
Type:	C – Institutional	Last Approved: Mar. 28, 2019
Executive Responsibility:	President & Vice-Chancellor	
Administrative Responsibility:	Provost & Vice-President Academic	Procedure: 31.03.001

STATEMENT:

1. Commitment to Protect Human Participants

Vancouver Island University (VIU) is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in research involving human participants, and to ensuring that the safety, health, welfare, and rights of participants are adequately protected. Therefore, when engaging in research involving human participants or human biological remains, all those working under the aegis of the University or on VIU campuses must:

- a. Have an Application for Ethical Review approved by the Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Board (REB) (or by another process authorized by the REB) before implementation of a project. In instances where funding has been granted for the proposed research, the University will release the funds to the researcher only after REB approval is granted. All research involving humans, whether funded or not funded, must maintain REB approval for the duration of the project.
- b. Advise the VIU REB of any anticipated changes to approved procedures prior to the changes being made.
- c. Be familiar with and guided by applicable legislation, including provincial and federal legislation on privacy, consent, confidentiality, intellectual property, and current professional standards and ethical guidelines, including the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS).
- d. Follow all procedures established by relevant legislation, this policy, and the REB. This includes relevant laws, regulations and/or policies of other jurisdictions and/or countries, when research is to be conducted in other jurisdictions and/or countries.
- e. Satisfy the REB that the proposed research is consistent with standards of professional and scholarly review appropriate to the relevant field of study.

2. The Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Board (REB)

Vancouver Island University shall maintain a Research Ethics Board (see Procedure 31.03.001). The REB exercises the authority of the President in matters concerning research involving human participants and is responsible to the President in all matters concerning research involving human participants conducted under the aegis of the University. The REB has the authority to establish procedures necessary to implement this policy, including the authority to delegate to departments the responsibility for reviewing minimal risk, undergraduate student research that is conducted under faculty supervision as part of a University course.

3. Research and Scholarly Activities Exempt from Ethical Review

The requirement for ethical review applies to all research involving human participants or human biological materials except where explicitly exempted by the TCPS. Types of activities exempt from REB review include:

- a. Research that relies exclusively on publicly available information when:
 - i) The information is legally accessible to the public and appropriately protected by law; or
 - ii) The information is publicly accessible and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.
- b. Research involving the observation of people in public places where:
 - i) It does not involve an intervention staged by the researcher or direct interaction with the individuals or groups;
 - ii) Individuals or groups targeted for observation have no reasonable expectation of privacy; and
 - iii) Any dissemination of research results does not allow identification of specific individuals.
- c. Research that relies exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information or anonymous human biological materials, so long as the process of data linkage or recording or dissemination of results does not generate identifiable information.
- d. Quality assurance, quality improvement and program evaluation studies when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, where such studies are within the mandate of an organization and are normally administered in the ordinary course of the operation of the organization.
- e. Activities intended solely for pedagogical purposes.
- f. Questionnaires concerning teaching performance or course content distributed to a class by instructors, deans or others, when intended solely for program evaluation, quality assurance, and/or quality improvement purposes.

- g. Research conducted by the Office of Planning and Analysis, or by others authorized by a member of the Executive, where such research is conducted to meet external reporting requirements or to facilitate the management of the institution.
- h. Undergraduate research that meets all of the following conditions:
 - i) Are undertaken as part of course requirements;
 - ii) Are 'minimal risk', defined as research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in the aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research;
 - iii) Do not involve deception; and
 - iv) Have undergone ethical review by a Departmental Review Process approved by the REB (see Procedure 31.03.001).

If there is any doubt as to whether ethical review is required, the researcher shall seek the opinion of the REB. The REB makes the final decision on whether activities are exempt from ethical review.

4. Delegated Reviews

The following categories of research may be reviewed by a subcommittee of the REB on a delegated basis (see Procedure 31.03.001):

- a. Research that involves no more than minimal risk, defined as research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.
- b. Annual reviews of approved projects in which there has been little or no change in the on-going research.
- c. Research that has been previously approved but requires only minor modifications.
- d. Multi-jurisdictional research that has been approved by another Research Ethics Board.

5. Violation of Policy

The VIU REB has the authority to approve, reject, terminate, or require modifications to any proposed or ongoing research involving human participants not explicitly exempted from VIU REB purview. Breaches of the ethical requirements established by the REB are addressed in the University's Integrity and Conduct in Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedures (Policy 31.10 and Procedure 31.10.001).

6. Scholarly Review as Part of Ethics Review

- a. The REB shall review the ethical implications of the design and methods of the research. The primary criterion used by the VIU REB in evaluating a research project shall be ethical acceptability and, where appropriate, relevant disciplinary scholarly standards.
- b. The extent of the review for scholarly standards shall be proportional to the risks and vulnerabilities involved.
- c. Research in the humanities and the social sciences that poses, at most, minimal risk shall not normally require scholarly review.
- d. Certain types of research, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities, may legitimately have a negative effect on public figures in politics, business, labour, the arts or other walks of life, or on organizations. Such research should not be blocked through the use of risk-benefits analysis or because of the potentially negative nature of the findings. The safeguard for those in the public arena is through public debate and discourse and, in extremis, through court action.

7. Liability

Failure to acquire REB approval or to follow REB-approved procedures may attract personal liability to the researcher or, in the case of student research, supervising faculty.

8. Appeals

The VIU REB is obligated to reconsider its decisions when requested to do so by applicants, and provide comprehensive documentation of the reasons for its decision. Applicants who disagree with the REB's final decision have the right of appeal in accordance with the procedure described in VIU Procedure 31.03.001.