

Research that is Respectful of Indigenous Peoples and Context (RRIPC)

Senior Indigenous Leadership Implementation Process

Rethinking Indigenous Research at the University of Manitoba

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Frank Deer and Adele Perry, with Shauna Mulligan, Ashley Edson, Josée Lavoie, Linda Diffey, Meryl Ballard, Brian Rice, Raymond Frogner, Amanda Fowler-Woods, Kerrie Hayes, Punam Mehta and Suzanne McLeod



**University
of Manitoba**



Committee Members:

Dr. Adele Perry (Arts)

Dr. Frank Deer (Education)

Shauna Mulligan (Arts)

Ashley Edson (SAGE and the Indigenous Student Centre)

Dr. Josée Lavoie (Rady Faculty of Health Sciences)

Dr. Linda Diffey (Rady Faculty of Health Sciences)

Dr. Meryl Ballard (Science)

Dr. Brian Rice (Kinesiology and Recreation Management)

Raymond Frogner (NCTR)

Amanda Fowler-Woods (Ongomiizwin and Rady Faculty of Health Sciences)

Kerrie Hayes (ORS)

Dr. Punam Mehta (Rady Faculty of Health Sciences)

Dr. Suzanne McLeod (School of Art)

Additional thanks to Dr. Pauline Tennent, Dr. Cary Miller, Ha (Cassie) Dong, Meghan Menzies, Christine Cyr, Pinar Eskicioglu, Laura Orsak-Williams, and Iryna Tsybukh.

Executive Sponsors:

Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President Indigenous

Dr. Digvir S. Jayas, Vice-President Research International

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Indigenous Research: An Attempt to Conceptualize.....	5
Indigenous Research, University Protocols, and Regulations	7
Mandatory Indigenous Research Agreement Templates.....	9
Associate Deans Research Survey.....	9
RRIPC Ethics Review	15
Indigenous Research Ethics in Canada: A Literature Review	17
Indigenous Research Ethics among U15 Institutions	22
University of Alberta	22
University of British Columbia	23
University of Calgary	23
Dalhousie University	23
Université Laval.....	24
McGill	24
McMaster University.....	24
Université de Montreal	25
University of Ottawa	25
Queen’s University.....	25
University of Saskatchewan.....	26
University of Toronto	26
University of Waterloo	26
Western University	27
U15 Survey Observations	27
Recommendations.....	28
Office for Indigenous Research.....	28
Unit Indigenous Research Leads	30
Required Tutorials on Academic Integrity and Research Integrity for Graduate Students ..	30
Research Ethics Boards.....	31
References.....	33



Executive Summary

Indigenous peoples in Canada, their communities, lands, and traditions are pervasively the focus of research conducted by Canadian post-secondary institutions. Very frequently, however, Indigenous peoples are not consulted, have not consented, and do not benefit from being subject to researchers' agendas. This report addresses the importance and challenges of research that is respectful to Indigenous peoples and contexts, with attention to the University of Manitoba.

The report has four parts. The first conceptualizes "Indigenous research." The second part turns to the prospect of universal and mandatory templates governing university research with Indigenous people, governments, and territories. In order to investigate such approach and whether it would be relevant to the University of Manitoba, the RRIPC Associate Deans Research (ADR) Survey was launched in the summer of 2021. The highlights of this survey are discussed, as well as recommendations regarding universal and mandatory agreements and templates. The third part of the report examines what the literature indicates as being current challenges/gaps among research ethics boards across Canada when evaluating Indigenous research. We then offer a review of how Indigenous research ethics is being conducted throughout Canada, more specifically, among the U15 institutions.

The report concludes with recommendations for the University of Manitoba, which are organized into an Office of Indigenous Research, Indigenous research leads at the unit level, required tutorials for graduate students, and research ethics boards.



Indigenous Research: An Attempt to Conceptualize

It may be reasonable to postulate that since *Indigenous Research*, as we have begun to regard it, is a relatively new avenue of academic endeavour at Canadian universities, our understanding of Indigenous Research may be incomplete and subject to discussion. Currently, it seems that *Indigenous Research* may be constituted by a number of different and potentially competing elements. Issues such as the:

- topical focus of the research,
- identity of the researcher(s),
- identity of research participants,
- location of the research,
- nature of the research methods and their associated methodologies,
- the manner in which research data is managed and shared,
- what happens to the final research product? Who owns, controls, accesses, and uses it?
- is the research of use to related Indigenous communities?
- what is the role and capacity of Indigenous research “participants”?
- local protocols and definitions of ethical and appropriate research.

This non-exhaustive list may be regarded as features that make a particular research project “Indigenous” in nature. Clearly, features such as these may not be regarded as checklists—one, some, or even other features, may be resident in a particular research project that makes it

Indigenous in nature. Thus, an expansive and inclusive conceptualization of *Indigenous Research* is called for.

For the purposes of this report, *Indigenous research* is defined as any investigation:

- for which Indigenous peoples and/or topics are the subject of investigation, or
- that will be related to and/or affect Indigenous peoples, territories, or communities, or
- for which the research methods are based on Indigenous principles, knowledge, culture, artifacts, or existing modes of investigation.

Indigenous research may originate in a university, Indigenous community or organization, or elsewhere.



Indigenous Research, University Protocols, and Regulations

The Research that is Respectful of Indigenous Peoples and Context (RRIPC) arm of the University of Manitoba's implementation of the Senior Indigenous Leadership Report was struck in the summer of 2020. A central concern the RRIPC was asked to consider is what we might call university protocols for regulating research with and around Indigenous peoples and territories. In particular, we were tasked to consider if the University of Manitoba should adopt a universal research agreement template governing university research with Indigenous peoples, communities, resources, and territories. This would be a basic universal template that all researchers at the University of Manitoba who conduct Indigenous research of any kind would be required to utilize.

Interest in this kind of universal, mandatory template is one response to a widespread and overdue conversation occurring in Canadian post-secondary institutions and in funding agencies. This conversation stems from compelling critiques of the university-based, academic research, often conducted by non-Indigenous people, on Indigenous people, their territories, communities, and interests.

The examples of Canadian university-based research that was conducted without Indigenous peoples' consent and which did tangible and lasting damage to Indigenous peoples are not hard to find. It includes projects such as the "nutritional experiments" conducted on Indigenous children at residential schools by researchers from across Canada (Mosby, 2013). Such research, Lenape historian Mary Jane Logan McCallum explains, was one part of a wider

research process “set in coercive conditions, without consultation or consent, with little benefit to Indigenous peoples, and intimately tied to government policies intended to eradicate Indigenous populations through assimilation and integration” (2017, p. 104).

The implications of the historically poor relationship between Indigenous people and academic research are enormous. Nehiyaw scholar Margaret Kovach explains that the crises in Indigenous educational, child welfare, and criminal justice policy reflect “the research that influences policy and shapes practice impacting Indigenous communities most often emerges from knowledges not of Indigenous culture and context” (2021, p. 12). It is for these reasons and more that academic research and the institutions that fund, regulate, and guide this research, including universities, have been roundly critiqued for failing Indigenous people.

In her germinal book, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (originally published in 1999), Māori health researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith explained that “The word itself, ‘research,’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous worlds’ vocabulary” (2021, p. 38), a word that evokes silence, bad memories, and distrust. When Canada’s Tri-Council revised its policies around ethical research with humans, it made some effort to address these critiques. In 2017 the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) commented that research on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples had been conducted primarily by non-Indigenous researchers, and that research had neither reflected Indigenous worldviews nor benefitted Indigenous communities. Given this, it was no surprise that Indigenous people regarded research “with a certain apprehension or mistrust” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2018, p. 107).

Mandatory Indigenous Research Agreement Templates

In July 2020, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) announced Research Impacting Indigenous Groups policy. This was the product of a two-year engagement process, involving more than 2,000 people and 60 meetings, and the leadership of Indigenous Science scholar and then Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Research) Max Liboiron. Hailed as the first of its kind, Memorial's policy aims to strengthen and shape research from the proposal stage and beyond and responds to the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP), that assert that First Nations have control over data collection processes, including ownership and control how this information can be used (Cook et al., 2014). A key part of Memorial's policy involves an "Indigenous Research Agreement" template that is available on their website (Office of the Vice-President (Research), 2020).

The advantages of MUN's approach are clear. By mandating that all researchers affiliated with the university adopt a common template, MUN makes clear its commitment to ethical and engaged research with Indigenous groups, makes its policies regarding that legible and visible, and ensures that they meet and exceed important guiding documents, including TCPS 2 and OCAP. As far as we know, no other Canadian post-secondary institutions have adopted a similar template. Is a universal template of the kind adopted by MUN advisable for the particular landscape of the University of Manitoba?

Associate Deans Research Survey

To gauge the appropriateness of a universal template for the University of Manitoba, and Indigenous people and governments who work with its researchers, the RRIPC Templates and Agreements working group designed the RRIPC Associate Deans Research (ADR) Survey in

the summer of 2021. It is our opinion that ADRs were best situated to speak to the granular research practices and needs in their units. With the approval of the University Survey Committee and using the SurveyMonkey platform, we directed nineteen ADRs to a survey of eleven questions. We received eleven responses from across the University of Manitoba. While a response rate of over 50 percent is respectable for this kind of survey, it is still important to note that almost half of the ADR's contacted *did not* respond, and our conclusions cannot speak to their responses.

With these caveats in mind, the RRIPC ADR survey yields some important insights:

- It confirms *the need to recruit and retain Indigenous scholars and scholars familiar with Indigenous research in these crucial positions and need for Indigenous support staff to assist with research projects*. Q2 inquired about the responder's Indigenous identity; all eleven of the responses indicated that they did not identify as Indigenous. Q4 asked the ADRs if they had engaged in Indigenous research themselves: the most common answer was "not at all" at 27.27%, and another 18.18% responded with "only one short project."
- The survey speaks to *a wide variety of Indigenous research being practiced in the ADR's units*: large clusters in human health and wellness, economic and social, and environmental, and smaller clusters in cultural and environmental research. The ADRs also reported varying degrees of research with or about Indigenous peoples and territories and using Indigenous research methodologies in their units. The survey indicated a wide range of uses of research agreements with Indigenous groups,

communities, and organizations. A little over 9% of respondents indicated that standard university templates were regularly used in their faculty.

- The ADRs who responded had *mixed opinions about standard templates*. When asked if the University of Manitoba should develop a standard template to “guide discussions with groups/communities/organizations when negotiating an agreement,” a significant number—over 63%—indicated yes, a little under thirty percent indicated that they did not know or had no opinion, and around 9% indicated no.
- The final part of the survey that allowed participants to share any additional thoughts revealed *more complex arguments*. One respondent indicated that a template prompting a “conversation about this” would be a great step. Another pointed out that “Our faculty has many years of experience working with Indigenous organizations [and] I don’t believe that another generic form is going to help out these relationships at all.” This perspective was shared by another, who explained that there is a “tension” between non-Indigenous researchers “bringing and imposing an agreement from a colonial institution to set the tone of the agreement.”

Read as a whole, the ADR survey speaks to the need to recruit and retain Indigenous scholars and scholars with experience in Indigenous research to these positions, the wide variety of Indigenous research being practiced across campus and by researchers at different career stages. On the particular question of standard templates, the survey’s responses are mixed. Many ADRs indicated an enthusiasm for standard templates, but the open comments indicated substantial concerns with what a generic form might mean for existing relationships combined with an interest in support to guide early conversations with Indigenous research partners.

The RRIPC committee advises *against* the adoption of a mandatory research template, for three compelling reasons:

- *The wide variety of research with Indigenous people, resources, and territories that are undertaken by researchers affiliated at the University of Manitoba.* The University of Manitoba is a large institution with a highly varied research landscape. There are important clusters of Indigenous research in the Max Rady College of Medicine, including but not limited to the Ongomiizwin Institute of Health and Healing; in the Faculty of Arts, home to Canada's second oldest Indigenous Studies Department in Canada, and one of only four graduate programmes in Native/Indigenous Studies in Canada; the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, the repository of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2015; and in the Natural Resources Institute housed in the Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources, and beyond. Each of these units, not to mention the departments and units within them, have longstanding practices of research design and process, including around templates and formal agreements often co-developed with or adopted from Indigenous partners. Given the wide variety of Indigenous research practiced at the University of Manitoba and the evolving landscape of Indigenous governance and research, no one template is likely to capture all circumstances.
- *The particular provincial context of Manitoba.* The University of Manitoba is the province's research university, and Manitoba has both a significant Indigenous population and a varied one. In 2016, 18% of Manitobans identified as Indigenous. There are 63 First Nations in Manitoba, and seven languages recognized by the province

– Cree, Dakota/Lakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway/Anishinaabemowin, and Ojibway-Cree. Manitoba is the homeland of the Red River Métis, the current location of significant rural and urban Métis settlements, including Winnipeg, St. Laurent, and Duck Bay. In 2016, 12.2% of Winnipeg’s population was Indigenous; 54% of them identified as Métis, 44% as First Nations, and 2% as Inuit or other Manitoba’s Inuit population is growing, and Winnipeg is an important hub for Inuit seeking a range of services (City of Winnipeg, 2018; Chernikova, 2016). To serve Manitoba’s large and varied Indigenous population, the University of Manitoba’s research infrastructure must be supple and adaptable, capable of responding to the concerns of urban and rural, First Nations and Métis, and north and south.

- *Meaningful and ethical Indigenous research is based on relationships and requires flexibility.* A common thread in Indigenous research methodology is the importance of relationships and relationality. Ethical and responsible Indigenous research is grounded in relationships and connections, and University policies should seek to support the development and maintenance of ongoing, mutual, and engaged relationships between researchers, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, and the Indigenous peoples, governments, and communities they work with. These relationships cannot be created by formal, written agreements and templates, and in fact can be harmed or at least hampered by them. The negotiation of agreements is part of the relationship building/renewal process. In some contexts, it is or includes ceremony. Researchers from a range of units and involved in a range of Indigenous research spoke of the need for flexible, supportive

involvement from the University, and were wary of the impact of more paperwork and requirements.

Another example of the shortcomings of codified, universal documents lays in the failed attempts by international bodies to come up with a universal definition of Indigenous. James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood and Marie Battiste have both observed how international debates over who is Indigenous became prominent as the UN Commission on Human Rights began to address the human rights of Indigenous Peoples in the early 1980s. As S'akej Youngblood Henderson notes, for more than two decades, "international human rights experts, states, and Indigenous peoples debated the definition and status of Indigenous peoples in international law ... a legalistic, positivistic, and heartless quibble over categories and terminology." He dryly concludes, "[s]ince cultural diversity has become the defining characteristic of humanity, no universal, unambiguous definition of the concept of "Indigenous peoples" exists in international law" (2008, p. 42, 46). Attempts to define Indigenous peoples have struggled with the fact that relationships between Indigenous communities and dominant settler society will change over time just as Indigenous communities will continue to evolve and self-determine. Therefore, "no single accepted definition captures the evolving diversity of Indigenous heritages, cultures, histories, and current circumstances..." (Henderson, 2008). The best that can be done is to acknowledge the unique, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships interrelating land, cultures, and peoples, both settler and Indigenous.

There is another problem in attempting to formulate a general definition of the term Indigenous: it perpetuates the modernist, Eurocentric, grand social-theory approach that envelops groups in social engineering programs assigning to them unique characteristics,

strengths, and vulnerabilities to formulate universal laws of behavior and social control. The historic result has been catastrophic social programs such as Canadian residential schools and eugenics. As legal scholar Sébastien Grammond wrote, “ethnicity is a descriptive concept carrying no inherent normative value, so it needs to be assessed against a moral standard” (2009, p. 15). Researchers still need to work thoroughly through these fundamental concepts of homeland, belonging, and identity. There is a good reason why the preamble to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) opens with comment on this issue.

But researchers at all career stages and at a range of location around the University of Manitoba do need more support, guidance, and resources for creating, maintaining, and growing Indigenous research in ethical, appropriate, and generative ways. We draw attention to the need to recognize first principles that will be used to develop engaged and respectful relationships between researchers, whether Indigenous or not, and Indigenous people, communities, and governments. These are not inviolable rules but rather a platform of principles upon which to build respectful relationships. This can best be provided through the creation of an *Indigenous Research Office*—which will be explored more specifically in the Recommendations section of this report. We also recommend that the University of Manitoba consider identifying *Indigenous Research Leads* at the relevant unit level – department, faculty, or school. These researchers, usually faculty members, would help build ethical and responsive research practices within their specific disciplinary contexts.

RRIPC Ethics Review

The purpose of this review is to provide a survey of how Indigenous research ethics is being addressed in select Canadian universities. Since this review is intended to support continued

discussion of Indigenous research ethics at the University of Manitoba, the following is presented:

- An initial and tentative conceptualization on Indigenous research;
- A brief review of academic literature on this topic with a focus on Canadian contexts;
- A survey of individual universities and how they address Indigenous research ethics. The universities listed are, to varying degrees, comparable to the University of Manitoba.



Indigenous Research Ethics in Canada: A Literature Review

Analyzing the research ethics boards (REBs) of Canadian universities, one can quickly notice that most REBs do not dedicate special consideration for research involving Indigenous peoples¹ (Bull et al., 2019). But even in cases where they do, it is clear that there are many inconsistencies and uncertainties that surround the work of reviewers and submitted protocols. This brief review of literature suggests that there is an urgent need to affect appropriate change in Canadian REBs.

In recent decades, many frameworks and guidelines have emerged with the intent of providing principles for conducting research with Indigenous peoples (e.g., OCAP, TCPS 2, CIHR, the four “R”s—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility, among others). OCAP and TCPS 2 appear to be the most prominent but these may not be the preferred frames for considering research ethics, and some Indigenous governments in Manitoba use different frameworks. Campbell (2014) observed, “OCAP principles are a political response to unethical research methods that have been carried out by academic and government researchers” (p. 43). However, OCAP may not be viewed as appropriate for some Indigenous groups such as the Inuit (Riddell et al., 2017). As Riddell explains, notions of co-creation and data-sharing agreements as ownership and control are incongruous with Inuit belief systems, which value non-interference and the practice of sharing within the community. The First Nations

¹ Herein, the term *Indigenous* will refer only to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada and their respective relations.

Information Governance Centre (2014) also highlights some of the legal knowledge, capacity, and institutional barriers for the implementation of OCAP.

In a similar vein, some shortcomings of the TCPS 2 have been noted. While a REB may adhere to the TCPS 2 principles, that does not necessarily mean that the research is ethical from an Indigenous perspective. A major reason for that is because the TCPS 2 provides broad principles but no practical guidance, thus making their application complex and challenging. Kershaw et al. (2014) also noted that the TCPS 2 does not give direct consideration to non-human research subjects, which has serious implications for studies on Indigenous lands or artifacts. Moreover, the tensions between the TCPS 2 guidelines and the logic of western academia have been greatly observed. For example, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) has become a widely adopted design in studies with Indigenous peoples. However, not only is “community engagement” a blurred concept but also not every community engagement is necessarily appropriate (Brunger & Wall, 2016). Community engagement must be co-production of knowledge throughout the research—from the memorandum of understanding (MOU) to the development of co-authored publications. However, the challenges of putting principles into action may lead researchers to involve participants just as minimum as possible so as to be able to conduct their projects.

From an Indigenous perspective, ethics is an ongoing conversation, not a punctual procedure (Bull et al., 2019). Therefore, the logic of most REBs, which require detailed and defined work plans before the research begins, may be seen as going against the principles of the TCPS 2, which encourage community involvement with the research development (Brunger & Wall, 2016; Moore et al., 2017). Additionally, Brunger and Wall (2016) observe that,

If done uncritically and in service to ethics guidelines rather than in service to ethical research, [community involvement] can itself cause harm by leading to community fatigue, undermining the community's ability to be effectively involved in the research, and restricting the community's ability to have oversight and control over research. (p. 1863)

Since it may be reasonable to state that knowledge of the principles of TCPS 2 and OCAP are not necessarily sufficient, many research projects may have been approved by a REB but not be ethical from an Indigenous worldview. There are longstanding concerns about how familiar many REB members are with research that honours the tradition and spirit of Indigenous peoples (Flicker et al., 2015), or that has been co-created with Indigenous partners. The TCPS 2's suggestion of seeking volunteers does not necessarily address these problems (Brunger & Wall, 2016).

A reality of academic work in universities that may pose a challenge when conducting Indigenous research is evidenced by the "publish or perish" mentality that drives western academia. The hyper focus on (individual) publication numbers, for example for tenure purposes, can disadvantage Indigenous research, including by conflicting with the TCPS 2's requirement that recognition be negotiated beforehand. Ideals of western intellectual property can conflict with Indigenous ownership of data, or data sovereignty. This misalignment becomes particularly problematic when researchers reinforce stereotypes and focus on the problems of a community rather than a "strength-based approach that capitalizes on the capacities, abilities, knowledge and talents that already exist in Indigenous communities" (Hyett et al., 2018, p. E619). Furthermore, Castleden et al. (2010) note that community authorship can,

on the one hand, be perceived by other academics as engaging in unjustified (honorary) authorship and, on the other hand, pose a threat to a community's intellectual property (e.g., research on medicinal plants).

Another contradiction and challenge of the TCPS 2 is observed in the call for Indigenous participants to be co-researchers while benefitting from the research. Ball and Janyst (2008) point out that "agreeing to participate in one of the projects must clearly and directly benefit each research participant" (p. 38), and not just "indirect benefits." However, Castleden et al. (2012) observe that "if Indigenous communities are participating in or leading the direction of the research, they may not benefit financially according to the Tri-Council's allowable expenses" (p. 174). Even what constitutes an appropriate gift is something that the researcher must not take for granted (Lee, 2019).

Indeed, while guidelines and frameworks such as the TCPS 2 can offer initial conversations, a research project methodology and methods must respond to the specific context, language, and worldviews of the community in focus. For example, Braun et al. (2014) observe that dreams can be an important source of information for some Indigenous peoples, such as the Cree and Mi'kmaq in Canada, but not for others. In regard to incorporating community perspectives, some universities have a specific advisory committee in addition to the REB with the purpose of reviewing studies conducted with Indigenous peoples, but that does not come without challenges. For example, Brunger and Wall (2016) observe that the NunatuKavut Research Advisory Committee (RAC), which functions much like other Indigenous RACs in Canada and elsewhere, has two main purposes. First, the RAC seeks to ensure that research involving NunatuKavut peoples and lands is conducted in a manner that is appropriate

to the spiritual, cultural, social, and environmental context of NunatuKavut, that it is keeping with the needs, expectations, and values of NunatuKavut, and that it is compliant with the principles of OCAP. The second (tacitly understood) purpose is to consider whether the proposed research can or actually should take place at that point in time. As the authors note, oftentimes a project may be outrightly rejected by the RAC (thus not following the same logic as the REB which gives the researcher a set of revisions to be made), which can be very distressing for researchers.

The challenges of conducting ethical research with Indigenous peoples lie not only in the time and effort it requires, but on the notion that it fundamentally dissonates with western worldviews and often leads to a “catch-22” in which “we are ‘damned if we do’ (the minutia of privileging academic protocols over respect for Indigenous jurisdiction and community autonomy) or ‘damned if we don’t’ (thus not getting REB approval to proceed with our research)” (Stiegman & Castleden, 2015, p. 4). As it seems, the best approach for non-Indigenous researchers is to invest quality time with the community so as to identify research needs, learn what is important from them, and together develop the research plan, which may begin with (but not be limited to) a template designed by a research advisory committee (Bull et al., 2019). While non-Indigenous academics have a major role to play in conducting ethically appropriate research, it is of utmost importance to build capacity for Indigenous peoples to conduct and review research—something that perhaps the Tri-Council could fund, as Moore et al. (2017) suggest. An example of this within the University of Manitoba is the NCTR’s Indigenous Academic Research Committee, which evaluates and provides support for new research utilizing the NCTR’s records.



Indigenous Research Ethics among U15 Institutions

The following is a survey of individual universities and how they address Indigenous research ethics. The universities listed are, to varying degrees, comparable to the University of Manitoba (in terms of size, research orientation, etc.). Each description below is based on publicly accessible information from their respective websites, which are provided at the end of each sub-section. Other information that is germane to this conversation may not be publicly available.

University of Alberta

In order to approve any research conducted with or on the lands of Indigenous peoples, the REB requires evidence of community involvement—the nature and extent of which shall be determined jointly by the researcher and the relevant community depending on the nature of the study. This is also a requirement in cases in which Indigenous identity or membership in an Indigenous community is used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data or when interpretation of research results will refer to Indigenous communities, peoples, language, history, or culture. The application form asks for details about the way in which consent will be sought, agreements regarding access, ownership and sharing of research data with communities, and how final results of the study will be shared with the participating community.

Source: <https://www.ualberta.ca/research/research-support/research-ethics-office/forms-cabinet/forms-human.html>

University of British Columbia

The Behavioural Application Form asks for details in cases where the research is focused on Indigenous peoples, their knowledge or heritage, if conducted on their lands, or if Indigenous identity or membership in an Indigenous community is used as a variable for the purposes of analysis. In such cases, the researcher must clarify how community engagement is sought and the steps taken to respect their community, who was consulted, and proof of such consultations.

Source: <https://www.rise.ubc.ca/sample-forms-and-rise-sandbox>

University of Calgary

While it is not possible to access the research application form (as it is necessary to have a UCalgary account), the website brings information about the Indigenous Research Support Team (IRST), which is a pilot project launched in 2019 within Research Services to better support and strengthen Indigenous-related research capacity at the University of Calgary. IRST is an advisory entity and the point of contact for all university researchers doing any work within the broader Indigenous landscape, including with Indigenous communities and on Indigenous lands. They provide guidance to researchers on the proper processes to adhere to in Indigenous research, promoting opportunities for culturally responsive, collaborative research whereby community interests and perspectives are affirmed and there is mutual benefit in all processes.

Source : <https://research.ucalgary.ca/conduct-research/additional-resources/irst>

Dalhousie University

The REB application form brings four questions for studies which will involve Indigenous peoples. The researcher must explain how community engagement will be sought, whether

ethical approval has been or will be sought from [Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch](#) (or other Indigenous group), a description of research agreements (e.g., data ownership), and whether the research incorporates OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) principles as described in TCPS [Article 9.8](#).

Source : <https://www.dal.ca/dept/research-services/responsible-conduct-/research-ethics-/apply-for-reb-approval.html>

Université Laval

No specific information was found in the protocol.

Source : <https://www.cerul.ulaval.ca/depot-dune-demande-et-suivi-dun-projet/formulaire-et-documents-a-fournir/>

McGill

No specific information was found in the protocol except the request for proof or permission to conduct research with “distinct groups of participants” such as “cultural groups”. No reference to Indigenous peoples was found.

Source: <https://www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance/human/reb-i-ii-iii/forms-and-guidelines>

McMaster University

While it is necessary to have a university account in order to access the application form, there is a publicly available sample of a research agreement in their website, provided by the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE). This document prompts the researcher to provide detailed information on what the purpose of the research is, how community engagement will be sought (including progress report and sharing of findings), how

consent will be obtained, how data will be collected and stored, how the community will benefit from the research, and circumstances that would lead to the interruption of the study.

Source : <https://research.mcmaster.ca/support-for-researchers/forms-templates/?ofc=Research%20Ethics>

Université de Montreal

In the REB form, the researcher is asked whether they will be involving Indigenous peoples in their study. If yes, they must describe the collaborative measures taken with the communities concerned, the nature of the official authorizations required from the communities, how data will be collected, owned, retained, shared, and disseminated, and the agreements made with the community in those regards.

Source : <https://recherche.umontreal.ca/responsabilite-en-recherche/ethique-humaine/cas-particuliers/>

University of Ottawa

No specific information was found in the protocol except a statement about “the right for cultural groups to demand a respectful description of their heritage and their customs, as well as the discrete use of information about their life and aspirations.”

Source : <https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms>

Queen’s University

The General Research Ethics Board Application Form has one yes/no question asking the researcher whether the study is specifically focused on Indigenous peoples. If yes, the researcher must explain how community involvement will be sought. Earlier, the protocol reminds the researcher that it might be necessary to obtain approval from external jurisdictions.

Source : <https://www.queensu.ca/vpr/ethics/greb>

University of Saskatchewan

In the Behavioural Application Form, there are five yes/no questions about the potential involvement of Indigenous peoples in the study, including whether Indigenous peoples will comprise a large proportion of the participants, even no Indigenous-specific conclusions will be made. If any of the questions is answered affirmatively, the researcher must describe how approval will be obtained from the community, customs, and codes to be observed, how the research will be mutually beneficial, how it will support capacity building through enhancement of the skills of community personnel and the recognition of the role of Elders and other knowledge holders, and how the community will be involved in the interpretation, review and dissemination of findings.

Source: <https://wiki.usask.ca/display/public/CPKB/Behavioural+Application>

University of Toronto

No specific information was found in the protocol.

Source: <https://research.utoronto.ca/my-research-system-help-support/my-research-human-protocols-mrhp>

University of Waterloo

Although it is not possible to access the ethics protocol form, the university highlights that conducting research in First Nations territory requires a specific license. They provide links to the First Nations Information Governance Centre - Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles, guidelines to conducting research on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory (a policy approved by Six Nations Elected Council), the Indigenous Research Protecting Act, a guiding video (“Understanding the First Nations Principles of OCAP: Our Road

Map to Information Governance”), and a Six Nations Council Research Ethics Committee Protocol (but it is not clear whether that document would be in lieu of the standard application, in addition to it, or even if it would be necessarily required by the REB).

Source: <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/pre-submission-and-training/human-research-guidelines-and-policies-alphabetical-list>

Western University

While it is not possible to access the protocol (an account is needed), no specific information or policies were found on the website.

Source: <https://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/human/index.html>

U15 Survey Observations

While all universities seem to adhere to the [TCPS 2](#) and often refer researchers to its Chapter 9 to familiarize themselves with the guidelines, only one university surveyed requested the approval of an external Indigenous focused REB. Some universities had no specific questions for studies focused on Indigenous peoples, just the same general questions of potential risks and benefits, how consent will be sought, etc., thus leaving to the researcher’s and reviewer’s criteria to decide if the measures taken have been sufficient. But even in cases where there REB asks for details, non-Indigenous reviewers are often not the appropriate people to decide the appropriateness of a protocol. A well-resourced and staffed Office of Indigenous Research and would be equipped to determine the best option, which may include requesting the approval of an external Indigenous led and focused REB or having the researcher complete a protocol agreement designed by an Indigenous community, organization, or government.



Recommendations

Office for Indigenous Research

We recommend that *the University of Manitoba establish an Office for Indigenous Research. We recommend that this be under the portfolio of The Office of the Vice-President Indigenous (OVPI) and liaise with the Vice-President Research International Office (VPRIO) and work collaboratively with the NCTR, Ongomiizwin Research, and the Department of Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Arts.*

The Office for Indigenous Research (OIR) would:

- Work with VPRIO to ensure that the RRIPC Research Ethics Working Group recommendations are met in a robust fashion. The Office of Indigenous Research would assist the Office of Research Ethics and Compliance (OREC) ensure that Indigenous research submissions to all REB's are all appropriately and respectfully processed and adjudicated; develop and deliver professional development components for REB members; work to identify and support Indigenous REB members; work to support community input and, where relevant, Indigenous community protocols in REB process. The Office of Indigenous Research could also provide assistance to Indigenous communities and governments developing their own research ethics process, for instance by supplying examples of relevant materials or giving feedback on policies. The Office of Indigenous Research would work to ensure that researchers and Indigenous communities and governments do not need to go through multiple processes that are TCPS 2 and OCAP compliant. Alternately, it could also work to develop a specifically

Indigenous REB process that would support research with, around, and concerning Indigenous communities on all U of M campuses.

- Work to support ethical and appropriate research in areas of research that do not require approval from REBs.
- Serve as a visible and easily recognized "front door" for Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals who might be seeking research relationships with the University of Manitoba and its researchers.
- Maintain a suite of relevant precedent documents, agreements templates, best practices and handbooks, and work with specific researchers and Indigenous partners to locate the best and most appropriate documents for a particular collaboration or assist in the creation of new ones.
- Stay abreast of Indigenous research methodology, liaise with Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers across campus, librarians, archivists, Elders and knowledge keepers, and other information professionals, and provide workshops and research support for undergraduate and graduate classes, interested graduate students, researchers, and faculty members from throughout the University of Manitoba community.
- Be staffed by professionals who are familiar with the research landscape of the University of Manitoba, and the particular Indigenous communities in the province. This office would share similarities to the University of Calgary's Indigenous Research Support Team, established in 2019 (<https://research.ucalgary.ca/engage-research/irst>) and UBC's Indigenous Research Support Initiative, established in 2017,

(<https://irsi.ubc.ca/>), but be developed and maintained with the particular context of Manitoba, and the University of Manitoba, in mind.

- Work in conjunction and collaboration with existing units that have been serving in this role, or parts of this role, in their respective areas. This would include Ongomiizwin Research, the NCTR, and the department of Indigenous Studies in the Faculty of Arts. In different ways, each of these units have been supporting and resourcing Indigenous research, often for decades.

Unit Indigenous Research Leads

We recommend that relevant units identify an *Indigenous Research Lead* and that they work together as members of a *Council of Indigenous Research Leads*. In large faculties, this might be a department; in smaller ones, it may be a faculty or school. The *Indigenous Research Leads* would usually be a faculty member who is experienced in Indigenous research, and able to help promote and foster ethical, responsive, and engaged Indigenous research in ways that are appropriate and relevant to the discipline at hand. The Indigenous Research Leads would meet regularly as a Council under the OVPI and work with the OIR.

Required Tutorials on Academic Integrity and Research Integrity for Graduate Students

An important part of the University of Manitoba's research mandate is the training of graduate students and early career researchers. All graduate students are required to take two non-credit courses, Grad 7500: Academic Integrity, and Grad 7300: Research Integrity. These courses are delivered remotely and asynchronously and have no active, designated staff or faculty support.

At present, neither course contains any express mention of Indigenous research or Indigenous research methodology. In order to better serve the needs of students seeking

training in Indigenous research, and to meet the University's Strategic Plan with its emphasis on Indigenous Achievement and Engagement, we recommend that these courses be revised to include content on Indigenous knowledge, research, and research methodology, and to better meet the needs of Indigenous students.

Research Ethics Boards

The RRIPC Research Ethics Working Group recommends the following:

- OREC, in consultation with the Office of the Vice-President Indigenous, would develop a strategy for ensuring that submissions to all Research Ethics Boards that are for Indigenous research studies are appropriately and respectfully processed and adjudicated.
- All REBs at the University of Manitoba will require a professional development component through which committee members would become prepared to adequately and respectfully adjudicate submissions for Indigenous research studies.
- All REBs will include committee members of First Nations, Inuit, or Métis descent. Care must be taken to ensure that Indigenous faculty members, especially junior ones with already punishing service loads, are recognized and rewarded for this work. REBs should consider expanding their definition of appropriate REB members to include staff people, and non-Indigenous allies with support from Indigenous researchers and governments.
- REBs will, when submissions on Indigenous research studies are received that involves Indigenous communities and/or territories, allow for Indigenous community voice/participation in the adjudication process when feasible.

- Where necessary, relevant Indigenous community protocols will be the principal guiding frame.
- That the University of Manitoba clarify that consulting a circle of Indigenous scholars, speakers, research experts or elders is advisory to the research, and does not require the approval of the REB.
- That these recommendations be reviewed and reassessed within five years.

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