

Indigenous Research Involving Humans: Scope and Process

Scope of Dalhousie Research Ethics Boards Oversight

Research Ethics Board (REB) approval is required when conducting **research with living people**, with **information provided by living people** or with **human biological materials** (from living or deceased individuals). Research involving humans includes conducting research, including data analysis, with information provided by human participants, regardless of whether or not that information was collected by you (for instance, it could be provided by a data custodian or shared by a research team member).

1. Is your project research? Yes ☐ No ☐

For the purposes of research involving humans, **research** is defined as an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation.

Research **exempt** from research ethics board review is described in [TCPS articles 2.2-2.4](#). Activities not requiring REB review are described in [TCPS articles 2.5 and 2.6](#).

2. Does your project involve humans? Yes ☐ No ☐

Human participants are defined as individuals whose data, or responses to interventions, stimuli or questions by the researcher, are relevant to answering the research questions ([TCPS article 2.1](#)).

3. Are you eligible for Dalhousie Research Ethics Board oversight?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Does your research fall under the Boards' **auspices or jurisdiction** as described in the University's [policy](#) on ethical conduct for research involving humans? Is the research conducted by members of the University, or those employed by members of the University, acting in their university capacity. Members of the University include: faculty (full-time, part-time or emeritus), staff, students, medical residents, fellows, research associates, visiting or adjunct scholars, or any others associated with research at the University; and/or

is research conducted using University resources that are not generally available to the public, including but not limited to facilities, human data, and human biological materials (including data or biologicals that are in the custody of the University or members of the University)?

If you answered **YES** to all of these questions (questions 1 – 3), you are conducting research involving humans and must secure Dalhousie University [research ethics board approval](#) for your research involving humans.

4. Does your research also involve **First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada**? Yes ☐ No ☐

Where the research is likely to affect the welfare of an Indigenous community, or communities, to which prospective participants belong, researchers shall seek engagement with the relevant community. The conditions under which engagement is required include, but are not limited to:

- a. research conducted on First Nations, Inuit or Métis lands;
- b. recruitment criteria that include Indigenous identity as a factor for the entire study or for a subgroup in the study;
- c. research that seeks input from participants regarding a community's cultural heritage, artefacts, traditional knowledge or unique characteristics;
- d. research in which Indigenous identity or membership in an Indigenous community is used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data; and
- e. interpretation of research results that will refer to Indigenous communities, peoples, language, history or culture.

([TCPS article 9.1](#))

If your project involves collaboration with First Nations, you are encouraged to complete the [Fundamentals of OCAP®](#) course.

If you answered **YES** to question 4, or are unsure, please **contact** the Office of Research Services **Indigenous Research Facilitator** (indigenousresearch@dal.ca) to discuss your project and appropriate community engagement.

Timing and Process for Research Ethics Application

Your application to a Dalhousie University research ethics board is the **final step** after all other consultations, engagement activities, funding, agreements and permissions have been finalized. The application must include:

- a. Research agreements with relevant Indigenous communities to clarify and confirm mutual expectations and commitments (see [TCPS article 9.11](#)).

Agreements typically set out the purpose of the research and detail mutual responsibilities in project design, data collection and management; analysis and interpretation; credit due to knowledge holders; protection (and non-disclosure) of restricted knowledge; sharing of benefits or royalties flowing from intellectual property where applicable; production of reports; co-authorship; dissemination of results; and a conflict resolution process. Provisions for any anticipated secondary use of the information or human biological material, and associated data collected, should also be addressed and documented in the research agreement.

Dalhousie Legal Counsel Office's [Contract Approval and Signing Policy](#) requires that agreements that relate to Indigenous research are subject to mandatory legal review. Contact ORSLegal@dal.ca for questions or assistance.

- b. Confirmation that any required permissions will be secured, including any Indigenous ethics review approvals required (for example Nunavut Research Institute, Nunatsiavut Government, etc.);
- c. Documentation (email is fine) from the Indigenous Research Facilitator that confirms that you have engaged with them in the preparation of the research plan and/or of the research ethics submission.