



Research Ethics for Human Subjects

Policy No.	6500
Category:	Research
Approving Body:	President's Executive Council and Board of Governors
Executive:	VP Research and International
Department Responsible:	Research and International
Most Recent Revision:	2007 March 27

Preamble

This document contains BCIT's policy for review of ethical considerations arising from research involving human subjects. This policy is implemented through procedures set out in a separate document¹.

There is a professional responsibility of researchers to adhere to the ethical norms and codes of conduct appropriate to their respective disciplines. When researchers are engaged in research supported by BCIT, the Institute may, in some circumstances, be liable for research conducted by these researchers. Furthermore, most funding agencies require ethics review of research proposals, which involve the use of human subjects. For these reasons, policy and procedures are required to ensure that appropriate safeguards are provided. This policy will enable BCIT to conduct research on human subjects of a standard acceptable to all of the major granting agencies and regulatory bodies.

Norms for the ethics of research involving human subjects are developed and refined within an ever-evolving societal context, elements of which include the need for research and the research community, moral imperatives and ethical principles, and the law. Research at BCIT must demonstrate that appropriate methods will be used to protect the rights and interests of the subjects in the conduct of research.

Research involving human subjects is premised on a fundamental commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge and understanding, and to examining cultural dynamics. Researchers undertake or fund research involving human subjects for many reasons. An ethic of research involving human subjects should include two essential components:

1. the selection and achievement of acceptable ends, and
2. the acceptable means to those ends.

¹The document "Procedures for Implementing the BCIT Research Ethics Policy" is available at: http://www.bcit.ca/files/appliedresearch/pdf/procedures_reb.pdf.



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The first component is directed at defining acceptable ends in terms of the benefits of research for subjects, for associated groups, and for the advancement of knowledge. The second component is directed at ethically appropriate means of conducting research.

BCIT endorses the principles set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" and this document describes how BCIT will apply the Tri-Council policy. BCIT uses the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS)

(<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>) and the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) "Good Clinical Practice: Consolidated Guideline" as references and as educational resources in developing and implementing this Policy. These principles and guidelines have been widely adopted by diverse research disciplines. As such, they express common standards, values and aspirations of the research community: respect for human dignity, respect for free and informed consent, respect for vulnerable persons, respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for justice and inclusiveness, balancing harms and benefits, minimizing harm, and maximizing benefit. Accordingly, this policy is intended to ensure that the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants are maintained at BCIT in compliance with the TCPS.

The law affects and regulates the standards and conduct of research involving human subjects in a variety of ways, such as privacy, confidentiality, intellectual property, competence, and in many other areas. Human rights legislation prohibits discrimination on a variety of grounds. In addition, most documents on research ethics prohibit discrimination and recognize equal treatment as fundamental. Research should also respect the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly the sections dealing with life, liberty and the security of the person as well as those involving equality and discrimination.



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Policy Statement

All research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the BCIT community - including all faculty, staff and students, including students carrying out research as part of class assignments - shall fall within the jurisdiction of a committee called the **BCIT Research Ethics Review Board (REB)**, irrespective of the source of financial support (if any) and irrespective of the location of the project, in the latter case, so long as the investigator represents the work as BCIT research. The BCIT REB reports directly to the Board of Governors and will be administratively responsible to the Vice President, Research and International.

Projects conducted by researchers from outside the BCIT community who access Institute resources (either equipment or personnel), may also fall within the jurisdiction of the BCIT REB.

The BCIT REB shall apply the principles set out in the TCPS "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" and in accordance with the procedures set out in the document "Procedures for Implementing the BCIT Research Ethics Policy"¹. Those procedures may be varied from time to time to accommodate future approved amendments to the Tri-Council Policy, or for BCIT research activities.

Administration

Administrative Support

The work involved in the ethical review process should be distributed appropriately among faculty members, staff, researchers, and administrators.

BCIT will provide administrative support to the REB with respect to conducting the activities of proposal review and Board administration. Deans of Schools will provide significant support to the REB, with respect to:



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- educational activities
- management of the system for reporting research
- ensuring that research projects requiring ethical review are submitted to the REB.
- advising their faculty members about the need to comply with the TCPS.

Individual departments are expected to support and train students so that their research projects are ethical and those that exceed minimal risk may be efficiently reviewed by the REB. Departments should screen student applications for ethical review prior to submission to the REB. The REB may return applications to the department if they do not conform to the requirements of the TCPS.

School/Department Level Review

This policy requires that all Faculty research must be submitted to the REB. If however a study is a teaching exercise (i.e., part of a diploma or undergraduate degree level course), and entailing no more than minimal risk, it must be reviewed by a school/departmental level committee on behalf of the REB and in compliance with the TCPS. The School/Departmental Ethics Committee must report results of such reviews to the REB at the end of the academic year.

Student research deemed to be beyond minimal risk must be reviewed by the REB.

Institute Support

BCIT shall provide adequate resources and an annual budget to support the administrative processes and educational activities required by the REB so that the Institute as a whole remains in compliance with TCPS.



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Authority of the REB

The REB is mandated by the Board of Governors to accept, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate any proposed or ongoing BCIT research that is subject to REB review.

Interpretation

Questions of interpretation or application of this policy or its associated procedures shall be referred to the Vice-President Research and International, whose decision shall be final.

Acknowledgement

BCIT acknowledges the following documents and organizations for their contribution to the preparation of this policy and its associated forms and guidelines:

- Simon Fraser University
- University of British Columbia
- University of Prince Edward Island
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Authority for Implementation:

Approval by the BCIT Board of Governors. Amendments/revisions to the associated procedures will be submitted to the Vice-President Research and International in an annual report.



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Related Policies

- 1504 Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest
- 2501 Contracts
- 5101 Student Regulations
- 5102 Student Code of Conduct (Non-academic)
- 7507 Harassment and Discrimination
- 7512 Occupational Health and Safety
- 6600 Integrity in Research
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
- Tri-Council Policy
- International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) "Good Clinical Practice: Consolidated Guideline"

Who Should Know About This Policy

- BCIT Administrators
- BCIT Faculty
- BCIT Staff
- BCIT Students
- BCIT Research Subjects

Amendment History

Effective Date of Policy	February 2, 1999
Revision 1	June 19, 2001
Revision 2	February 7, 2006
Revision 3	February 13, 2007