding application (2), plagiarism (1), falsification of data (1), Fabrication of data (1).	6	1	3 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2020 - 06/2021	1	1	3 (1 inquiry closed)	0	4	2	inadequate acknowledgement (1), invalid authorship, (2), plagiarism (2)	2	2	1 ongoing
07/2021 - 06/2022	3 (1 involving 3 respondents)	0	5 respondents	2 respondents	0	0	falsification (2), failure to comply with applicable policies, laws or regulations for the conduct of Research (to CCAC guidelines (2)	2	2	1 ongoing
07, 2022 – 06, 2023	11 (involving 15 respondents)	1 denied, in judicial review	15 4 acknowledged 4 dismissed 3 hearings 4 informal resolution	4	1 complete (but in judicial review)	0	Misrepresentation in a funding application (2); mismanagement of grants or awards funds (1); Invalid authorship (1).	3	4	1 hearing complete but in judicial review, 2 upcoming
1 Jul2023 to 30 Jun 2024	18 involving 24 respondents	1	24: 5 breaches; 4 dismissed; 7 informal resolution 1 withdrawn; 7 in progress:	5	2 (cases ongoing from previous year)	2 (1 in appeal)	failure to comply with relevant policies for the conduct of research (TCPS2) (4); mismanagement of grant and awards funds (1)	3	3	6 ongoing, 1 in judicial review; 1 being appealed

Data extracted from RSAW Committee Annual Reports to Council; June 2013 to June 2019.

\*Acknowledgement of a Breach not offered as an outcome prior to 2019.