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Purpose

This policy aims to establish principles, practices, and procedures to guide and ensure the ethical conduct of research and scholarship carried out under the umbrella of University Canada West (UCW). It is intended to replace previous versions of the Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures. It applies to research applications presented for review and approval by the UCW research ethics committee as of May 2021.

Policy Statement

All research and scholarship shall be carried out following the Government of Canada's regulations, Panel on Research Ethics, and [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (TCPS2, 2014). UCW students, staff and faculty conducting research must have a valid (within the last 365 days) TCPS2 training certificate. In the case of any conflict between policies, procedures and practices established by UCW and the document mentioned above, the latter will prevail.

1. Requirement for Ethics Review

Appointed by the Vice President of Academics, the Research Ethics Committee (REC) is composed of faculty who are committed to providing you with expert, on-going guidance for all ethical issues relevant to your research. When you are uncertain about a moral or ethical issue, do not hesitate to contact the REC. If you require assistance in completing the ethics review application and protocols, please contact the REC and request a consultation.

This REC ethics policy applies to research and scholarship conducted by all faculty staff, research associates, research assistants, visiting scholars, and graduate and undergraduate students who are at or working in collaboration with UCW.

There are three levels of REC review:

2. Ethics Review Required (Level 1) (Timeline on Decision: Maximum 6 days)

Research involves data collected from human participants must undergo an ethics review, including the following:

2.1 Living human participants through interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and focus groups, or through intervention (e.g., the participant is affected in some way by being placed in a situation to be studied).

- 2.2 *Secondary non-public sources that identify an individual.* This may include: 1. information gathered by another researcher or institution for another purpose that identifies an individual; 2. information collected by the researcher for another purpose that identifies an individual, such as information from a private database; and/or 3. other non-public secondary data sources.
- 2.3 *Human remains, cadavers, human organs, tissues, and biological fluids* from individually identified participants. **Please note that the UCW does not participate in this type of research at this time – ethics would/will apply if this were to be done in the future;** and
- 2.4 *First-Person Action Research* (autoethnography) in which protecting the privacy of others creates a unique challenge.

3. Ethics Review Not Required (Level 2) (Timeline on Decision: Immediate)

There are some research approaches involving humans that do not require review and approval by the REC.

- 3.1 *Research with living individuals involved in the public arena or about an artist based exclusively on publicly available information.*
- 3.2 *Quality assurance studies, performance reviews, or testing within standard educational requirements.* Please know, however, that when such information is used as a secondary non-public source is specified in the section above, an ethical review will be required.
- 3.3 *Research involving only observation in public settings (not naturalistic observation).* Participants are expected to seek general visibility with no expectation of privacy, such as a rally or a public meeting.
- 3.4 *Research involving data from public where aggregated information cannot be associated with an individual or specific group* (e.g., a study report from statistics Canada with no identifying information); and/or
- 3.5 *Research already in the public domain, such as journals, published articles, and archives.*

4. Expedited Review (Level 3) (Timeline on Decision: 72 hours)

Expedited research ethics approval must be no more than minimal risk and led by UCW faculty. As defined in the federal regulations, minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude discomfort anticipated in the study is not more significant in and of themselves than those encountered initially in daily life or during the performance of a routine physical or psychological examination. *Only the REC and/or the VPA may determine if an application is granted expedited status.*

An example of expedited status would be a faculty led classroom project that may involve working with another organization under the faculty's supervision to investigate an issue that has been approved within the course syllabus. Research involving human participants conducted by UCW faculty within the purview of a classroom setting, such as a survey, that demonstrates a particular research outcome. In this instance it must be clearly defined that no identifying information will be obtained, as well as that the purpose of the research is for educational purposes and not for dissemination.

4.1 REC will make one of the following three (3) determinations regarding the protocol and consent forms for **expedited approval**:

- a. **APPROVED**: REC approval indicates that the reviewer has concluded that the research and consent forms met the approval criteria.
- b. **MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO SECURE APPROVAL**: The REC reviewers allow conditional approval with the immediate (within 3 days) submission of revisions and additional information.
- c. **FULL REVIEW REQUIRED**: The REC reviewers may determine that the protocol requires full review by the REC at a convened meeting.

5. Guiding Ethical Principles

In reviewing proposed or research involving human participants, REC shall ensure that the activity being performed complies with the three core principles set out in TCPS 2.

- a. Respect for persons
- b. Concern for the welfare, and
- c. Justice

All research proposals must clearly and concisely address each of these principles, to the specific research activity. The request for an ethics review is designed to ensure that the applicants address the principles noted above.

6. Responsibilities of the Researcher

6.1 As a researcher, you were responsible for ensuring the following:

- a. That your research participants meet selection and eligibility requirements as defined by the research study.
- b. The researchers were approved by the REC and conducted the research accordingly by your ethical review protocol.
- c. No recruitment of participants or collection of data begins before our REC approval.
- d. Ensure a plan to secure data immediately and destroy primary data within 3 years of the completion of the study.
- e. Participants' informed consent is appropriately obtained, and
- f. The study is designed correctly, ethically, and in a manner that is scientifically valid.

6.2 Your ethical review protocol declares that you understand and will adhere to the core principles for responsible research involving human participants:

- a. Respect for persons: informed consent of participants
- b. Beneficence: minimization of risk to participants
- c. Justice: equitable selection of participants and distribution of benefits

7. Benefits and Risks

7.1 Benefits

Researchers and the REC consider all research benefits when considering the inclusion of human participants. This will include consideration related to the participants, the researcher, sponsors, organizations, and/or communities that may be directly involved, as well as the academic community and society.

7.2 Estimate of Risk

Minimal risk research is research where the probability and magnitude of possible harms by participating in the research are no more significant than those encountered by participants in aspects of their everyday life as it relates to the research.

More than Minimal Risk is research with possible harms two participants in the study that could go beyond the risks encountered in those aspects of the participant's everyday life related to the investigation (e.g., any risks relating to confidentiality, populations, or psychological stress).

8. The mandate of the Research Ethics Committee

8.1 The REC is established by the Vice President, Academic to:

- a. ensure an ethical and participant-centered approach when reviewing project proposals; and
- b. approve proposed modifications to, reject, or terminate any proposed or on-going research involving humans. Please note that research involving animals, radioactive material, biohazards, and other hazardous materials are not considered nor excepted as research for or by UCW.

8.2 The research ethics committee will adopt appropriate standards based on the general principle that the more invasive the research, the more excellent care with which it should be assessed. The concept of minimal risk provides the foundation for proportional review.

9. REC Membership

The Vice President of Academics determines the membership. It will consist of at least five members. The requirements for committee appointment will consider the following:

- a. Members who have broad experience in the methods and areas of research to be reviewed
- b. Members who know ethics and how to conduct ethical research
- c. Members who have or are active in their respective field of study and or a subject matter expert; and
- d. Members are representing full-time, part-time, and sessional faculty.

The membership of the REC should reflect the range of research and scholarship represented at UCW.