

January 11, 2013

A Message from the Provost and the Vice-President, Research

Colleagues:

In answer to many questions and concerns by faculty, we have included below a statement that aims to clarify issues of “self-plagiarism,” more properly referred to as “redundant publication.” This statement is not meant as an answer to all the questions that might be raised in this regard. For some of these answers, and especially with respect to norms and conventions for specific disciplines, it may be important for faculty to engage in discussions with their deans (Deans' Council has already discussed these and related issues).

In considering questions of redundant publication, we would ask that you keep in mind that:

(i) questions of academic misconduct by faculty must be dealt with in a manner in keeping with Article 60 of the Collective Agreement;

(ii) Tri-Council guidelines clearly recognize redundant publication as an unacceptable practice and faculty risk losing their grants if they do not adhere to their guidelines in this regard;

(iii) the specific guidelines established by individual journals and publishing houses inform acceptable practices;

(iv) the seriousness of instances of redundant publication vary according to the extent to which this is a pattern in someone's work, the type of article, the extent to which references have been omitted, etc.

(v) you may contact either of us if you have further questions about these matters.

Best Regards,

Leo Groarke
Provost/Vice-President, Academic

Michael Siu
Vice-President, Research

A Statement on “Redundant Publication”

University of Windsor

January 11, 2011

A number of faculty members have asked about “self-plagiarism” and related issues around research misconduct. Please note that allegations of research misconduct by faculty members at the University of Windsor are governed by Article 60 of the Collective Agreement, and will be investigated according to the procedures outlined there.

According to Article 60, “plagiarism” is the use of *another* person’s work without proper reference and citation. If we understand the term in this way, there can be no such thing as “self-plagiarism” (which is a contradiction in terms). In view of this, the emerging term for the re-use of one’s own work without proper citation is “redundant publication.”

It is important not to overstate the issues that redundant publication raises. The use of expressions or phrases or ideas or arguments that one has used before is not, in itself, redundant publication. The conventions of academic writing require that ideas that are not original (and not general knowledge) should be recognized as such. In judging what this means in practice – and what counts as redundant publication and academic misconduct -- the established conventions that govern a journal, a discipline, a book, or other publications must be considered. In some cases, publishing houses make allowances for minor overlap without citation (e.g. up to 250 words total in the case of Wiley-Blackwell), and these conventions are another consideration in judging instances of redundant publication. In general, the significant re-use of one’s previously published materials is not permissible without proper references.

In Canada, standards for academic conduct have been incorporated within the policies of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Tri-Council guidelines recognize that misconduct in academic research comes in a variety of forms; including but not limited to: plagiarism, redundant publications, invalid authorship, and inadequate acknowledgement. One can find definitions of these terms in section 3.1.1 of the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*. The Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research (2011).*

Most peer-reviewed journals (and books and anthologies) require submissions to be original work, and require the explicit citation of works that have contributed to these submissions. The latter must include proper citation and the use of quotation marks in fields where this practice is the norm. In this context, redundant publication is an act of misrepresentation that is a kind of falsification. In those cases in which a previous article was copyrighted by a publisher, and significant quotations are used but not recognized, it is a violation of copyright law.

* *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*. Retrieved November 28, 2012 from <http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/>. The *Framework* indicates that these definitions were drawn from: CCA (2010). *Honesty, Accountability and Trust: Fostering Research Integrity in Canada*. Ottawa: Council of Canadian Academies; the Singapore

Statement on Research Integrity, 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, 21-24 July 2010; the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) www.publicationethics.org; and the University of Toronto, 'Framework to Address Allegations Of Research Misconduct' Nov. 7 2006. This framework defines redundant publication as the "re-publication of one's own previously published work or part thereof... without adequate acknowledgement of the source, or justification." This definition is consistent with the standards of most academic publishing houses, as well as organizations like the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).