



Procedure Title	Procedure No.	
Human Research Ethics	E-1.56	
Executive Responsible	Administrator Responsible	
Vice President Academic	Associate Vice President Academic	
Approving Body	Approval Date	Date of Next Review
Executive Committee	January 6, 2026	January 2031
Associated Policy and Resources		
Human Research Ethics Policy		

PROCEDURE

1. **REB Membership**

- 1.1 The REB will consist of at least five voting members of diverse intersectional identities and must include:
 - a) two members with expertise in relevant research disciplines, fields, and methodologies covered by the REB;
 - b) one member with knowledge in ethics;
 - c) one member with knowledge in relevant law (this member will not be the institution's legal counsel or risk manager); and
 - d) one member from the community without affiliation to the College.
- 1.2 Wherever possible, each member will be appointed formally to fulfil the requirements of only one of the above categories.
- 1.3 The REB's membership will include Indigenous representation.
- 1.4 The REB may expand its membership but must consider a reasonable balance of the categories of members above and ensure that the composition of the REB sustains adequate diversity of background, expertise, and perspectives among its members.
- 1.5 Should the REB review a project requiring representation or expertise not available from its members (particularly for equity deserving or historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized (HPSM) groups), the REB will consult with ad hoc advisors for that specific project and for the duration of the review.
 - a) Ad hoc advisors will not be counted in the REB quorum, participate in deliberation of the REB, nor be allowed to vote on REB decisions.
- 1.6 Members will serve a two-year term and their term may be renewed once. To ensure continuity, terms will be staggered.

- 1.7 With consensus of the board, the chair may recommend removal of an REB member to the VPA or designate if that member fails to meet standards set out in these procedures. Such a recommendation will only occur after the chair has alerted the member and provided guidance for improvement.
- 1.8 Senior administrators may not serve on the REB or directly or indirectly influence the REB decision making process.
- 1.9 The REB Coordinator is a non-voting member of the committee.

2. **REB Meetings**

- 2.1 The REB will meet formally at least 3 times per year and as often as necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.
- 2.2 The REB will consider reasonable requests from principal investigators to participate in discussions about their proposals.
- 2.3 The REB may invite research teams to attend REB meetings to provide further information and/or explanations relating to their projects.
- 2.4 REB members will have at least five (5) business days' notice of any meeting and will receive all documents to be reviewed at the meeting at least three (3) business days in advance of the meeting.
- 2.5 Members are expected to attend all REB meetings.
 - a) The chair will provide guidance to frequently absent members before making recommendations about that member's removal to the VPA or designate.
 - b) If a member misses three (3) meetings in a row, the Chair will advise the AVP or designate and the member may be removed from the REB.
 - c) If a member misses 50% of meetings over a one-year period, the Chair will advise the AVP or designate and the member may be removed from the REB.
- 2.6 Quorum for the REB requires the following:
 - a) Half or more of the total number of REB members in attendance; and,
 - b) Adequate representation of member categories listed in section 1 of these procedures, as determined by the chair at the beginning of the meeting.
- 2.7 Where quorum is not met, decisions will not be valid or binding.

3. **Applying for REB Review**

- 3.1 Principal investigators will submit research proposals to the REB for review and approval of their ethical acceptability.
 - a) Before REB review and approval, principal investigators or research teams will not recruit participants, collect data, access existing data sets, or collect human biological materials.
 - b) Before obtaining REB review and approval, principal investigators or research teams may conduct an initial exploratory phase of their research. This may include establishing research partnerships or collaborations, exploring research settings, designing a research proposal, and/or contacting individuals or communities for the purposes of establishing research partnerships, or otherwise discussing the feasibility or design of a research proposal.

- 3.2 Principal investigators will use the *Ethics Application Form* to accurately and transparently provide the REB with all relevant information about the nature and area(s) of their research, including (but not limited to):
 - a) all elements of the proposed research project;
 - b) full documentation from any scholarly reviews that have already been completed;
 - c) the names and affiliations of the research team, when applicable; and
 - d) other information that would allow the REB to meaningfully assess the ethical acceptability of the project.
 - 3.3 Principal investigators will provide the REB with a data management plan which will include necessary physical, technical, and administrative safeguards to protect the confidentiality of all personal information they access or collect.
4. **Initial Review**
 - 4.1 The Chair of the REB will first determine the level of review needed for the research proposal.
 - a) The REB may complete a delegated review if the research involves minimal risk of harm to human participants.
 - b) The REB will complete a full board review for all other research involving human participants.
 - 4.2 If the Chair is involved in the research proposal or there is another conflict of interest, the research project will automatically be reviewed by full board review, and the Chair will be excluded from any further participation in the REB approval process.
5. **Delegated Review**
 - 5.1 During a delegated review, at least two delegates will complete an ethical review of the research proposal as outlined in the TCPS-2 and the procedures below:
 - a) Delegates must be voting members of the REB. The REB Chair is always one of the delegates and the Chair selects other delegates based on a combination of their background, expertise, and current workload reviewing ethics applications.
 - b) Delegates will include REB external community members when research focuses on engaging with the communities that CNC serve.
 - c) Delegated review decisions will be made outside of scheduled meetings.
 - d) If a research proposal is denied during delegated review, the proposal will automatically be assessed in its entirety by full board review.
6. **Full Board Review**
 - 6.1 During a full board review, the REB will review research proposals following the standards of the TCPS-2 and using a proportionate approach. The level of scrutiny needed will be consistent with the level of perceived risk to participants.
 - 6.2 REB members will document their assessment of each application using a REB approved standard evaluation form to ensure ethical considerations are made directly to sections of the TCPS-2.

- 6.3 The REB may request clarification from the principal investigator about any concerns which could impact the REB's review of the proposal before voting.
- 6.4 The principal investigator will not be present while the REB is deliberating or making decisions.
- 6.5 The REB will work together to reach decisions by consensus, if possible. When consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.
- 6.6 The REB Chair will share their decisions with principal investigators in a timely manner and will provide them with written documentation outlining the decision.
- 6.7 When the REB determines a proposal needs minimal adjustments to be ethically acceptable, they will outline the modifications that the principal investigator must complete before the proposal can be approved.
 - a) The REB Chair and coordinator will ensure the principal investigator has taken reasonable measures to address the REB's recommendations.
- 6.8 When the REB determines a proposal needs significant adjustments to be ethically acceptable, the REB chair will provide the reasons in writing to the principal investigator within 20 business days of the decision.
- 6.9 Within 20 business days of receiving the decision, the principal investigator may respond to the chair in writing requesting the REB reconsider their decision.
- 6.10 Requests for reconsideration may:
 - a) provide new information;
 - b) claim the REB has contravened the TCPS-2 or this procedure;
 - c) claim the decision was unreasonable given the information presented.
- 6.11 The applicant will be invited to present their case to the REB.
- 6.12 The REB's decision following a reconsideration will be final, but may be appealed.

7. **Appeal Process**

- 7.1 If reconsideration has been exhausted, principal investigators may appeal the REB's decision based on any of the following grounds:
 - a) Relevant information has become available that was not reasonably available at the time of the REB's decision;
 - b) The TCPS-2 or these procedures were not followed by the REB;
 - c) The decision was unreasonable given the information presented.
- 7.2 The appeal must be submitted in writing to the VPA or designate within 30 days of the reconsideration decision.
- 7.3 The VPA or designate will arrange for an external appeal board to review the application.
- 7.4 CNC does not control when the external appeal board will complete the review of the application.
- 7.5 The decision of the external appeal board is final; there is no further appeal after this decision has been made.

8. **Unanticipated Issues and Changes to Research**

- 8.1 Principal investigators have a duty to report to the REB any issues that arise before, during or after their research is complete. The principal investigator recognizes this may affect the ethical acceptability of their research projects. This includes issues that arise after human participation has ended.
- 8.2 Principal investigators may submit requests to make changes to their research projects after their ethics application has been approved using the REB *Ethics Status Form*. The Principal investigator must receive approval before implementing those changes.
 - a) If the proposed changes are minimal risk they will be reviewed through the delegated Review process. Full Board Review is needed in all other cases.

9. **Ongoing REB Review**

- 9.1 The REB will determine how often a research project needs to be reviewed. At minimum the principal investigator must submit an Ethics Status Form once a year, including at the end of their project.
- 9.2 Ethics approval must be renewed annually for research to continue.
- 9.3 Research will go through the delegated review process for its annual review if it has already undergone ethics review and has not been changed in any substantial way.
- 9.4 Research will go through the full board review process in all other cases, or where other guidelines, regulations, or legislation require full board review for the annual review and renewal process.

10. **Post-Research Requirements**

- 10.1 The principal investigator is accountable for continuing to manage the data according to the research data management plan, and to report complaints or breaches that may result in harm to participants.

11. **REB Approval During Publicly Declared Emergencies**

- 11.1 In the event of public health outbreaks, natural disasters, and other publicly declared emergencies, the REB will continue to operate through official guidance from CNC based on advice or directives from the Government of British Columbia or the Government of Canada.
 - a) The REB will consider whether it is appropriate for research to be conducted during an emergency.
 - b) The REB will prioritize supporting what can be reasonably interpreted as time sensitive or essential research during a publicly declared emergency.

Definitions and Acronyms	
Data Management Plans	A living document modified to accommodate changes throughout the research project that includes: how data will be collected, documented, formatted, protected, preserved and disposed of; how existing datasets will be used and what new data will be created over the course of the research project; whether and how data will be shared; and where data will be deposited.
Ethical Acceptability	Effort by the Principal Investigator to design research where risks have been minimized by preventing potential harms and minimizing their potential negative impacts. Outstanding potential harms and negative impacts are reasonable in relation to the potential benefits of the study.
Participant	An individual whose data, biological materials, or responses to interventions, stimuli, or questions by a researcher are relevant to answering the research question(s). Also referred to as a "human participant."
Principal Investigator	The researcher responsible for the ethical conduct of the study, and for any actions of any member of the research team. When students are assigned to do research projects in classrooms, the instructor is the Principal Investigator.
Research Team	All of the researchers that are contributing to the research project under ethical review, including the Principal Investigator.
Scrutiny	Careful and critical observation or examination.
TCPS-2	The Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. As a condition of funding, the Agencies require that researchers and their institutions apply the ethical principles and the articles of this Policy and be guided by the Application sections of the articles regardless of whether funding is provided by Tri-Council.
Supporting Information	
Related Policies, Forms, Documents, Websites	CNC's Freedom of Information Policy AD-CO-4.14 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Tri Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy CNC Research Ethics Board Terms of Reference