



## ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS POLICY

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### PREAMBLE

George Brown College (GBC) is committed to ensuring that the rights of human participants in research are respected and protected and that research involving human participants is conducted ethically in accordance with the guidelines and standards of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (TCPS).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish principles for maintaining high quality ethical standards for research involving human participants.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all research activities involving humans conducted within the jurisdiction or under the auspices of the college. This includes all research involving humans conducted by GBC employees or students, regardless of where the research is conducted. It also includes all researchers who use GBC employees, students, equipment and/or facilities for research activities involving human participants.

## DEFINITIONS

**Autonomy:** the capacity to understand information and to be able to act on it voluntarily; the ability of individuals to use their own judgment to make decisions about their own actions

**Conflict of interest:** the incompatibility of two or more personal or professional duties, responsibilities, or interests of an individual or institution as they relate to the ethical conduct of research, such that one cannot be fulfilled without compromising another

**Course-based research:** research activities of which the primary purpose is pedagogical; these activities are normally required of students with the objective of providing them with exposure to research methods in their field of study

**Delegated review:** The level of REB review assigned to minimal-risk projects; delegated reviewers are selected from among the REB membership, with the exception of the ethics review of minimal-risk course-based research activities which can be reviewed by delegates from the respective academic division

**Minimal risk research:** research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research are no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research

**Multi-jurisdictional research:** research involving multiple institutions and/or multiple research ethics boards

**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)

**Principal Investigator:** the researcher who is responsible for the ethical conduct of the research, and for the actions of any member of the research team at a local site

**Proportionate approach:** the assessment of foreseeable risk to determine the level of scrutiny a research proposal will receive as well as the consideration of the foreseeable risks, the potential benefits, and the ethical implications of the research in the context of initial and continuing review

**Research:** an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systemic investigation

**Research Ethics Board (REB):** a body of researchers, community members and others with specific expertise established by the institution to review the ethical acceptability of all research involving humans conducted within the institution's jurisdiction or under its auspices

**Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS):** a joint policy of Canada's three federal research agencies – 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), or "the Agencies" – that expresses the Agencies' continuing commitment to the people of Canada to promote the ethical conduct of research involving humans

## POLICY

### 1. Principles

- 1.1. All research activities involving human participants will consistently align with the complimentary and interdependent core principles of the TCPS:
- Respect for persons – recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due; incorporates the dual moral obligations to respect autonomy and to protect those with developing, impaired or diminished autonomy
  - Concern for welfare – researchers and REBs will aim to protect the welfare of participants; provide participants with enough information to be able to adequately assess risks and potential benefits associated with their participation in the research
  - Justice – obligation to treat people fairly and equitably

### 2. Research Ethics Board (REB)

- 2.1. GBC will establish a REB to review the ethical acceptability of all research involving humans conducted within the jurisdiction or under the auspices of the college.
- 2.2. The REB will be established by and accountable to the Provost.
- 2.3. The President will ensure that the REB is provided with necessary and sufficient ongoing financial and administrative resources to fulfil its duties.

### 3. Conflict of interest

- 3.1. Researchers and REB members must identify an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest and minimize or otherwise manage those conflicts appropriately.

### 4. Proportionate Approach to Research Ethics Review

- 4.1. All research activities involving human participants will undergo an assessment of foreseeable risk to determine the level of scrutiny a research proposal will receive as well as the consideration of the foreseeable risks, the potential benefits and the ethical implications of the research in the context of initial and continuing review.
- 4.2. Research activities that carry minimal risk will undergo a delegated REB review.
- 4.3. Research activities that carry higher than minimal risk will undergo a full REB review.

## 5. Multi-Jurisdictional Research

In accordance with the provisions outlined in [Chapter 8 of the TCPS](#):

- 5.1. A minimal risk study that has received a recommendation for approval from the Ontario College Multi-Site Expert Panel may undergo a streamlined delegated review by the GBC REB.
- 5.2. A minimal risk study that has been approved by a REB from another accredited Canadian postsecondary institution may undergo a streamlined delegated review by the GBC REB.
- 5.3. In either of these instances, a Principal Investigator is required to submit their original ethics application for review by the GBC REB, including a list of requested revisions and feedback from the approving REB. If the GBC REB requires information not included in the original application, they may request that information before approving the study.

## 6. Course-based Research

- 6.1. Ethics review of minimal risk course-based research activities with a primarily pedagogical purpose can be delegated to non-REB members.
- 6.2. Delegated reviewers who are non-REB members must have experience, expertise and knowledge comparable to what is expected of a REB member.
- 6.3. Delegated reviewers will follow the college's written procedures for ethics review of course-based research.

## 7. Appeal of Research Ethics Board Decisions

- 7.1. GBC will establish and maintain a Research Ethics Appeals Board (REAB) and process, in accordance with [Chapter 6, Section C of the TCPS](#).

## COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures in accordance with the relevant and applicable College academic and administrative codes of conduct and collective bargaining agreements.

## PROCEDURES

GBC REB Appeals Procedure  
GBC REB Member Recruitment Procedure  
GBC REB Risk Assessment and Review Procedure  
GBC REB Terms of Reference  
GBC REB Unanticipated Events Reporting Procedure

## RELATED POLICIES

Intellectual Property Policy  
Integrity in Research and Scholarly Activity Policy

## REFERENCES

[Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada  
Panel on Research Ethics](#)  
[Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research](#)  
[Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#)  
[Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)