

2009

Research Ethics

A handbook for researchers



UNIVERSITY
OF THE FRASER VALLEY

RESEARCH & GRADUATE STUDIES

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2009-2010

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INTRODUCTION

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) requires and supports the highest ethical standards in conducting research involving human subjects, and all researchers at or associated with UFV are required to follow research ethics guidelines to ensure that their subjects' rights to privacy and dignity are respected and protected. As such, all research that involves living human subjects requires review and approval by UFV's Research Ethics Board (REB) or the designated Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) that report to it, and in accordance with UFV's Research Ethics Policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) on Research Ethics.

This handbook is designed for all faculty and students who wish to conduct research involving human subjects. Contextually, it summarizes the relevant sections of UFV's Research Ethics Policy 210.10, and the related policies on Integrity in Research 210.09 and Conflict of Interest 520.03. Practically, it also contains the guidelines explaining how researchers prepare and submit research ethics review applications to either the REB or their DREC. These procedures are abridged in a convenient *Research Ethics Decision Making Process* chart to provide a quick access guide for prospective researchers.

For more information, and the complete text of Policies 210.10, 210.09 and 520.03, go to www.ufv.ca/Research.htm.

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UFV RESEARCH ETHICS

POLICY 210.10 - SYNOPSIS

The following section synthesizes the Articles in the UFV Research Ethics Policy 210.10 relevant to the procedures UFV faculty, staff and students must follow when conducting research on human subjects. Please note that these Articles appear here in summary form only. For the full text, please refer to Policy 210.10 at www.ufv.ca/ucc/policy_manual.htm.

Definitions

1. Research

By definition, research refers to any activity that involves a systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or general knowledge. However, there is a distinction between activities directed at the acquisition of data for research in the pure sense and those designed for professional education or skill development. For more on this distinction, see *Guidelines for Course-Based Student Research Projects*.

2. Researcher

A researcher is any faculty, student, staff or community member employed directly by, or otherwise affiliated with, UFV who undertakes to conduct research as defined above. It also includes anyone who enlists UFV faculty, staff, students, or departments as subject.

3. Research Subjects

Under TCPS policy, a research subject or participant refers to any living individual or groups of individuals about or from whom a researcher either obtains data through some kind of methodological intervention or interaction with the individual or group, or uses or accesses data either containing, or that can be traced to, identifiable private information.

Procedures and Guidelines

A. Research Requiring Ethical Review

Article 1.1

- a) All research directly or indirectly involving living human subjects or participants requires review and approval by the REB or its designate in accordance with this policy and the TCPS before the research is started.
- b) However, research about a living individual clearly in the public domain (such as a politician, artist or performer), provided it is based on publicly available information,

documents, works or performances and not on interviews or access to private papers, is not subject to ethical review.

- c) Similarly, research directed at program evaluation or professional education or skill development, or based on archival or public information data bases, is not subject to ethical review. However, research based on list-mining of certain electronic websites (e.g., blogs, chatrooms, etc.) is subject to ethical review.

B. Research Ethics Board (REB)

Article 1.2

- a) All research as defined above falls under the jurisdiction of the Research Ethics Board (REB). It is constituted under the Office of the President, and has the authority to approve, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate all proposed or ongoing research involving human subjects. The REB is also charged with the education of, and consultation with, the UFV research community.
- b) As spelled out in the *Guidelines for Course-Based Student Research Projects*, certain kinds of undergraduate student research can be approved by a designated Departmental Ethics Review Committee (DREC), but is at all times still subject to full disclosure to, and final approval by, the Chair of the REB.

Articles 1.3 and 1.4

These articles deal with the rules of selection, membership, and terms of reference of the REB. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10. The important point is that the REB membership is drawn from all faculties and has a range of experience in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in different disciplines.

C. Analysis, Balance and Distribution of Risks and Benefits

Article 1.5

- a) In accordance with TCPS, the REB is charged with utilizing a proportionate approach based on the general principle that the more invasive the research, the greater degree of scrutiny or care in assessing it.
- b) In practical terms, this means that the REB must satisfy itself that the design of a research project that poses more than 'minimal risk' is capable of addressing the questions being asked in the research. In the biomedical sciences, research that does not involve more than minimal risk will depend on the type of research. In the social sciences and humanities, research that does not involve more than minimal risk shall not normally require peer review. The REB has the authority to seek expert advice when deliberating on any and all research in the natural or social sciences.
- c) At all times, and within the limitations noted above, the REB shall always weigh the possible harms and risks against the overall value of the research. Put alternately, the

REB cannot reject a research proposal on the basis of bias, unfamiliarity, or because it poses controversial questions.

D. Review of Procedures

Article 1.6

- a) In accordance with the TCPS, a proportionate approach to ethics review is based on whether or not the potential harms or risks of the research fall below or above the threshold of minimal risk, which is defined as that level of risk which accrues if potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of their everyday lives that relate to the research.
- b) According to UFV policy, and the principle of minimal risk outlined above, research on human subjects falls under either of three general categories:
 - i) research conducted by faculty or graduate students (in which case applications below the threshold of minimal risk may be expedited, but above to the full REB)
 - ii) research conducted by undergraduate students (in which case applications below the threshold are submitted to the DREC, but above to the full REB)
 - iii) courses designed primarily for research purposes (in which case applications go to the full REB).
- c) As such, and within the general guidelines of the TCPS, the procedures that researchers must follow, including the forms that must be filled out in a research ethics application and whether or not the research proposal is submitted to the REB or the DREC, please refer to the *Research Ethics Decision Making Process* and the *Guidelines for Course-Based Student Research Projects*.
- d) Researchers who are still unclear as to how to classify their research, how to file an application for ethical review, or anything else related to their proposed research on human subjects, should contact the Chair of the REB.

Articles 1.7 and 1.8

These articles deal with matters relating to REB meetings, attendance, and record keeping. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10.

Article 1.9

- a) The REB meets face-to-face, on a regular monthly basis, except during July and August, when meetings will be held as required. Meeting dates are listed by academic year at the back of this manual.
- b) Although there are exceptions, research applications that are checked off by faculty or graduate students as minimal risk will typically qualify for expedited review, and can be approved by the Chair and Vice-Chair. Applications from undergraduate students that

check as minimal risk should be submitted to the relevant DREC. Research applications that are above the threshold of minimal risk must go to the full REB.

- c) The REB, and in the case of expedited reviews the Chair and Vice-Chair, will function in a fair and impartial manner and accommodate and/or invite researchers to the meeting at which their applications are being heard. Researchers may freely enter into discussion with the REB and be assured that those discussions will be recorded in the minutes. However, researchers may not be present when the REB renders its decision.
- d) REB decisions can fall under any one of the following four categories:
 - **Approved** - approval of proposed research activity as originally submitted
 - **Minor Revisions** - application returned to the researcher for minor revisions, in which case the researcher makes the necessary changes and then resubmits to only the Chair and Vice-Chair for final approval
 - **Major Revisions** - application returned to the researcher for major revisions, in which case the researcher makes the necessary changes and then resubmits to the full REB
 - **Not Approved** - rejection of the proposed research activity
- d) The REB will render its initial decisions in a timely manner. However, the time between initial application for ethical review and final approval will depend on a range of factors, including when the application is first filed; whether it is a student application; whether or not the research proposal is minimal risk and/or expeditable; and the nature of any minor or major revisions requested.

Article 1.10

- a) Researchers have the right to request, and the REB has an obligation to provide in a timely manner, reconsideration of decisions affecting a research proposal. Such reconsideration will be guided by the principles of natural justice and a fair opportunity for researchers to be heard.
- b) In cases where researchers and the REB cannot reach agreement through the process of reconsideration, the researcher may seek an appeal to the UFV Research Ethics Appeal Board (REAB), a body constituted under the Office of the President, but whose membership is not the same as the REB.

Articles 1.12, 1.13 and 1.14

These articles deal with the potential conflict of interest applicable to REB members, review procedures for ongoing or longitudinal research and review of research in other countries. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10. See also the summary of the UFV Conflict of Interest Policy 520.03.

Free and Informed Consent

A. Requirement for Free and Informed Consent

Article 2.1

- a) The principle of free and informed consent lies at the heart of research ethics. In practical terms, this means that research governed by this policy may begin only when prospective subjects, or authorized third parties that represent them, have received the opportunity to give free and informed consent about their participation, and that this is maintained throughout the entire research process.
- b) Evidence of free and informed consent shall normally be obtained in writing. Where written consent is culturally unacceptable, or there are good reasons for not securing consent in writing, the procedures used to seek free and informed consent will be documented.
- c) The REB may approve a consent procedure which alters the principles of (a) above, provided the REB concludes that the research falls below the threshold of minimal risk; that the alteration is unlikely to adversely affect the rights of the subject; that the research could not be carried out without the alteration; that subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation is secured; and that the alteration does not involve a therapeutic intervention.
- d) In the context of free and informed consent, researchers should also familiarize themselves with the contents of UFV Integrity in Research and Scholarship Policy 210.09. A synopsis of the relevant sections of this policy is included in this manual, below.

B. Voluntariness

Article 2.2

Free and informed consent must be voluntarily given, without manipulation, undue influence or coercion.

C. Naturalistic Observation

Article 2.3

Although there may be exceptions (such as in the case of political rallies, demonstrations or public meetings in which participants are deliberately seeking public visibility), research involving naturalistic observation is subject to REB review.

D. Informing Potential Subjects

- a) Researchers must provide to prospective subjects, or their authorized representatives, full disclosure of all information relevant to free and informed consent. Put alternately, researchers must ensure that potential subjects are given adequate opportunity to consider their participation.

- b) In practical terms, this means researchers must, at minimum, provide prospective subjects with information that the individual is being invited to participate in a research project; a comprehensible statement of research purpose; the identities of the researcher(s); and the expected duration and nature of the research and scope of their participation.
- c) Researchers must provide a description of all reasonably foreseeable harms and benefits that could arise from their participation; an assurance that prospective subjects are free not to participate and have a right to withdraw at any time without prejudice to pre-existing entitlements; the possibility of any commercialization of research findings; and any actual or perceived conflict of interest on the part of the researcher(s), institutions or sponsors.

E. Competence

Article 2.5

Subject to any legal requirements, individuals who are not legally competent to give free and informed consent can only be asked to become research subjects when the research project can only be carried out using individuals in the identified group(s); free and informed consent will be sought from their authorized representatives; and the research does not expose them to more than minimal risk.

Article 2.6

For research involving incompetent individuals, researchers must demonstrate to the REB how free and informed consent will be sought from the authorized representative (not including the researcher or any member of the research team) and the continued free and informed consent of the authorized representative so long as the subject remains legally incompetent. In the event that the subject becomes competent during the research, his or her free and informed consent will be sought as condition of continuing participation.

Article 2.8

This article deals with research in emergency health situations. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10

Privacy and Confidentiality

A. Accessing Private Information: Personal Interviews

Article 3.1

Subject to exceptions outlined in Article 1.1 above, researchers intending to conduct interviews to secure identifiable personal information shall secure REB approval for the interview procedure and script, and the free and informed consent of interviewees as required in Article 2.4 above.

B. Accessing Private Information: Surveys and Questionnaires

Article 3.2

- a) Subject to Article 3.1 above, researchers shall secure REB approval for obtaining identifiable information and must include such considerations as the type of data to be collected; the purpose for which the data will be used; any limits on the use, disclosure and retention of the data; and appropriate safeguards for security and confidentiality of the data.
- b) Researchers must disclose to subjects all modes of observation or data gathering (e.g., photographs or videos) or access to information (e.g., sound recordings) in the research that might allow identification of particular subjects.
- c) Researchers must notify subjects of any anticipated secondary use of identifiable data; any anticipated linkage of data gathered in the research with other data about subjects; and provisions of confidentiality resulting from the research.

C. Secondary Use of Data

Article 3.3

REB approval is required if researchers wish to access secondary data containing identifiable information. In practical terms, researchers need to demonstrate that identifying information is necessary for the research; that they will take the steps necessary to protect individual privacy; and that individuals to whom the data refer have not objected to secondary use.

Article 3.4

The REB may also require that a researcher's access to secondary data involving identifiable information depend upon the informed consent of those who contributed the data; contain an appropriate strategy for informing the subjects; and, involve consultation with representatives of those who contributed the data.

Article 3.5

Unless already secured through the process of free and informed consent, researchers wishing to contact individuals to whom secondary data refer shall first seek authorization by the REB.

D. Data Linkage

Article 3.6

Any implications of approved data linkage in which research subjects may be identifiable must be approved by the REB.

Conflict of Interest for Researchers

Article 4.1

Researchers must disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest to the REB. In such cases, researchers are also directed to familiarize themselves with UFV Conflict of Interest Policy 520.03. A synopsis of the relevant sections of this policy is included in this manual.

Inclusion in Research

Articles 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3

Except in situations where specific cohorts are being targeted in a research proposal, researchers shall not exclude prospective or actual subjects on the basis of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10.

Clinical Trials, Genetics, and Research on Human Tissues

Articles 6.1 through 6.4, 7.1 through 7.7, 8.1 through 8.5, and 9.1 through 9.3

While these kinds of research typically do not occur at UFV, the articles in these sections govern a range of research in pharmaceuticals, clinical trials and non-therapeutic interventions, genetic counseling, alteration and banking, and the use or manipulation of human embryos, gametes and tissues. For details, please refer to Policy 210.10

RESEARCH ETHICS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Course-Based Student Research

| Is it minimal risk? (complete <i>Checklist for Minimal Risk</i>) | Category | Description | Action Required |
|--|---|---|--|
| No | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any research that is more than minimal risk | Full UFV REB review |
| Yes | Professional Education & Skill Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily for professional education and/or skill development Instructor guided | No action required. Proceed according to accepted standards of professional conduct |
| Yes | 1. Research Course Full Course Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily for conducting research or experimenting with method and/or subject pool Instructor driven Whole course Uniformity of projects | Full UFV REB review. Request for designation of course as a REB Approved Course for three (3) year term |
| Yes | 2. Research Course Assignment Only | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student research projects within a course Directed studies | DREC review for individual projects. DREC recommendations go to REB Chair for final approval. |
| Yes | 3. Non-Research Course with Research Assignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research assignment | |

See *Guidelines for Course-based Student Research Projects* for more information

Faculty / Graduate Student / Institutional Research *

| Is it minimal risk? | Category | Description | Action Required |
|---------------------|----------|--|--|
| No | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any research that is more than minimal risk | Full UFV REB review |
| Yes | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research involving human subjects that is minimal risk | Expedited Review by REB Chair and Vice-Chair |

* Research conducted by students for faculty is considered faculty research and must follow the procedures for faculty as per UFV REB Policy 210.10, D1.1d.

REB – Research Ethics Board

DREC – Departmental Research Ethics Committee

Guidelines For Course-Based Student Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Introduction

The guidelines and procedures in this document apply to research projects involving human subjects and conducted by an entire class or individual students or small groups within a class. Such projects are generally of two types:

- projects designed by a student or group of students and in which the student(s) have some freedom in designating the subject pool and/or methodology of the research
- projects designed by the instructor which share a common methodology and/or subject pool, and assigned to the entire class as a regular course component

Defining student research

A student research project is defined as any research program that:

- has students conducting interviews in individual or focus group sessions, or engaging in various kinds of monitoring or participant observation
- has students designing and/or administering tests, questionnaires, and/or analyzing primary data
- has students obtaining and/or analyzing secondary data
- has students engage in any other activities which would be considered research in the disciplinary tradition of the course being taught

These guidelines do not apply to students assisting faculty or faculty-directed research outside of class, or to students engaged in independent research for honors essays, theses or dissertations. Any such research projects must be submitted to either the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) or the UFV Research Ethics Board (REB) as outlined in the UFV Research Ethics Policy 210.10.

These guidelines do not apply to any activities designed by the instructor solely for professional education or skill development purposes and not embedded in a research framework as outlined in UFV Policy 210.10. Such projects are not subject to either university or departmental review so long as they align with appropriate professional standards, codes of conduct or review processes required by the relevant faculty.

Distinguishing research from professional education and skill development

Distinguishing projects classified as research from those classified merely as information gathering for professional education or skill development purposes is as follows.

1. Data recording and collecting activities qualify as research when any of the following apply:

- the intent is to educate students on research processes used to explore and expand existing theories, paradigms, or concepts
 - students compare new techniques, practices or programs with standard approaches in order to determine methodological effectiveness
 - the results or findings are written in a format that would be acceptable for a research journal or academic conference presentation
2. Data recording and collecting activities qualify as professional education or skill development when any of the following apply:
- the intent is to use information to provide diagnosis, identification of appropriate interventions, or general advice for a client
 - the intent is to develop skills which are considered standard practice within a profession (e.g., observation, assessment, intervention, evaluation, auditing, etc.)
 - the information gathering process is part of the normal relationship between student and participant (e.g., classroom teacher and student interaction, nurse and patient, social worker and client, etc.)
 - the data collected or conclusions to be drawn are disseminated in private, either within the class or with the client(s)

Instructors who are uncertain as to how to properly classify any research, learning or skill development project should contact either the relevant DREC or the UFV REB.

General principles governing ethical reviews

These guidelines meet all the requirements of University of the Fraser Valley's (UFV) Research Ethics Policy 210.10 and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

As such, the UFV REB and the DRECS all utilize a proportionate approach based on the general principle that the more invasive the research the greater should be the care in assessing it.

Potential harms to, or infringements on subjects and their rights to privacy are usually identified and evaluated as risks, which are defined in terms of the magnitude of possible harm to the subject(s) and the probability of its occurrence. Risks can range from minimal to significant to substantial and are evaluated primarily from the viewpoint of the potential subject(s).

In all instances, the UFV REB and DRECs evaluate potential harms from a baseline of the concept of minimal risk, which is defined by the Tri-Council policy as that level of risk that accrues "if potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her life that relate to the research."

Above this threshold of minimal risk, the research will warrant a higher degree of scrutiny and greater provision for the protection of the interests of the subjects. The concept of minimal risk

also applies to the level or kind of inducements or offers intended to excessively encourage subject participation in a particular research project.

As a general rule, a research project will qualify as minimal risk provided the following conditions apply:

- participants are competent adults
- there is no physical, emotional, psychological, sociological, or economic risk
- topics discussed and questions asked can be handled in ways which cause little or no discomfort or distress
- methodologies are non-invasive
- neither deception nor partial disclosure is involved
- participants do not experience any excessive inducement to participate

If the activity qualifies as professional education or skill development as defined above, no further action is required.

Application for Designation as a REB Approved Course

Category 1 - Research Course – Full Course Review

If the research project is designed by the instructor, shares a common methodology and/or subject pool, and is assigned to the entire class as a regular course component, the instructor should apply direct to the UFV REB for a Designation of Course as a Research Ethics Approved Course, as outlined in Appendix C of this schedule.

These applications are reviewed and evaluated in the same way as any faculty based research project as specified in the UFV Research Ethics Policy 210.10. Once approved, such courses are authorized for three (3) academic years from date of issuance of the Certificate of Approval so long as there are no subsequent changes to the subject pool, research methodology, or level of instructor supervision of projects.

Application for Student Research Assignment

Category 2 - Research Course - Assignment Only

If the research project is designed by a student or group of students and there is some freedom in designating the subject pool and/or methodology of the research, the student should apply to the relevant DREC.

Category 3 - Non-Research Course With Research Assignment

If the research project is a small assignment in a non-research course the student should apply to the appropriate DREC.

1. Students should begin their application for ethical review by completing and signing the *Checklist for Minimal Risk*. Students are advised to seek the assistance of the course instructor in order to ensure that the project is within the range of minimal risk.

2. If the project is deemed minimal risk the student will submit his/her application to the DREC and must include all of the following:
 - a) a completed Student Request for Ethical Review Form
 - b) a completed *Checklist for Minimal Risk*
 - c) all questionnaires, interview forms, or other survey instruments used
 - d) consent form (if applicable)
 - e) any supporting documentation from partner organizations (if applicable)
 - f) any supporting documentation from client organizations (if applicable)

Students should ensure that while all elements of an ethics review application are clear, this is especially the case with informed consent, which must be in a plain and simple language that all potential subjects will understand. It is understood that the process for obtaining consent may vary according to the research setting (i.e., telephone, questionnaire, interview, etc.) or the culture of the subject(s) (i.e., international, Aboriginal, etc.).

At minimum, the consent form (or equivalent) must include the elements identified on the checklist on the Student Request for Ethical Review form

3. The DREC will review the project application in either a face-to-face meeting or electronic meeting, including all the forms, and determine whether or not the research is within the range of minimal risk. If the application is not within the range of minimal risk as determined by the *Checklist for Minimal Risk*, then the DREC must forward the application and supporting documents directly to the UFV REB.
4. If it is within range of minimal risk, the DREC may respond in one of the following ways:
 - a) by determining that the project requires no revisions, in which case the project may proceed to the REB for final approval.
 - b) by requiring minor revisions, in which case the researcher should effect the required changes and resubmit to the DREC
 - c) by requiring major revisions, in which case the research is not approved, and the researcher must substantially revise and resubmit to the DREC

The UFV REB recognizes that as students sometimes develop an understanding of research methods interactively over time, it may not be possible or desirable for them to submit all components of an ethics review application prior to the start of the research. The DREC is authorized to review applications consisting of only the *Checklist for Minimal Risk* and request for ethical review form, provided all survey instruments and consent and/or other forms are reviewed as they become available and before being incorporated into the research program.

5. The chair of the DREC sends the application and supporting documents, minutes of the DREC meeting (or *complete* email thread of electronic meeting), and recommendation of approval to the chair of the UFV REB. The DREC will forward only complete applications to the REB for final approval prior to data collection.

6. The UFV REB Chair will review the application and recommendation and may either:
 - a) approve the application and send Certificate of Approval to the student (cc the DREC)
 - b) not approve the application, and redirect it to the DREC outlining its reasons for not approving it and any modifications required in order to meet approval if and when it is resubmitted.

UFV INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH

POLICY 210.09 - SYNOPSIS

The following section synthesizes the Articles in UFV's Policy 210.09 governing integrity of research and scholarship, and fundamental to the conduct of ethical research under Policy 210.10, summarized above. Please note these Articles appear here in summary form only. For the full text, please refer to Policy 210.09.

Purpose, Intent and Policy

In accordance with the principle of adhering to the highest ethical standards in research, the obligation of maintaining integrity in research and scholarship rests primarily on faculty, staff and students conducting research as defined in 210.10 above. Professional misconduct in research, including the failure to comply with the terms of Policy 210.10, is an offence which, depending on its severity, can be subject to a range of disciplinary measures, including dismissal. For the full text on the procedures governing the determination of, and response to, allegations of misconduct, please refer to Policy 210.09.

Principles

Maintaining integrity in research and scholarship rests on:

- a) using disciplinary and scientific rigor in acquiring, analyzing, using and storing data; not fabricating or falsifying data or results; allowing all collaborators access to the data; and ensuring original records are retained for five years or as long as there is a reasonable possibility that the data could be required
- b) recognizing the substantive contributions of all collaborators in research, whether published or not
- c) ensuring that authorship of published work includes all those, and only those, who contributed materially to the conception, design, interpretation, execution and reporting the results of the research
- d) obtaining written approval for the use of all new information, concepts or data acquired from original manuscripts, training or applications for research funding
- e) seeking and obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Board before engaging in any research involving human subjects or participants
- f) seeking and obtaining approval from the Animal Care Committee before engaging in any research involving animals
- g) seeking and obtaining approval from the Biosafety Officer or the Radiation Safety Officer before engaging in any research involving biohazards or ionizing radiation
- h) complying with external grant regulations as they relate to the operational or financial aspects of research grants and awards

- i) revealing to UFV in writing any financial or other interest in any company that contracts research with UFV; material financial interest includes ownership, major stock holdings, directorships, and significant honoraria or consulting fees
- j) revealing to UFV in writing any potential conflict of interest, financial or other as spelled out in Policy 520.03

UFV CONFLICT OF INTEREST

POLICY 520.03 - SYNOPSIS

The following section synthesizes the Articles in UFV's Policy 520.03 governing conflict of interest, and fundamental to the conduct of ethical research under Policy 210.10, summarized above. Please note these Articles appear here in summary form only. For the full text, please refer to Policy 520.03.

Policy and Definitions

In accordance with the principle of adhering to the highest ethical standards in research, this policy defines conflict of interest, the process by which members of the UFV community avoid situations in which they may be in conflict, and disciplinary procedures in the event that a breach occurs. For details on procedures, please refer to Policy 520.03.

By definition, a conflict of interest exists when a member of the UFV community, defined as any employee, volunteer, student, or alumnus, has an interest sufficient to cause a reasonable person to question whether the person could be compromised in the impartial discharge of his or her duties. In practical terms, this means members of the community must remove themselves from situations where conflict of interest may arise.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when a member of the UFV community obtains or gains an advantage to the member or the member's family or business; when it causes an adverse effect on UFV interests; or when a relationship affects a member's capacity to exercise due care, skill and judgment on behalf of UFV and in the performance of the individual's duties. Common situations might include, but are not be limited to:

- a) participating in any decision where the member has a pecuniary interest, as in the member's capacity as proprietor, partner, shareholder in an organization or corporation, whether private or public, profit or non-profit
- b) making an investment in any situation in anticipation of UFV taking a material interest therein, or resulting from facts not known by or available to the general public
- c) participating in the appointment, promotion, discipline or performance review affecting a relative or partner
- d) participating in decisions regarding grades, financial aid, awards, academic program or thesis or paper, providing references to a relative or partner

A conflict of interest could arise if gifts, gratuities or favours of any kind are exchanged between a member and any individual or company whose relationship with UFV entails the member's sphere of opportunities. So long as they are reported to the immediate supervisor, the policy does not prohibit common business courtesies such as receiving a meal or gift of nominal value, or restrict the recognition of donors to UFV.

TIPS AND POINTERS

Because all research on humans takes place in a cultural context, the field of research ethics is in a state of permanent evolution and policies do change. That said, when it comes to actually completing and submitting your application for ethical review, there are some constants. Over and above the information above, the following bullets below offer some useful hints and warnings that apply to all applications for ethical review at UFV

- Always fill out your *Checklist for Minimal Risk* first. If it checks as minimal risk it is probably expeditable.
- If it is not minimal risk, watch your submission timelines. Applications to the UFV REB must be in the Research and Graduate Studies office one week prior to the next regular meeting (see *REB Meeting Schedule* inside back cover). If they are not, they will have to wait for the meeting of the following month. Students submitting to a DREC should check with their department.
- Make sure you submit all documents. At bare minimum, these include
 - the *Checklist for Minimal Risk*
 - application for ethical review
 - any and all letters of consent
 - any and all letters of information
 - all survey instruments (questionnaire, interview script, etc.)
 - ethics approvals from collaborating institutions
 - for thesis projects, the thesis advisory committee's approval is required
- When filling out applications, complete all boxes. If the box is not relevant, at least record 'N/A'.
- Write your applications and supporting documents in grammatically correct English throughout. Applications for ethical review remain confidential, but consent letters, questionnaires, etc. circulate in public.
- Write your applications in plain English. While REB members are familiar with a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, they are less familiar with disciplinary jargon. Special terminology should be used consistently throughout the application and between the application and supporting documents. Spell out acronyms the first time used.
- Handwritten applications will not be accepted. Fill them out electronically and submit directly to the REB Administrative Assistant, Deborah Block in the Research & Graduate Studies office. Sending applications to only the Chair will slow down the process of duplication to the REB membership, and especially if it is otherwise expeditable.
- Throughout your application, be especially clear on:
 - the identities of everyone involved in the research, including, but not limited to, the primary and, if any, secondary investigators, and any and all individuals, institutions or collaborating agencies otherwise involved in the research process (e.g., persons

- distributing questionnaires, intermediaries in recruitment or contact, persons assisting in data management, etc.)
- the duration of the research (you are allowed one year default so if in doubt, take at least that)
 - your methodology (reviewers do need to know, in plain language, exactly what you are doing and how)
 - how and whom you are recruiting, and who is actually doing the recruitment
 - how you will ensure the principle of free and informed consent, and protect the confidentiality and privacy of your research subjects
 - exactly what you are going to do with the data, indicating whether it is in primary or aggregate form; who will have access to it and at what stage in the research process; how and where you are going to secure the data; how long you will retain the data; whether or not the data will be used for purposes above and beyond the terms of the research being submitted for review; and that if the data is to be shared with other parties, you have a signed data sharing agreement in place
- The principle of free and informed consent lies at the heart of ethical research. Letters of consent must fully disclose all foreseeable risks and benefits of the research. In cases where additional letters of assent are required for adolescents or other individuals under the age of majority, write them in a language that the target population will understand. Letters of consent, assent or information should not be excessively long, but must be clear on:
 - what you are researching and why
 - who the researcher(s) are
 - all reasonably foreseeable possible risks and benefits of a physical, mental, emotional, financial, or other relevant measure
 - how you will ensure your potential subjects anonymity and confidentiality
 - what you are going to do with the data, whether in primary or aggregate form, how long and in what form you are going to keep it, any possible future use of the data, and where it will be secured
 - a rider to the effect that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty to themselves
 - a rider to the effect that participants having any concern or question about the research can contact the Yvon Dandurand, AVP of Research & Graduate Studies (if other collaborating institutions are involved, this rider should include their relevant offices also)
 - Finally, do not believe the myth. The REB is not an inquisition or designed to make life difficult for researchers. It is to help you process your applications as expeditiously as possible, and to ensure that your research accords with the highest ethical standards required by UFV and consistent with the TCPS. If at any time you are unsure of how to proceed, contact your nearest REB member or the Chair

WEBSITES TO VISIT

Tri Council Policy Statement - <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/index.cfm>

TCPS Tutorial - <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/welcome.cfm>

The Tutorial for the Tri Council Policy Statement for ethical conduct of research involving human subjects helps to educate the research community about the TCPS. It also facilitates the use, interpretation and implementation of the TCPS.

UFV Research Ethics Board <http://www.ufv.ca/Research.htm>

UFV Policies - http://www.ufv.ca/ucc/policy_manual.htm

REB MEETING SCHEDULE 2008-2009

| Meeting Date Thursday | Time | Place | Deadline for Submission 12:00 noon Wednesday |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|---|
| October 1 | 3:00 pm | A229 | September 23 |
| October 29 | 3:00 pm | A229 | October 21 |
| November 26 | 3:00 pm | A229 | November 18 |
| *December 24 | 3:00 pm | A229 | December 16 |
| January 28 | 3:00 pm | A229 | January 20 |
| February 25 | 3:00 pm | A229 | February 17 |
| March 25 | 3:00 pm | A229 | March 17 |
| April 22 | 3:00 pm | A229 | April 14 |
| May 20 | 3:00 pm | A229 | May 12 |
| *June 17 | 3:00 pm | A229 | June 9 |

Generally, the REB meets Week 4 Thursdays of the UFV meeting schedule, from 3-6 p.m.

Requests for Ethical Review must be received by the Research Ethics Board (c/o Research & Industry Liaison Office, Yvette.Boutin@ufv.ca) by **noon on Wednesday, one week prior** to the meeting.

Researchers will be invited to attend a portion of the meeting in order to answer questions or concerns.

** Meeting date may change.*

www.ufv.ca/Research.htm