



Memorandum

Office of the Research Integrity Officer
Room 419, 845 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, QC, H3A 0G4
Tel: (514) 396-2890
rio2.vpri@mcgill.ca

TO: Senate
FROM: Professor Craig Mandato, Research Integrity Officer
SUBJECT: Annual Report on the Investigation of Research Misconduct
DATE: October 16, 2024
DOCUMENT #: D24-16
ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE An annual report submitted to the Senate and Board of Governors for information in accordance with the provisions of the *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct*.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE According to article 14.3 of the [Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct](#), the Research Integrity Officer is to provide an annual report to Senate and to the Board of Governors on the operation of the Regulations. The report includes the following:

- (i) the number of Research Misconduct allegations received;
- (ii) the number of Research Misconduct allegations investigated;
- (iii) a summary of the findings of the investigations conducted;
- (iv) a summary of any actions taken pursuant to the investigations.

The last annual report was presented on January 17, 2024 (for the 2022-2023 reporting year, Document D23-39).

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS N/A

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS The Annual Report will be submitted to the Board of Governors for information.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL This item is presented for information.

APPENDICES Appendix A: 2023-2024 Annual Report on the Investigation of Research Misconduct

**2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE INVESTIGATION OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

Reporting Period June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024
Report of the Research Integrity Officer
Dr. Christina Wolfson
Prepared September 2024

Introduction:

The *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct* call for the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) to report annually to Senate and to the Board of Governors on the application of the Regulations. This is the fifteenth annual report presented to Senate and the Board of Governors in discharge of this obligation.

During this reporting time period, Professor Craig Mandato was appointed as McGill University’s Research Integrity Officer and Professor Andrew Kirk was appointed as Deputy Research Integrity Officer, both effective May 15, 2024, for three-year terms. Professor Kirk joined Professor Niky Kamran who continues in his role as Deputy Research Integrity Officer. During this reporting period all meetings were held via Zoom.

Background:

The Regulations provide for an internal process for the assessment (referred to as “Inquiry”) by the RIO (or Deputy RIO) and, where appropriate, the formal investigation (referred to as “Investigation”) of allegations of research misconduct brought against members of the University community regardless of Faculty or discipline. The investigation committee membership and process to be followed are governed by the Regulations.

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 below provide statistical information concerning allegations and their disposition for the past six academic years [2018-2019 to 2023-2024].

Broad Overview:

There were 12 new dossiers opened during the 2023-2024 reporting year, and an additional three dossiers were carried over from the 2022-2023 reporting year. Of the three dossiers carried over to this reporting year, two resulted in a finding of research misconduct as a result of an inquiry or investigation (see Table 4). For the third, there was not sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation.

Of the 12 new dossiers, one was declared a no prima facie case and four proceeded to inquiry during the reporting period. All four that proceeded to inquiry resulted in an Admission of Research Misconduct by the Respondent. Seven of the 12 dossiers opened in this reporting year were ongoing at the end of the reporting period (see Table 3).

Table 1 below presents summary statistics on the Nature of the Allegations Received for the 12 new dossiers. It is not uncommon for a complaint to include more than one allegation of research misconduct. What is presented below is the “primary allegation” as determined by the RIO.

	Table 1: Nature of the Allegations Received – New Dossiers						
	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Plagiarism or Authorship	0	4	3	5	2	2	16
Fabrication/ Falsification	1	1	2	2	2	5	13
Ethical Misconduct	1	2	3	2	3	1	12
Misrepresentation	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mismanagement of Research Funds	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Misappropriation of Intellectual Property	2	3	1	1	0	1	8
Mismanagement of Conflict of Interest	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
False Accusation of Research Misconduct	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Destruction of Research Records – Introduced 2020-21			1	0	0	0	1
Libel – Introduced 2020-21			1	0	0	0	1
Total	6	10	11	11	7	12	57

Source of Allegations:

The sources of allegations are shown in Table 2 (below). In line with past years, complaints come from a variety of sources, and we note this year that there was an increase in the number of anonymous allegations. Over the past 6 years, the majority of the respondents (i.e., those against whom a complaint is made) have been academic staff, although graduate students/postdoctoral fellows have also been named as respondents. The RIO works closely with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies when the respondent is a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as per the Regulations.

	Table 2: Source of Allegations – New Dossiers						
	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Funding Agency	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
University Community¹	1	4	3	5	3	7	23
External²	5	4	6	3	2	2	22
Anonymous³	0	1	1	3	2	3	10
Total	6	10	11	11	7	12	57

¹Includes administrative units of the University

²Includes Journal editors, members of the lay public, researchers outside the McGill community.

³An anonymous allegation must contain sufficient information to enable the Institution to assess the allegation without further information from the complainant.

Actions in Response to Allegations:

The first step following the receipt of an allegation is an inquiry conducted by the RIO or Deputy RIO. The possible outcomes of the RIO inquiry are (i) insufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation; (ii) admission of research misconduct; or (iii) sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation. Assessments of allegations have taken place in 57 cases over the past six years, 39 of which were Inquiries only or Inquiries followed by Investigations. Seven cases were judged as no prima facie (no basis for an inquiry or inadequate information to launch an inquiry). Four cases were transferred to other jurisdictions. Research misconduct (including admission of research misconduct) was established either through a formal investigation or an admission of research misconduct by the respondent in four cases. There were seven cases ongoing at the end of this reporting period.

Table 3: Actions in Response to Allegations – New Cases

Nature of the Allegation	Year	Total Cases	No Prima Facie Case	Transferred ¹	Inquiry only OR Investigation	Ongoing	Finding of Research Misconduct Current Year
Plagiarism/Authorship	2018-19	0					
	2019-20	4			4		
	2020-21	3	1		2		
	2021-22	5	1	2	2		
	2022-23	2	1		1		
	2023-24	2			1	1	1
Fabrication/Falsification	2018-19	1		1			
	2019-20	1			1		
	2020-21	2			2		
	2021-22	2			2		
	2022-23	2			2		
	2023-24	5			1	4	1
Ethical Misconduct	2018-19	1			1		
	2019-20	2			2		
	2020-21	3			3		
	2021-22	2			2		
	2022-23	3	2		1		
	2023-24	1			1		1
Misrepresentation in official documents	2018-19	0					
	2019-20	0					
	2020-21	0					
	2021-22	0					
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	1			1		1

Nature of the Allegation	Year	Total Cases	No Prima Facie Case	Transferred ¹	Inquiry only OR Investigation	Ongoing	Finding of Research Misconduct Current Year
Mismanagement of Research Funds	2018-19	0					
	2019-20	0					
	2020-21	0					
	2021-22	1			1		
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	2	1			1	
Misappropriation of Intellectual Property	2018-19	2		1	1		
	2019-20	3			3		
	2020-21	1			1		
	2021-22	1			1		
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	1				1	
Mismanagement of Conflict of Interest	2018-19	1			1		
	2019-20	0					
	2020-21	0					
	2021-22	0					
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	0					
False Accusation of Research Misconduct	2018-19	1			1		
	2019-20	0					
	2020-21	0					
	2021-22	0					
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	0					
Destruction of Research Records	2020-21	1			1		
	2021-22	0					
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	0					
Libel – Introduced 2020-21	2021-21	1	1				
	2021-22	0					
	2022-23	0					
	2023-24	0					
Totals		57	7	4	39	7	4

¹Allegations that upon review were transferred to other jurisdictions/universities and not managed through McGill University.

Table 4: Disposition of Cases Carried Over

Nature of the Allegation	Year	Total Cases	No Prima Facie Case	Transferred*	Inquiry only OR Investigation	Finding of Research Misconduct
Plagiarism/Authorship	2022-23	2			2	1
False References	2022-23	1			1	1
Totals		3			3	2

Consultative Activities:

In addition to the formal allegations noted above, the RIO (or Deputy RIO) held preliminary discussions with current or former members of the McGill community who were concerned about an issue of research misconduct. No formal allegations of research misconduct were submitted to the RIO from these consultations.

Additional Statistical Reporting:

Each year in addition to the annual report to Senate, the RIO files the following annually:

- (a) In accordance with the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2021)*, Article 4.5(b), institutions are required to report annually to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research matters involving Agency funding. This is a statistical report only.
- (b) Each institution which receives or applies for US Public Health Service research funding must report to the US Office of Research Integrity concerning any allegations of research misconduct involving U.S. Public Health Service funded research. This is a statistical report only.
- (c) For all allegations involving research funded by FRQ or in relation to allegations against a member of the McGill community based at an FRQ funded research institute, a lettre de recevabilité must be forwarded to the FRQ with the decision concerning the disposition of each allegation (i.e., insufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation; admission of guilt; or sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation). In addition, the FRQ has introduced annual reporting. This is a statistical report only.

Acknowledgements:

The Research Integrity Officer and Deputy Research Integrity Officers take this opportunity to thank all those who have served on, or cooperated with, investigation committees. This includes members of the McGill University Community as well as those from outside the University who have served as external members or consultants. All recognize the critical importance of such allegations and the major impact that they can have on the academic and professional lives of both respondents and complainants. The dedication that committee members as well as advisors, both faculty and students, have exhibited in these important roles, the integrity with which they have fulfilled their responsibilities, and the time and energy they have devoted to ensuring a fair and transparent investigation of all the issues, deserve commendation. The RIOs extend their gratitude to the University and its members for the opportunity to have served in this capacity and for their cooperation and support.