

RCRC
CHECKLIST



ABOUT

This Tool is extracted from the Toolkit for RCRC produced as part of the research project *Responsible Conduct in Research-Creation: Providing Creative Tools to Meet the Challenges of an Emerging Field*. It was funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) as part of the Concerted Action *La conduite responsable en recherche : mieux comprendre pour mieux agir* (2016-2018) [Responsible Conduct of Research: A Better Understanding for More Effective Action — 2016–2018]. A co-design workshop held in November 2017 was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and several institutional partners.

The Toolkit for RCRC provides an overview of the issues of responsible conduct in research-creation identified through this initiative. It is complemented by four detachable, practical reflective tools aimed mainly at the responsible conduct of research and research-creation communities.

Toolkit French version

<http://hdl.handle.net/1866/20923>

Toolkit English version

<http://hdl.handle.net/1866/20924>





PRESENTATION OF THE TOOL

This tool gathers together questions and practical considerations for researcher-creators (RRC) identified in the Accompanying Guide (see *Section 2*), to foster responsible conduct in research-creation (RCRC). Through the checklist, avenues for reflection are suggested to support “best practices” in research-creation (RC), with regard to the main themes of responsible conduct of research (RCR), in addition to highlighting potential breaches of RCR associated with each.

Although this tool can be used independently, we invite readers to also consult the Guide, which provides the context for RCR and the specific issues relating to RC.

ACRONYMS

CC

Conflict of commitment

COI

Conflict of interest

FRQ

Fonds de recherche du Québec

RC

Research-Creation

RCR

Responsible Conduct of Research

RCRC

Responsible Conduct in Research-Creation

REB

Research Ethics Board

RRC

Researcher-Creator

SRCR

Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research

TO CITE THIS TOOL

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THEMATIC CHECKLIST

RCRC — CHALLENGES WHEN RCR AND RC MEET (2.1)

FAMILIARITY WITH RCR

› **Am I familiar with the concepts and terms pertaining to RCR, including integrity and research ethics?** Have I read the standards and policies provided by my institution or the organizations funding my project?

RCR, as it is described in this Toolkit, encompasses both the concepts of research integrity and research ethics. It generally refers to the conduct that is expected of researchers and other research actors in the performance of their activities. In particular, RCR addresses “best practices” in collaboration, authorship, use of data, publication, dissemination and evaluation of research, as well as the responsible use of the funding received, the respect of applicable policies, and the management of conflicts of interest and of commitment.

Consequently, among the “breaches” of RCR we find: fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism, destruction of research records, redundant publication, invalid authorship, inadequate acknowledgement, mismanagement of conflicts of interest, misrepresentation in a grant application, mismanagement of funds, and the violation of policies, laws or regulations governing research.

These aspects of research are framed by provincial (e.g., FRQ), federal (e.g., SRCR), international and institutional RCR policies. Several institutions also have a designated RCR officer.

› RCR is based in particular on the notion of “responsibility”. **What is my view of personal responsibility regarding my RC practice in relation to others, and from a civic, social, and creative perspective?** How do these different levels of responsibility fit into this specific project?



SPECIFIC ISSUES IN RC — DEFINITION, POSTURE AND QUALITY (2.2)

IDENTIFYING ISSUES IN RCRC

Since they are influenced by the uniqueness of the various practices in RC and the posture of the RRC, the issues in RCR can be more easily identified when they are considered from a specific context or project.

- > **What are the issues, especially those in RCR, specific to my RC practice or in this particular project?** Am I able to identify them? To connect them to a particular creative or ethical posture? And prevent or manage these issues when necessary?
- > **Would I be able to communicate this notion and this posture to an RCR officer, for instance?**

SELF-REFLECTIVE LOOK AT PRACTICES

Whether individual or collective, an on-going self-reflective look at the RC approach is necessary to better identify the responsibilities of the various actors and to prevent potential breaches of RCR.

A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

Cultivating a culture of collaboration that takes into account the visions and interests of each project partner—as well as their evolution—can help prevent or resolve some issues that arise in RCR.

FACILITATING DIALOGUE ON ISSUES SURROUNDING RCRC

Given the diversity of approaches in RC, many stakeholders in the RCR community have expressed an interest in being coached towards a better understanding of RC. In my interactions with them, it can be beneficial to:

- > situate my practice and its characteristics in relation to the more general field of RC, or within the creative or theoretical approaches it draws upon;
- > specify the aims and expected results of my RC project, as well as certain elements to be considered during its evaluation;
- > highlight the issues encountered in RCR, as well as their characteristics in the given context of RC.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OF COMMITMENT IN RC (2.3)

PREVENTING COI AND CC

Diverging interests do not necessarily lead to a COI. The important thing is to identify everyone's expectations and manage them appropriately. However, the appearance of a COI can be as damaging as an actual COI. Thus, it is best to avoid them from the start, if possible.

In order to identify and prevent COIs and CCs, it is recommended that one take a self-reflective stance on one's RC approach and seek out impartial advice from another person. For example, the following questions may help identify CCs in the first instance, and COIs in the second:

- > **How do I reconcile my obligations as professor and my involvement outside the university?** Do these activities conflict with my main occupation? If so, what adjustments can I make?
- > In the case of a professor collaborating with students — **Am I being neutral in my evaluation and supervision of their work with respect to my own creative activities?** Is my opinion biased regarding the quality and originality of their work because of my own?

IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING COI

The main stages of analysis and management of COIs are as follows:

- 1 Identification of conflicting interests**
What are the interests at stake and who are the actors? Is there a conflict? What is the nature and degree of the conflict?
- 2 Risk assessment**
If a potential conflict is identified, how significant is it? Can it be managed?
- 3 Establishing a management system**
If the COI can be managed, a suitable management strategy should be implemented. Otherwise, it is best to get out of the situation.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Management tools for COIs and CCs may include: collaboration agreements and contracts, disclosure of interests, a disclosure of occupations and income from outside the university, etc. University offices of research and creation, or of valorization, can help RRCs in this undertaking.

POTENTIAL BREACH OF RCR

Proven mismanagement of a COI is considered a breach of RCR. Despite their proximity to COIs, remember that CCs are not a conventional topic in RCR and therefore do not constitute a formal breach of current policies. However, a CC could be problematic if it distracts the RRC from their obligations regarding their role or funding.

DISSEMINATION OF RC (2.4)



AUTHORSHIP

Authorship concerns the modalities for attributing the status of author to the stakeholders in a RC project. To avoid misunderstandings, these issues should be discussed with the collaborators in advance, and regularly throughout the project.

- > **Have any ideas or concepts underlying my RC project been developed by other people (e.g., students)? If so, have I discussed authorship with these people?** Should they be recognized as co-authors? What is the contribution threshold to be recognized as an author? Have other modes of granting authorship been considered (e.g., artist collective, pseudonym, anonymity)?
- > **Did collaborators (e.g., students, technicians, artists, professors) contribute to any stage of my project?** How should I indicate their contribution?
- > Are the terms of this collaboration, as well as the expected recognition, specified in writing prior to the project (e.g., in the case of initiatives between professors and students)?

Recognition for participating in a RC project can take many forms, namely acknowledgements, a list of collaborators, royalties, etc.

- > **Did all the people I chose to mention in my project contribute significantly to its development?** Did some people (e.g., in a position of power) insist or put pressure to be included, even if their contribution was not significant? Are certain names cited to give the project prestige or attention, without their contribution being significant?

DISSEMINATION

- > **In published articles or public presentations (e.g., symposium, cultural events, exhibitions, festivals) of an ongoing or completed RC project, did I adequately mention my co-authors and collaborators?**
- > **Did I mention the funding bodies that allowed me to carry out these activities?** Omitting this information constitutes a breach of RCR.

DATA MANAGEMENT

What do I consider as my RC “data”?

- > **Have I kept track of the ideas and creations that I want to develop, or of the various RC data and results from my project (e.g., consent forms if applicable, textual, visual or audio documents)?** If so, how will this data be archived? For how long?

In fact, it is preferable to keep track (on paper or digitally) of all these steps so as to more easily support “best-practices” of RC dissemination, or to prove authorship of a project in case of allegations of a breach of RCR.

- > Although this is a good practice rather than a potential breach of RCR, **have I thought of documenting the essential components of my creation, whatever its form (e.g., technical specifications sheet to facilitate its reproduction or storage in a museum)?**

POTENTIAL BREACHES OF RCR

The fabrication, falsification, destruction of research records, plagiarism, redundant publication, invalid authorship or inadequate acknowledgement are considered breaches of RCR.

EVALUATION OF RC (2.5)

RCR policies state that requests for funds and their ensuing management must be done in a transparent and honest way.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

- > **Have all co-applicants, collaborators or partners listed in my funding application given consent to be included or to possibly participate in this project?** If, for various reasons, some withdrew or changes were made along the way, have I thought about notifying the granting agencies? Have I kept track of these withdrawals?
- > **Have I been transparent about the nature of my RC project in my grant application?** Have I provided the necessary information to properly identify my RC approach and methodologies (e.g., taking into consideration its experimental, heuristic or processual aspects, or by specifying the expected results and validation criteria specific to the project)?
- > **A RC approach can often have experimental and unforeseen elements, which forces the RRC to modify the project compared to how it was originally designed.** If my project has undergone significant changes or raises new research ethics issues, have I thought about notifying the REB?

MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

- > **After receiving funding, am I able to manage the funds in a transparent way following what was outlined in the grant?** Does project management rely on appropriate financial administration procedures or tools?

PEER REVIEW OF RC

- > **When I am invited to be on an evaluation committee, am I able to examine the work of others with integrity?** Are the procedure and evaluation criteria clearly stated? Are the confidentiality measures and the ownership of the ideas respected?

POTENTIAL BREACHES OF RCR

False statements in a grant application, mismanagement of funds, or the proven violation of research policies, laws, or regulations are considered a breach of RCR.

RC PRACTICES AND RESEARCH ETHICS (2.6.1)



FAMILIARITY WITH RESEARCH ETHICS

› **Am I familiar with the concepts and terminology of research ethics?** Research ethics focuses mainly on the respect and protection of research participants, as well as animals and the environment. In the case of people, it focuses mostly on informed consent, fairness, equity in research participation, as well as privacy and confidentiality. Specific considerations also guide projects involving biological material.

In Canada, research ethics is governed by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2), as well as by related institutional policies. It is normally up to the REB of each institution to carry out the research ethics review process of research and research-creation projects.

› **Have I acquainted myself with the standards and policies pertaining to my field, institution or the organizations funding my project?** These standards and policies, as well as related training (e.g., the TCPS2 online tutorial), are usually listed on the website of the university research and creation office or other similar entity.

IDENTIFYING RESEARCH ETHICS ISSUES

Since they are influenced by the specificities of the various RC practices and the posture of the RRC, the ethical issues encountered in research—just like those in RCR as a whole—can be more easily identified when they are considered from the outset of a specific context or project.

› **If my RC project involves humans or animals, what are the research ethics considerations involved?** Are these considerations related to a particular practice or creative, collaborative, etc., approach? If so, does this approach provide guidance or tools for addressing these potential risks? If this is the case, have I thought of bringing this up with the REB responsible for evaluating my project?

› **If my RC project involves living organisms (cells, bacteria, viruses, plants, animals, etc.), have I thought about obtaining the necessary certifications (e.g., relating to biosecurity in the laboratory or gallery)?**

› **Can interveners from my home institution, for example, RCR or REB officials, help me in considering these matters and in setting up the appropriate risk management strategies?**

› **Beyond the ethics review process, how can this ethical reflection benefit my RC project?**

POTENTIAL BREACH OF RCR

The proven violation of policies, laws or regulations governing research is considered a breach of RCR.

TRAINING AND STUDENT SUPERVISION IN RC (2.6.2)

The training of students in RC poses many challenges, in particular regarding the articulation between the research and creation components within their project, the reconciliation of the differing expectations of supervisors and jury members, as well as the uneven integration of RCR and research ethics training into the curriculum. Some avenues are proposed for further reflection to facilitate this integration.

FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPERVISORS

› **Are expectations regarding the content of my dissertation or my RC thesis, as well as its evaluation, clearly specified?** This is especially important since most RC students propose a personal project, rather than being part of their director's research project, as may be the norm in other fields. This situation in particular raises issues related to the originality of their approach and authorship.

› **Have we taken the time to raise the issues of integrity and research ethics specific to my RC project?** If so, how can they be taken into consideration? Are there training programs or resource people in research integrity or in research ethics at my institution who can guide me? Are there colleagues who can share their experience regarding the ethics review process?

FOR SUPERVISORS AND JURY MEMBERS

› **In cases of co-supervision, are the supervisors' expectations clearly specified and understood by the student?**

› **To prevent the thesis defense from shifting to a defense of RC, do jury members have an adequate prior understanding of this approach and of the specificities of the project being evaluated?**



SELECTED KEY POLICIES TO BE CONSULTED

POLICY FOR THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (2014)

Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ)

TRI-AGENCY FRAMEWORK: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (2016)

Three national research councils of Canada (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC)

TRI-COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT: ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS (TCPS2) (2014)

Three national research councils of Canada (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC)

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