

## **Ethical conduct for research involving human participants policy**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy governs the conduct of research involving humans at Bow Valley College (BVC).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Promote awareness of research ethics within the college community;
- b) Ensure that research is conducted in accordance with BVC's expectations for ethical conduct; and
- c) Ensure compliance with applicable law as well as standards set forth in the Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans. [TCPS2 (2014)]

### **Scope**

Any research done at the College by BVC faculty, staff, and/or learners, or that uses BVC faculty, staff, and/or learners as participants requires an ethics review. Any research conducted by BVC faculty, staff, and/or learners that takes place outside of BVC, where the researcher's intention is to represent the College, also requires ethics review. Projects conducted by researchers from outside the BVC community who access College resources (equipment, personnel, or learners) fall within the jurisdiction of the BVC Research Ethics Board (REB) to ensure that all research is conducted in a fair and ethical manner.

### **Principal Objectives**

#### **1. Governing Principles**

- 1.1 Research involving human participants at BVC will at a minimum be conducted in accordance with the most current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 The REB governs the ethical conduct of research on human participants at the College.
- 1.3 Research involving humans must be conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the inherent worth of all human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due. Respect for human dignity is expressed through three core principles: Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice.

#### **2. Review of Research**

- 2.1 Research involving human participants requires review and approval by the REB before the research commences.
- 2.2 The opinion of the REB shall be sought whenever there is doubt about the applicability of this Policy to a particular research project.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS_2_FINAL_web.pdf)

#### **3. REB Organization and Management**

- 3.1 The Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer appoints the Vice Chair and regular members to serve on the REB for a term of two (2) years. The term is open for renewal beyond two years. The Vice Chair will become the Chair upon completion of their term and finally transition to the past Chair role to ensure continuity of practice. The Past Chair role is occupied by the former Chair. The Past Chair acts as an advisor to the board and the new Chair. If the board is unable to meet quorum at a regular REB meeting, the Past Chair may attend the meeting as a voting member.

- 3.2 The authority of the REB is delegated by the Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer. The Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer does not have the authority to override REB decisions.
- 3.3 The REB shall consist of at least five (5) members drawn from faculty, staff, and the community. The Board may also include alternate members.
- 3.4 The REB will have an Aboriginal advisor/consultant on an ad hoc basis when reviewing applications for research involving Aboriginal peoples. The advisor shall not be counted in the quorum nor vote on REB decisions.
- 3.5 The Board shall require a quorum of at least sixty percent of members (including the Chair) at all meetings concerned with the ethical approval of research proposals.
- 3.6 Members of the REB shall not serve more than six (6) consecutive years. Departing members are eligible for reappointment after one (1) year.
- 3.7 The Applied Research & Evaluation (AR&E) unit within Academic Innovation and Applied Research (AIAR) shall host the REB and provide administrative support.
- 3.8 An annual activity report from the REB will be forwarded to the Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer.

#### **4. Authority of the REB**

- 4.1 The mandate of the REB is to approve, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate research involving human participants, which is conducted under the aegis of the College, using the standards outlined in the TCPS2 (2014).
- 4.2 The REB will suspend the research of applicants who fail to follow the ethical terms and conditions (for example, failing to submit a study completion or annual status report).

#### **5. Responsibilities of the REB**

- 5.1 REB members are responsible for making reasonable decisions consistent with the TCPS2 (2014).
- 5.2 The REB shall function impartially, provide a fair hearing to relevant parties, and provide justification with appropriately documented opinions and decisions.
- 5.3 The REB shall accommodate reasonable requests from researchers concerning the review of their proposals, but those researchers shall not be present while the REB is making its decision.
- 5.4 In the event that unanimity cannot be achieved, a majority vote is required for approval of a proposal.
- 5.5 In the event that an REB member has a personal interest in a proposed research project (e.g., as a researcher, supervisor, or entrepreneur), the member(s) shall not be present during review of the application.
- 5.6 All decisions regarding delegated reviews will be reported to the full REB at the first scheduled meeting after the decision has been made.
- 5.7 For research involving institutions, multiple REBs will review the same proposal and independently determine the ethical acceptability of research undertaken.

#### **6. Ethical Obligations of Researchers**

- 6.1 Researchers must follow the best research practices when engaging in all research activities and knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, researchers must comply with applicable law, ethical and professional standards, College policies and contractual obligations.
- 6.2 Approval for research involving human participants within the context of this policy shall be obtained by the researcher from the REB in accordance with its procedures before any research activity is undertaken and before any College facilities or services are used.
- 6.3 Proposed modifications to a research project must be submitted to the REB for approval,

such as changes to applicant(s), design, procedures, instruments, sampling and so forth that substantively alter the research. Modifications must be approved by the REB prior to implementation.

- 6.4 Ethical approval is granted for one (1) year. Ethical approval is required for as long as the researcher is engaging with participants. If a researcher intends to interact with human participants beyond one (1) year of receiving ethics approval, they must request an extension to their approval. Extension requests must be submitted to the REB prior to the anniversary date of ethics approval being granted and approval will be extended in one (1) year increments. If a researcher allows their ethical approval to lapse before they have finished engaging with human participants, then they will be considered in breach of College policy and all research activities must cease immediately. For ethics approval to be reinstated, the researcher must submit a new ethics application to the REB. The researcher may not conduct any research activities until the REB has reviewed the new application and ethics approval has been restored.
- 6.5 When conducting research with Aboriginal peoples, researchers shall seek engagement with the relevant communities. Researchers must comply with the guidelines for conducting research involving Aboriginal peoples laid out in Chapter 9 of the TCPS2 (2014) and the First Nations Principles of OCAP.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Article 9:17 of the TCPS2 (2014), when conducting research in Aboriginal communities, researchers must provide the community the opportunity to review and approve “reports and academic publications” derived from the research in order to “validate findings, correct any cultural inaccuracies, and maintain respect for community knowledge”.<sup>3</sup>
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the researcher to provide participants with all of the information necessary to make an informed decision to participate in a research study. In cases in which there are considerations related to participants’ language or literacy skills, the researcher must use plain language throughout informed consent forms and related

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS_2_FINAL_web.pdf); <http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html>

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS_2_FINAL_web.pdf)

materials. Prospective participants must be given adequate time to review information materials about the project and should be permitted to pose questions to the research team before deciding whether or not to participate.

- 6.7 Where a researcher does not comply with stipulations set out by the REB, this may be considered academic misconduct and will be investigated appropriately.

## **7. Research Conducted Outside the Jurisdiction of Bow Valley College**

- 7.1 Research to be performed by BVC faculty, staff, and/or learners outside the jurisdiction or country of the institution which employs the researcher shall undergo prospective ethics review by (a) the REB within the researcher's institution, and (b) the REB, where such exists, with the legal responsibility and equivalent and procedural safeguards in the country or jurisdiction where the research is to be done.

## **Compliance**

Employees, contractors, and learners are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with BVC policies, procedures, and any other attached documentation that relate to their position, employment, or enrolment at the College.

## Definitions

### **Aboriginal Peoples:**

Individuals who are Indian (First Nations), Inuit, or Métis descent, regardless of where they reside and whether or not their names appear on an official register (as defined in the current TCPS).

### **Concern for Welfare:**

The welfare of a person is the quality of that person's experience of life in all its aspects. Participants are to be provided with enough information to be able to adequately assess risks and potential benefits associated with participation in research.

### **Consent:**

Consent means a person voluntarily agrees with what is being done or proposed. In research, consent must be free (a result of one's free will), informed (with full understanding of risks, potential benefits, expectations, and rights), ongoing (with ability to withdraw participation after initial consent).

### **Human Participant(s):**

Living individuals, human remains, cadavers, tissues, biological fluids, embryos, or foetuses that are to participate in or be the subjects of research.

### **Justice:**

Fair and equitable treatment of persons. Fairness entails treating all people with equal respect and concern.

### **Participant(s):**

Those who are to participate in or be the subject of research

### **Procedural Error:**

Real or reasonably perceived bias, including bias based on validity, method, theoretical grounds of the method or research, scope, or undeclared conflict of interest on the part of one or more members of the REB.

### **Research:**

A systematic investigation to establish facts, principles, or knowledge. Most activities that involve information collected solely in the course of teaching or other usual college functions such as quality assurance studies, performance reviews, instructor evaluations, program evaluations or reviews, curriculum development projects, or testing within normal educational requirements are NOT considered research for the purposes of this policy.

### **Research Ethics:**

Moral principles that govern the planning, conduct, and reporting of research activities.

### **Respect for Persons:**

Recognition of the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due.

### **Risk:**

The possibility of the occurrence of harm. The level of conceivable risk posed to participants by their involvement in the project is calculated by considering the magnitude or seriousness of the harm and likelihood that it will occur to either participants or third parties.

**Tri-Council:**

Refers to three federal agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) that fund research for post-secondary institutions in Canada. The Tri-Council also provides standards governing research at post-secondary institutions, including standards on research ethics through the TCPS2 (2014) referenced throughout this policy.

**DATA SHEET**
**Accountable Officer**

Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer

**Responsible Officer**

The Director of Academic Innovation and Applied Research (AIAR) search is responsible for the content development and implementation of the policy and is considered as the policy owner for purposes of operationalizing the policy. Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Director of AIAR.

**Contact Area**

Applied Research & Evaluation, AIAR

**Relevant Dates**

Approved	Board of Governors: BOG170125-03
Effective	January 26, 2017
Next Review	January 2020
Modification History	April 2010, October 2011, January 2017 Rebranded 2021
Verified by	Office of the President, March 2022*

**Associated Policies**

Applied Research and the Promotion of Innovation Policy #500-3-1  
Integrity in Research & Scholarship  
Employee Code of Conduct Policy #200-1-1  
Learner Code of Conduct Policy #500-1-1 Ethical  
Business Practices Policy #200-1-5

**Directly Related Procedure(s)**

Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants Procedure #5000-2-3

**Related Legislation**

Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2014) for Ethical Conduct of Research involving Humans  
([http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS_2_FINAL_web.pdf))