

## Did you know...

Auto ethnographic research, or self-study research, requires review and approval from the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC).

Self-study done for the purpose of research and involving human participants falls within the scope of *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2-2018)*, and requires BUREC review. Self-study typically involves a scholarly reflection on one's own experiences in a particular context. Self-study may involve narratives, reflections and/or analyses of experiences based on the researcher's observations of, interactions with, or information about other individuals or communities. In self-study, at least the researcher is a research participant.

The BUREC must assess the ethical acceptability of self-study by considering its foreseeable risks, its potential benefits, and the ethical implications of the research. The researcher may be the sole participant, e.g. a researcher writing a self-study of their experience camping alone in the woods. The Committee will assess the level of risk that the researcher is willing to assume to themselves.

Some self-studies may also involve others with whom the researcher interacts or studies. The level of involvement of others in the research determines whether they are also research participants as defined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2-2018)*, Application of Article 2.1. If the BUREC determines that others are involved as research participants, the Committee must assess how the researcher plans to manage the consent process. In general, researchers must seek participants' consent to participate in the self-study. In some exceptional circumstances, the researcher may request an alteration to consent requirements if certain provisions are met (as per Article 3.7A). In general, if the material on which self-study is based (e.g., journal entries, recollections) was not originally intended for research, but is later proposed for research purposes, then the consent of the individual(s) and/or communities involved, if any, must be sought.

Out of concern for welfare, regardless of whether or not they meet the definition of research participants, others mentioned in the self-study have a right to privacy protections. Individuals and/or groups mentioned in the study may not be aware that their interactions with the researcher would be included in a research project. The BUREC must assess whether the dissemination of the research could lead to the identification of individuals and/or communities, and may pose additional risks to participants' and non-participants' privacy and confidentiality. This assessment should also consider the research context, and the level and relevance of privacy protections to others mentioned in the self-study. For example, participants, or other individuals implicated in the research, who seek or expect public acknowledgement of their contributions may not have the same expectations or needs for privacy protections.

## Auto-ethnographic Research

As with any research that poses risks of identification, the researcher and the BUREC will work together to minimize and/or manage these risks to individuals and communities who are mentioned in the self-study research (e.g., remove identifiable information, disguise names and identities).

If you are unsure if your project requires review and approval from the BUREC, we recommend completing the Ethics Exemption Inquiry Form. The BUREC Chair will make a determination on exemption and formal correspondence will be sent confirming if the project is exempt or requires approval from the Committee. The Ethics Exemption Inquiry Form, *TCPS2-2018*, and the *Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) Policies and Procedures* can be found on the BUREC webpage at: [www.brandonu.ca/burec](http://www.brandonu.ca/burec).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact BUREC at [burec@brandonu.ca](mailto:burec@brandonu.ca).