FAQs

2nd edition of the
Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

TCPS 2

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1.   Q: What is the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS or the Policy)?

A: The TCPS is the joint research ethics policy statement of the federal research agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) or "the Agencies." It was published in August 1998 to promote the ethical conduct of research involving humans. It outlines standards and procedures for research involving humans and applies to those conducting, participating in, or reviewing human research in institutions funded by either CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC. A variety of other institutions across Canada have also adopted the TCPS. An introduction is available online, as is a self-administered tutorial for those interested in a more thorough understanding of the Policy and how it is applied.

2.   Q: Why was the TCPS revised?

A: The Agencies have published the 2nd edition of the TCPS (TCPS 2) as part of their commitment to keep the Policy a living, evolving document that reflects developments in research and research ethics. Since the publication of the TCPS in 1998, the Interagency Advisory Panel and Secretariat on Research Ethics have provided numerous interpretations of the TCPS, and the Panel's working committees produced reports on specific issues or aspects of the document. However, TCPS 2 marks the first major revision to the Policy itself since its initial publication.

3.   Q: What was the revision process of the TCPS?

A: Revision of the TCPS was informed by interpretations, reports from working committees and by public consultation. The first round of consultations followed the release of a draft 2nd edition of the TCPS in December 2008. A second round of written comments followed the release of the revised draft 2nd edition of the TCPS in December 2009. Over the course of these two consultation periods, the Panel and Secretariat made presentations to approximately 2,000 members of the community and received 374 sets of written submissions from groups and individuals, resulting in nearly 2,000 pages of comments. The Panel submitted its final draft Policy to the Agencies in August 2010. The Agencies reviewed the Policy and the Presidents approved the 2nd edition of the TCPS (TCPS 2) in December 2010.

4.   Q: What are the main changes in TCPS 2 compared to the 1st edition?

A: TCPS 2 continues to be founded on respect for human dignity, but the original core principles have been consolidated from eight into three. Three new chapters and many new articles have been added. The Policy has been updated to address relevant research ethics issues that are more inclusive of the research disciplines of the three Agencies (CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC). Two companion documents have been specifically created to facilitate a comparison between the two editions. "Highlights of TCPS 2" and "Tables of Concordance" are available on the website of the Panel on Research Ethics.

5.   Q: To whom does TCPS 2 apply?

A: The scope of application of the 2010 TCPS is the same as that of the 1998 TCPS. The Policy applies to all institutions eligible to receive or administer funding from one or more of the Agencies, and members of those institutions – faculty, staff and students. The requirement to follow the TCPS as a condition of funding is contained in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Agencies and these institutions.

6.   Q: What is the official version of the TCPS?

A: TCPS 2 replaced the 1st edition of the TCPS on November 29, 2010. The electronic version of TCPS 2 is the official version of the Policy.

7.   Q: How do I navigate through the new TCPS?

A: TCPS 2 includes a glossary and an index to assist users. A number of companion documents are also provided to facilitate the transition from the 1998 to the 2010 TCPS. These include the "Tables of Concordance" and "Highlights of TCPS 2."

8.   Q: Will the online introductory tutorial for the TCPS be updated?

A: Yes. The Panel and Secretariat are currently revising the online tutorial to reflect the provisions of TCPS 2. They will inform the community of the launch date once it is set.

9.   Q: What happened to the former chapter on the good practices for research involving Aboriginal peoples?

A: The good practices included in the 1st edition of the TCPS have been expanded upon in a new chapter of TCPS 2 entitled, "Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada" (Chapter 9). Examples pertaining to research involving Aboriginal issues have been incorporated throughout the Policy. Research specifically involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples will be governed by the provisions outlined in Chapter 9 and other relevant provisions in the TCPS 2, as well as by any codes of research practice established by Aboriginal communities themselves.

10. **Q: Will the Panel undertake any other TCPS-focused educational initiatives?**

   A: Yes. The Panel is currently developing an education strategy. Information concerning this strategy will be posted on the Panel's website. In addition to the revision of the online tutorial, initiatives under consideration include regional workshops for research ethics board (REB) members and researchers in partnership with institutions, and a series of webcasts addressing common issues of interest to the research community. The Panel also plans to provide further tutorial modules focusing on specific types of research.

11. **Q: Can I submit interpretation questions on TCPS 2?**

   A: Yes. The Panel will continue to respond to written interpretation questions on TCPS 2. You may send your questions to: secretariat@pre.ethics.gc.ca. Please include an e-mail address and phone number with each inquiry. The Panel will also issue interpretive guidance on its website as issues arise. You may subscribe to become part of the circulation list for interpretations.

12. **Q: Will there be further revisions to the TCPS?**

   A: Yes. The TCPS will continue to evolve in response to the emerging needs and suggestions of all those whom this Policy is intended to serve, including the research community, participants and the public. Revisions will be made to the online version of the TCPS and will be brought to the research community's attention as they become available.

13. **Q: Can I order print copies of TCPS 2?**

   A: A PDF version of the Policy is available for printing and downloading at www.pre.ethics.gc.ca. A limited number of print copies is also available. Please send your requests to secretariat@pre.ethics.gc.ca. The Agencies encourage the community to consult the online version of TCPS 2, which constitutes the official version of the Policy. The Agencies grant permission to photocopy TCPS 2 to institutions that need to print a large number of copies.

14. **Q: Will the 1st edition of the TCPS, its interpretations and the introductory online tutorial continue to be available?**

   A: The Panel's website (www.pre.ethics.gc.ca) features an archive that will house the 1st edition of the TCPS, the interpretations of the 1st edition, committee reports and the original TCPS tutorial.

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