



Research and Planning Department Code of Ethics¹

PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics for the Research and Planning Department at Red River College was developed to provide staff of the Department with guidelines for ethical and professional conduct. The code defines a normative standard and expectation for individuals in the Department in their work. Research and planning plays a special role in post-secondary education in adhering to high research and planning principles. These include protection of confidentiality, data and analysis security and accuracy, integrity and truth in reporting and high standards of practice.

1. COMPETENCE

- 1.1. Claims of Competence. RRC Research and Planning staff shall not in the conduct of affairs, claim or imply a degree of competency he/she does not possess.
- 1.2. Acceptance of Assignments. RRC Research and Planning staff shall not accept (or be required to accept) assignments requiring competencies he/she does not have and for which he/she cannot effectively rely upon the assistance of colleagues, unless he/she would acquire the necessary competence prior to doing the research. Individuals should use methodologies or techniques that are new to them only after appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those methodologies or techniques.
- 1.3. Professional Continuing Competence. RRC Research and Planning staff have the responsibility to develop his/her own professional skills, knowledge, and performance and to keep abreast of changes in the field. The Department also has the responsibility for supporting staff in their endeavors to develop his/her own professional skills, knowledge, and performance and to keep abreast of changes in the field.

2. PRACTICE

- 2.1. Objectivity.
 - 2.1.1. Unbiased Attitude. RRC Research and Planning staff shall approach all assignments with an unbiased attitude and strive to gather evidence fairly and accurately.

¹ Based on the Association for Research, *Code of Ethics for Research* [12/14/01].

- 2.1.2. Conflicts of Interest. RRC Research and Planning staff should be particularly sensitive to avoid personal conflicts of interest when performing research and planning services.
 - 2.2. Use of Accepted Technical Standards. RRC Research and Planning staff shall conduct all tasks in accordance with accepted methodological standards for the conduct of research and planning activities.
 - 2.3. Initial Discussions. Before an assignment is begun, RRC Research and Planning staff shall clarify with the sponsor and/or major users the purposes, expectations, strategies, and limitations of the project.
 - 2.3.1. Special care shall be taken to recommend research and / or planning techniques and designs that are appropriate to the purposes of the project.
 - 2.3.2. Special care shall be taken to advise the sponsor and/or major users, both at the design phase and, should the occasion arise, at any time during the execution of the project, if there is reason to believe that the strategy under consideration is likely to fail or to yield substantially unreliable results.
 - 2.4. Identification of Responsibility. RRC Research and Planning staff shall accept responsibility for the competent execution of all assignments which he/she, or a subordinate, undertakes, and shall display individual and/or office authorship, as appropriate, on all such reports.
 - 2.5. Quality of Secondary Data. RRC Research and Planning staff shall exercise reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of data gathered by other individuals, groups, offices, or agencies on which he/she relies, and shall document the sources and quality of such data.
 - 2.6. Reports. RRC Research and Planning staff shall ensure that all reports of projects are complete; are clearly written in language understandable to decision-makers; fully distinguish among assumptions, speculations, findings, and judgments; employ appropriate statistics and graphics; adequately describe the limitations of the project, of the analytical method, and of the findings; and follow scholarly norms in the attribution of ideas, methods, and expression and in the sources of data.
 - 2.7. Documentation. RRC Research and Planning staff shall document the sources of information and the process of analysis in each task in sufficient detail to enable a technically qualified colleague to understand what was done and to verify that the work meets all appropriate standards and expectations.
3. CONFIDENTIALITY
- 3.1. Atmosphere of Confidentiality. RRC Research and Planning staff maintain an overall atmosphere of confidentiality within the work environment.
 - 3.2. Storage and Security. RRC Research and Planning staff shall organize, store, maintain, analyze, transfer and/or dispose of data under his/her control in such a manner as to reasonably prevent loss, unauthorized access, or divulgence of confidential information.
 - 3.3. Ethical Standards. RRC Research and Planning adheres to the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), on Research involving human subjects (<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>), in the conduct of any research with human participants conducted by the Department.
 - 3.4. Release of Confidential Information. RRC Research and Planning staff shall permit no release of information about individual persons that has been guaranteed as

confidential, to any person inside or outside the institution except in those circumstances in which not to do so would result in clear danger to the subject of the confidential material or to others; or unless directed by competent authority in conformity with a decree of a court of law.

3.5. Special Standards for Data Collection.

3.5.1. Balancing Privacy Risks against Benefits. RRC Research and Planning staff shall, at the design stage of any project, thoroughly explore the degree of invasion of privacy and the risks of breach of confidentiality that are involved in the project, weigh them against potential benefits, and make therefrom a recommendation as to whether the project should be executed, and under what conditions.

3.5.2. Developing Specific Guidelines. Where appropriate, RRC Research and Planning staff shall adopt a written description of any specific steps beyond the regular guidelines within the Research office that are necessary during a specific assignment to ensure the protection of aspects of privacy and confidentiality that may be at specific risk.

3.6. Disclosure of Rights. RRC Research and Planning staff shall ensure that all subjects are informed of their right of refusal and of the degree of confidentiality with which the material that they provide will be handled, including where appropriate, the implications of any freedom of information and protection of privacy statute. If there are any limits to confidentiality these must be made clear.

3.7. Appraisal of Implications. The Researcher and Planner shall apprise institutional authorities of the implications and potentially binding obligations of any promise to respondents regarding confidentiality and shall obtain consent from such authorities where necessary.

4. RELATIONSHIPS TO THE COMMUNITY

4.1. Equal Treatment. RRC Research and Planning Department shall promote equal access and opportunity regarding employment, services, and other activities of his/her office, without regard to race, creed, gender, national origin, disability or other accidental quality; and in analysis, demeanor, and expression shall be alert to the sensitivities of groups and individuals.

4.2. Custody and Archiving. RRC Research and Planning staff shall apply all reasonable means to prevent irrevocable loss of data and documentation during its immediately useful life; and, being aware of the role of data as institutional historic resource, shall act as an advocate for its documentation and systematic permanent archiving.

4.3. Assessment of Research. RRC Research and Planning staff shall develop and implement regular assessment tools for the evaluation of research and planning services.

4.4. Institutional Confidentiality. RRC Research and Planning staff shall maintain in strict confidence and security all information in his/her possession about the institution or any of its constituent parts which by institutional policy is considered to be confidential.

4.5. Integrity of Reports. RRC Research and Planning staff shall make efforts to anticipate and prevent misunderstandings and misuse of reports within the institution by careful presentation and documentation in original reports, and by diligent follow-up contact with institutional users of those reports. If a report has

been altered, intentionally or inadvertently, to the degree that its meaning has been substantially distorted, the Researcher and Planner shall make reasonable attempts to correct such distortions and/or to insist that Research and Planning authorship be removed from the product.

- 4.6. External Reporting. RRC Research and Planning staff have an obligation to the broader community to submit and/or report accurate data and professionally responsible interpretive material when requested by legitimate authority, including federal, state, and other governmental agencies and accrediting bodies. With respect to private inquiries, such as those from guidebook editors, journalists, or private individuals, the Researcher and Planner, should he/she respond, is bound by the same standards of accuracy, confidentiality, and professionally responsible interpretation.

5. RELATIONSHIPS TO THE PROFESSION

5.1. Research and Planning Responsibilities.

- 5.1.1. RRC Research and Planning staff shall seek opportunities to contribute to and participate in research on issues directly related to the craft and in other professional activities, and shall encourage and support other colleagues in such endeavors.
- 5.1.2. Acknowledging Credit. Researchers and Planners shall take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed. They should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5.2. Integrity of the Profession. RRC Research and Planning staff should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

- 5.2.1. RRC Research and Planning shall uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the research and planning professions. They should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the professions through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.
- 5.2.2. RRC Research and Planning shall contribute to the knowledge base and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, planning and ethics. They should seek to contribute to the professions' literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.
- 5.2.3. Unethical Conduct of Colleagues.
 - 5.2.3.1. RRC Research and Planning shall take appropriate measures to discourage, prevent, identify, and correct unethical conduct of colleagues when their behavior is unwittingly or deliberately in violation of this code or of good general practice in Research.
 - 5.2.3.2. RRC Research and Planning staff who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such a discussion is likely to be productive.