



Media Backgrounder

Report of the Expert Panel on Research Integrity *Honesty, Accountability & Trust: Fostering Research Integrity in Canada*

Research plays a key role in shaping the world. Through research, we gain a better understanding of today's most pressing and complex social and scientific issues such as cultural diversity, human rights, disease prevention, and climate change. Given this dependence on research, the *integrity* of research is vital.

In 2009, the Minister of Industry asked the Council of Canadian Academies to conduct an assessment of research integrity in Canada. The assessment was to examine existing national and international evidence, and develop a common understanding of research integrity that would be acceptable to all parties involved in the research enterprise. Specifically, the charge to the Council asked:

What are the key research integrity principles, procedural mechanisms, and practices, appropriate in the Canadian context, that could be applied across research disciplines at institutions receiving funds from the federal granting councils?

To address this question, the Council appointed an independent, 14-member, multidisciplinary Expert Panel representing both individual researchers and senior administrators responsible for the implementation and execution of research ethics and misconduct policies.

In developing the assessment, the Panel considered various lines of evidence: research integrity approaches by leading countries, existing policies and frameworks within Canada, scholarly literature, and testimony from relevant experts. Additionally, the Panel relied on its collective expertise to apply its analysis.

Overall, the Panel concluded that Canada can, and should strengthen the existing Canadian framework, which is best achieved by fostering a positive culture for research integrity.

The Panel's Key findings

- Canada must address the gaps in the existing research system that are undermining the system's transparency and accountability.
- Canada needs a common, system-wide approach to research integrity that involves all actors.
- There is a need to foster a positive, values-based environment for research integrity in Canada.
- Canada needs a new entity, the Canadian Council for Research Integrity, to serve as a central educational and advisory arm on issues of research integrity.

The Expert Panel concluded that a system-wide approach to research integrity involving all "actors" is required to promote a positive research integrity environment in Canada. "Actors" refers broadly to those who do research, manage research, and fund research. The Panel also outlined a common definition of research integrity, a core set of five values, and a set of 11 fundamental principles needed to promote a positive research integrity environment.

The Proposed Definition and Values for Research Integrity

Research integrity is the coherent and consistent application of values and principles essential to encouraging and achieving excellence in the search for, and dissemination of, knowledge. These values include **honesty, fairness, trust, accountability, and openness**.

After examining several options for Canada, the Panel concluded that a new central body, the Canadian Council for Research Integrity (CCRI), should be created to serve as a central educational and advisory arm on issues of research integrity. The role of the CCRI would be one of facilitation and support for all actors in the research community. The CCRI would have responsibility for (i) the provision of confidential advice; (ii) information gathering; (iii) dissemination and reporting; and (iv) promotion of best practices and standards.

Although the Panel's approach to research integrity focused very much on a system-wide approach with a shared set of values and principles that could promote awareness and help to prevent egregious conduct, the Panel was conscious of the need to discuss the issue of research misconduct. As such, the Panel also offered a definition for research misconduct and a proposed framework for inappropriate behaviours.

The Panel's report can be downloaded in English and French from the Council's website, www.scienceadvice.ca.

The Expert Panel on Research Integrity

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