

**EVALUATION OF LEVEL OF RISK AND ETHICAL CONCERN
FOR FULL/EXPEDITED SUBMISSIONS**

Any project which is deemed to be of greater than minimal risk *may* require a full review at a monthly GREB meeting. Based on Article 1.6 of the Tri Council Policy Statement “The standard for minimal risk is commonly defined as follows: if potential participants 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 everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk”. (Tri-Council Policy Statement Article C1).

The following are examples of research studies which *may* cause concern with regard to the level of risk involved. If your research involves any of these circumstances, the associated risks and measures to mitigate such risk should be addressed on the application form and evaluated by the Unit REB and GREB as to whether the level of risk is sufficiently high to warrant a full review by the GREB.

- Studies which could put participants at political, physical, psychological, or economic risk
- Studies involving serious deception (Some examples of serious deception are: giving negative feedback about an important aspect of self; creating a fearful environment; convincing someone they have a serious medical condition; covert recording of individuals with the intent of obtaining consent after the fact).
- Studies involving vulnerable populations (e.g. children; physically, cognitively, or mentally challenged individuals; economically marginalized individuals)
- Studies in which there is an existing employer/professional relationship between the researcher and participants (e.. manager-employer, therapist-client)
- Studies which acquire sensitive or personal information
- Studies involving more than minimal stress or anxiety
- Studies in which the investigator does not intend to obtain written consent
- Studies in which there is a significant difference in language and/or cultural sensitivities between the institutions, researchers and subject
- Studies in which there are significant risks to researchers inherent in the context of the research activity
- Studies which involve novel or ethically challenging research

Aboriginal Research:

From Aboriginal perspectives, the formal ethics review process as governed by Tri-Council guidelines does not necessarily coincide with the concerns of Aboriginal communities. Therefore this is one reason that *all* research conducted with aboriginal communities or individuals is brought to full review by the GREB where there is aboriginal expertise and a formal link to the Aboriginal Council. Researchers should examine the Tri-Council Guidelines Section 6 entitled “Research involving Aboriginal Peoples” to: 1) determination of projects that belong to this subgroup; 2) illustrate ethical issues and conduct of research; and, 3) indicate good practices for researchers.

Within the Tri-Council Guidelines are general and specific reasons guidelines for research with aboriginal individuals or groups. In all cases, the directive is to consider the interests of the aboriginal group when the following considerations apply:

- Property or private information belonging to the group as a whole is studied or used
- Leaders of a group are involved in the identification of potential participants
- The research is designed to analyze or describe characteristics of the group
- Individuals are selected on behalf of, or otherwise represent, the group

Some Aboriginal communities have their own set of formal research protocols. Researchers must learn what they are, and abide by them. If the community does not have formal protocols, the researcher must inform the community leadership (band administration or traditional leadership) about their research concerning any aspect of the collective life of the community (for example, about housing, politics, land, community history, etc). In these cases, GREB will normally require approval from a community leader or their delegate. If interviewing individual community members about their personal life experiences, normally the GREB will accept individual consent that does not necessary require the community’s leadership approvals. The GREB will review each application individually when identifying the appropriate level of community or individual approval.

International Research:

Research conducted in foreign locations or research conducted in Canada involving groups with possible cultural sensitivities *may* have circumstances that require special attention to risks to participants, researchers and/or communities. Such risks and any measures to mitigate them should be addressed, where appropriate, in the REB submission and the submission may require a full review. Examples of issues which should be addressed fully are:

- Risks to researchers inherent in the location of the research (eg. war-torn countries, volatile conditions)

- Risks to research subjects, particularly those due to power imbalances (eg. between subject and researcher; between subject and individuals/groups receiving research results)
- Language and cultural sensitivities

In addition to the above, any requirements for local permissions, licenses or agreements should be investigated and such requirements be in place before the research begins. As well, any research to be conducted off-campus must comply with the Queen's University Off-Campus Activity Safety Policy.