



## Brandon University Policy on Research Involving Humans

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)* is a joint policy of Canada's three federal granting agencies, the Tri-Agency: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada (NSERC); and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). To receive and administer Tri-Agency funding, Canadian institutions must comply with the policies set out in the *Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions*. The TCPS2 falls under Section 4.3 of this Agreement.

### 2.0 POLICY

Brandon University is committed to complying with the TCPS2 which requires that research projects involving humans participants undertaken by any person (faculty, staff, students, visiting professors, adjunct professors, visiting professional associates, research associates, postdoctoral fellows) under the auspices of Brandon University or within its jurisdiction, or using its resources, must be reviewed and approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC).

Undergraduate and graduate student Principal Investigators (PIs) must conduct research with a course advisor and within the jurisdiction of an academic program. This includes research that is: conducted on or off campus; funded or unfunded; conducted by formally affiliated organizations and institutes; and conducted on campus by organizations or individuals not affiliated with Brandon University. Furthermore, undergraduate students are limited to conducting research approved as Minimal Risk. BUREC will not consider student research projects conducted outside the jurisdiction of an academic program.

As of April 1, 2026, health-based research project reviews fall under Research Manitoba's Research Improvements Through Harmonization in Manitoba (RITHIM) initiative and are required to go through the Committee for Harmonized Health Impact, Privacy, and Ethics Review (CHIPER) for review and approval. From the Research Manitoba website: *RITHIM is a provincial initiative involving multiple stakeholders with a goal to build a best-in-class provincial program for health research in Manitoba. RITHIM is unique across Canada in that it will harmonize ethics, privacy and health institutional assessment review processes, creating a more efficient process for health research reviews in Manitoba.*

#### TCPS2 Definitions

- 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.

- 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 (PI): 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.
- Research: an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation.

The TCPS2 outlines the minimum standards for research involving human participants and Brandon University is at liberty to develop higher standards where appropriate. Where the University, external agency, or discipline has a higher standard or additional requirements for the protection of human participants, the higher standard will take precedence.

### **2.1 Research Requiring BUREC Review**

The following research requires ethics review and approval by BUREC prior to starting research:

- a. Research involving living human participants
- b. Research involving human biological materials and/or human embryos, fetuses, fetal tissue, reproductive materials and stem cells. This applies to materials derived from living and deceased individuals.

Given the breadth of possible research topics and methods to be reviewed, this policy cannot exhaustively cover all possible circumstances or ethical issues that may arise. It is the responsibility of the PI to verify with BUREC whether review and certification is required, prior to the commencement of any human participatory research. This includes situations in which human participatory research was not originally intended but arise during a project as the research evolves.

### **2.2 Research and Other Activities Exempt from BUREC Review**

In accordance with the TCPS2, BUREC makes the final decision on exemption from research ethics review.

### **2.3 Internal Oversight and Accountability**

BUREC is responsible for the administration and certification of human participatory research conducted under the auspices or jurisdiction of Brandon University. The BUREC review process shall be in line with the TCPS2 and is intended to provide assurance to research participants, researchers, and the University, that participants will be respected and protected, and will be involved in ethically sound research. BUREC:

- a. will maintain, develop, and revise ethics policies and procedures as appropriate;
- b. has the authority to approve ethics applications;
- c. approves amendments to approved applications; monitors on-going research, and ensures reporting requirements are met;
- d. terminates approved ethics applications that do not conform to ethical standards or comply with approved policies and/or procedures; and
- e. Undertakes and provides training on ethics policies and procedures.

## **2.4 BUREC Membership**

The BUREC composition shall be determined by BUREC for approval by the Senate Research Committee, and shall consist of at least five (5) members, who reflect gender diversity, of whom at least:

- two (2) members have expertise in relevant research disciplines, fields and methodologies covered by BUREC;
- one member is knowledgeable in ethics;
- one member who is knowledgeable in the relevant law, who is not the institution's legal counsel or risk manager; and
- one community representative who has no affiliation with the institution.

All appointed members of BUREC are to be approved by the Senate Research Committee.

## **2.5 Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest may arise when activities or situations place an individual or institution in a real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional or other interest. These interests include, but are not limited to, business, commercial or financial interests pertaining to an institution and/or the individual, their family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates.

A conflict of interest may involve the institution, researcher, or BUREC member. Any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest shall be disclosed. This includes dual roles in which the researcher(s) and their associated obligations (e.g., acting as both a researcher and a therapist, health care provider, caregiver, teacher, advisor, consultant, supervisor, student or employer) may create conflicts, undue influences, power imbalances or coercion that could affect relationships with others and affect decision-making procedures (e.g., consent of participants). When acting in dual or multiple roles, the researcher shall disclose the nature of the conflict to BUREC, outlining how this conflict will be mitigated, as well as to the participant in the consent process.

## **2.6 BUREC Appeal Process**

Decisions of BUREC may be appealed under the terms of the Brandon University and The University of Winnipeg bi-lateral agreement, whereby the ethics review committee of each University serves as the other's Ethics Review Appeals Committee in formal cases of appeal. The decision of The University of Winnipeg shall be final and binding.

## **2.7 Compliance**

Brandon University requires that all faculty members, staff, and students adhere to this policy and the BUREC Procedures derived from it. The University considers non-compliance and the inappropriate treatment of human participants to be a serious offence, subject to penalties, as outlined in the *BUREC Non-Compliance Policy and Procedures*.

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