Integrity in research and scholarship

The Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) funds cardiovascular research awards in academic institutions in Canada. The policies outlined below are developed to be consistent with those of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR).

The CCS is committed to the highest standards of integrity in research and scholarships. The CCS defines integrity as encouraging the highest standards of research and scholarship. The major concerns regarding scientific misconduct are considered fabrication or falsification of data and plagiarism, but the CCS regards any action that is inconsistent with integrity as misconduct.

Integrity includes the principles listed below, which should be interpreted with the understanding that research can involve honest error, conflicting data or valid differences in experimental design or in interpretation or judgment of information:

- Recognizing the substantive contributions of collaborators and students; using unpublished work of other researchers and scholars only with permission and with due acknowledgement; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source.
- Not using new information, concepts or data that were originally obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or applications for funds for research or training that may have been seen as a result of processes such as peer review, unless the author has given permission.
- Using scholarly and scientific rigor and integrity in obtaining, recording and analyzing data and in reporting and publishing results.
- Ensuring that authorship of published work includes all who have materially contributed to and share responsibility for the contents of the publication, and only those people.
- Revealing to sponsors, universities, journals or funding agencies any material, financial or other conflict of interest that might influence their decisions on whether the individual should be asked to review manuscripts or applications, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.

www.ccs.ca
These components of scientific integrity overlap with other areas such as financial integrity in the use of research funds and the ethical issues involving the use of human or animal subjects in research. This document is concerned only with scientific integrity and does not replace any other statements from the CCS on other areas with which this issue may overlap.

The CCS requires the institutions that administer funds to accept responsibility for:
- monitoring and investigating possible instances of misconduct in research or scholarship
- imposing appropriate sanctions in accordance with their own policies
- informing the CCS of conclusions reached and actions taken

The specific expectations for procedures and responsibilities of researcher, research institutions and the CCS regarding integrity in research and scholarship are outlined below:

Procedures for promoting integrity and for preventing and addressing misconduct in research

1. The responsibilities of researchers and scholars

The primary responsibility for high standards of conduct in research and scholarship rests with the individuals carrying out these activities.

2. The responsibilities of research institutions

The CCS holds the institutions that administer its funds responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct involving researchers, trainees or research staff receiving funds. Promotion by the institutions of understanding of the issues involved in integrity in research and scholarship offers a valuable means of preventing cases of misconduct.
(a) Promotion of integrity in research and scholarship

Integrity in research and scholarship is best encouraged by developing awareness among all involved of the need for the highest standards of integrity, accountability and responsibility. Research institutions should provide an environment conducive to this goal and actively promote programs for education of researchers, scholars, trainees and staff.

The CCS encourages institutions that administer its funds to establish a mechanism to educate all who are involved in the collection, recording, citing, reporting and retention of scientific or scholarly material about their expectations for the highest standard of integrity.

(b) Investigating allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship

Allegations may arise from anonymous or identified sources within or outside the research institution; the allegations may be well-founded, honestly erroneous or mischievous. Whatever their source, motivation or accuracy, such allegations have potential to cause great harm to the persons accused, to the accuser, to the institution and to research and scholarship in general.

• The CCS requires the research institutions that administer its funds to establish appropriate impartial and accountable procedures to:
  • receive written allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship
  • conduct and document appropriate investigations within an established and reasonable time period
  • protect the privacy of the person(s) accused and of the person(s) making the allegations throughout the investigation through mechanisms consistent with due process and natural justice
  • decide whether there has been misconduct
  • determine the actions to be taken as a result of conclusions reached, including:
    • the sanctions to be imposed
    • any actions to be taken to protect or restore the reputation(s) or credibility of person(s) wrongly accused of or implicated in misconduct in research, including the procedures to ensure that, if the charges have been dismissed, copies of documents and related files provided to third parties have been destroyed

www.ccs.ca
any actions to be taken to protect the person(s) deemed to have made a responsible accusation
inform the accused person(s) of the results of the investigation and of the actions that have been decided upon
prepare a report on the above

3. Responsibilities of the CCS

The CCS is responsible for ensuring that research funds are used with a high degree of integrity, accountability and responsibility.

Each institution receiving research funds must have established procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct that are consistent with the above expectations. The CCS has the right, but not the obligation, to review the policies and procedures of the institution with regard to integrity in research and scholarship.

Allegations of misconduct made to the CCS or to research institutions might involve past or present awardees, trainees or staff supported by CCS funds. Such allegations might also arise from the peer review processes of the CCS. Under provision of the Privacy Act, the CCS may only transmit allegations of misconduct in research with the permission of their author. The CCS will not transmit oral allegations to the institution or otherwise act upon them, since these cannot be assessed or transferred accurately. In the event that the CCS, or its peer review committee, identifies evidence of misconduct as part of the peer review process, the CCS will initiate an inquiry to gather and expeditiously review factual information to determine if an investigation of the allegation is warranted. An inquiry is not a formal hearing; it is designed to separate allegations deserving of further investigation from frivolous, unjustified, or clearly mistaken allegations. Based upon findings from the inquiry, the CCS may request that the institutions(s) involved to carry out an investigation and inform the CCS of the outcome.

The CCS requires that institutions that have carried out investigations of alleged misconduct in research or scholarship involving projects funded by the CCS inform the CCS of the allegations made and the progress of investigations and provide the CCS with the report prepared.
The CCS will consider the report and may request clarification or additional information. In cases in which misconduct is concluded to have occurred, the CCS will also consider imposing its own sanction(s) in relation to awards made to the individual(s) or the institution(s) implicated, in accordance with its policies. If actions are being considered, the CCS will provide an opportunity for the persons or institutions involved to present their position. These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- refusal to consider future applications for a defined time period
- withdrawal of remaining installments of the award(s)
- seeking a refund of all or part of the funds already paid as an award(s) for the research

The CCS will inform the person(s) and the institution(s) involved of any impending action.

The CCS must retain the right at any time to bring a case to the attention of the appropriate legal authorities.

**Indirect costs policy**

CCS Research Award funds may not be used for the indirect costs associated with the conduct of research. Indirect costs refer to the institution’s operational costs including, but not limited to, heating, lighting, computer networking/IT services, ethics review, facilities for animals used in research, management of intellectual property, and/or environmental assessment and safety compliance. This policy is reviewed annually and past practice does not necessarily dictate future CCS policy.

**Industry-related Research**

As is the case with all CCS supported research, a Host Institution must take full responsibility for the conduct of the research being funded, according to all existing CCS policies. These include, but are not limited to, maintaining integrity in research and scholarship, full ethical review and surveillance, compliance with accepted biohazard and animal care regulations and full financial accounting and control.

www.ccs.ca
• For-profit organizations are not eligible to be Host Institutions for award applications to the CCS.

• The Principal Investigator on any Research Award administered by the CCS must be based in, or be formally affiliated with (but not necessarily receive salary support from), a Canadian Host Institution which will take responsibility described above, for the duration of the funding period.

• Research may be performed at the collected premises of the Host Institution, but also at any other locations as needed or as appropriate for the efficient conduct of the research. This includes the facilities of a for-profit organization, subject to the provisions above.

• The CCS reaffirms that it does not wish to own or have a vested interest in Intellectual Property (IP) which may emanate from any of the research projects it is supporting. Neither does the CCS wish to dictate terms to Host Institutions as to how they handle such IP. The CCS does, however, require the Host Institution to have a clear policy regarding IP, and have such policy in force at the time any award is made. Note, however, that it is the intent of the CCS that the primary objective of funded research must not be the promotion of commercial interests.

• Full disclosure of any existing or intended funding of the applicant’s research and any agreements that pertain to that research, by any other source, whether not-for-profit or for-profit, must be made by the applicants to the CCS to support any application for research. The details and mechanism of such disclosure must be sufficient to allow the CCS to make a determination of the amount of overlap, if any, with projects being submitted for support. Moreover, during the period of a CCS award, any changes in funding status that pertain to overlap are to be disclosed to the CCS. The CCS is prepared to have such disclosure made to a limited group of its senior officials, under an agreement of confidentiality, if necessary, to protect the rights of third parties.

It is the policy of the CCS that investigators should be free to disseminate advances arising from its funded research to other researchers, practitioners, policy makers and the public without undue delay.

www.ccs.ca
Communication with the Canadian Cardiovascular Society

All applicants to the Canadian Cardiovascular Society will receive written notification of the outcome of their application. Applicants are afforded opportunities to interact with the CCS in a number of ways:

- All applicants may seek clarification regarding the scientific review process and the funding decisions.
- All applicants may communicate in writing a specific concern with regard to an issue of process or administration relating to a specific application. As appropriate, issues will be brought to the attention of the Chair for the Research Award Committee. The CCS will investigate any concerns and the CEO or a Director will respond to the applicant in writing on behalf of the Chair. Note that decisions of the CCS are final however revisions or improvements to the peer review process may be implemented if necessary.
- Applicants may respond in writing to the scientific merit critique of an application by submitting a revision of an unsuccessful application to the next regular competition with a copy of the applicable critique and a response to the critique, as applicable.

Note that applicants must not discuss their application with any member of the CCS Peer Review Committee, the Chair of the Research Award Committee. Any queries must be directed to the CCS.