
Title:	Research Ethics Policy
Type:	Academic
Policy #:	AC100-23
Responsibility:	Academic Policy Committee
Approved by:	Board of Governors, December 2005
Revised:	
Review date:	

1. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that research connected with the College is consistent with principles of Centennial College policies, procedures and values. This Policy covers all research activities connected with Centennial College and constitutes a preamble to the Applied Research Ethics Policies.

Research Ethics is defined a set of moral principles researchers use when researching a topic. These principles encompass all areas of the research project especially those related to participants in the study. Research is defined as the “systematic investigation of [an area of study] aimed at uncovering new information (discovering data) and/or interpreting relations among ... the parts (theorizing)” (Vogt, 1993).

2. Rationale

The reason for having a Research Ethics Policy is to minimize the College’s liabilities associated with research at the institution or research undertaken by members of the College community who may use the College name to gain access to other settings. These liabilities include, but are not limited to, guarding against ill effects to participants.

3. Scope

This policy covers all research activities connected with Centennial College. The Research Ethics Policy is not concerned with evaluating the research design. The Policy is concerned that research conducted should conform with Centennial College policies and procedures.

4. Accountabilities

This policy will be administered by the Research Ethics Committee. The Committee is responsible for reviewing research projects as outlined in the procedures section and ensuring that a complete review of the application has been conducted. The day-to-day operation of the committee will be managed by the Applied Research Director. The committee will be overseen by the Executive Vice President Academic.

5. Membership

The members will be selected through consultation with interested members of Centennial College. The membership and terms will be establish according to the tri-council statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, Canadian Council on Animal Care, Guide

to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals, Guide Vol. 1 (2nd Ed.), 1993 and the Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines (1996 2nd ed.), <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/ols-bsl/index.html>.

Terms of office will be two years. The Chair will be elected by the committee every two years. For the first year, the Chair and half of the committee members will serve for 3 year-terms, helping to stagger committee members' term of appointment. Members of the committee will be trained in using the standards of the committee when reviewing proposals. The committee will review its membership every year. The evaluation processes will be determined by the first Research Ethics Committee. An orientation session will be conducted for the committee anytime there is more than a 50% change in membership.

6. When should Research Projects be presented to the Committee?

All research projects that are in any way connected with Centennial College should be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee. These projects include those where:

- The College name or affiliation is used in a proposal or contract bid to an outside research supporting agency or in a proposed partnership or alliance, or in the research activity; or
- The College participates as a sponsor financially or through provision of release time, study leave, use of facilities, use of College personnel, administration of a grant from an outside agency, or other College resources; or
- College employees or students are participants or subjects for whom the College has responsibilities to regulate legal or ethical aspects of the research or where databases will be used which contain information about the aforementioned groups.

This includes:

- Requests received from Centennial employees who wish to do research (e.g., part of academic studies); or intend to use their position at the college for applying for or obtaining research funds; or
- Research proposals that name Centennial employees, who conduct research external to Centennial College and who use their status at the College to gain entry to the research site and/or participants, must be submitted to the Research and Ethics Committee for approval;
- Requests to do research within the Centennial community received from persons or organizations external to Centennial College.

In the case of tight timelines for grant applications, preliminary approval based on the agreed upon quorum will be given only to allow a grant to be request to be sent for funding review. Evaluation of the proposal will continue to focus on the attached procedures and evaluation process, but in a less in-depth process. When the study is funded, and the research design is finalized, the full proposal shall go through the in-depth committee review.

Ongoing information gathering activities that are part of normal College operations do not necessarily fall within the mandate of the Research Ethics Committee (e.g., First Year Student Survey; Student Success Survey; curriculum development, data collection to support College direction; teacher directed course assignment projects; course evaluation). There is an understanding that the research should follow minimum ethical standards such that if it were submitted to this committee for review, it would be acceptable. This committee may be asked to periodically review ongoing research projects and provide guidance on their ethical implications.

7. Decision Making

Every effort will be made to reach decisions by consensus. Committee members will be required to declare any conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest arises, then the committee member(s) will be asked to leave the room and/or abstain from the committee's discussion of and decision on the project.

College staff, faculty and external experts may be consulted on an ad-hoc basis as needed. In all cases, confidentiality will be maintained. Voting will be in person, in writing, or by voice or electronic mail on or before the meeting date. In the event consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will be sufficient. If there is no consensus and no majority vote is reached with the committee's decision, the Vice President Academic will be consulted for resolution. The Vice President's decision will be conveyed in written form to all concerned. If the researchers receive a "permission is denied" response, they will have the option of re-submitting their proposal. Their re-submission should include a letter outlining how the issues that were stated in the letter of denial from the Vice President Academic are addressed in the revised proposal.

Outcomes possible from a review include:

- accepted without revisions;
- accepted with revisions noted;
- permission denied with reasons outlined (e.g., student survey fatigue) and an opportunity for re-submission possible. The re-submission should include a letter outlining how the issues that were stated in the letter from the committee or Vice President Academic are addressed in the revised proposal.

8. Meetings

The meetings schedule must comply with the Tri-Council Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, Canadian Council on Animal Care, Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals, Guide Vol. 1 (2nd Ed.), 1993 and the Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines (1996 2nd ed.), <http://www.hcsc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/ols-bsl/index.html>.

9. Cross Reference to Other Existing Policies or Regulations

- Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures (pending approval)
- TRI-Council Statement, Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
- Canadian Council on Animal Care, Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals, Guide Vol. 1 (2nd Ed.), 1993.

- Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines (1996 2nd ed.), <http://www.hcsc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/ols-bsl/index.html>

10. Archive

Selected non-confidential final reports from projects that have obtained ethical approval will be available in the Learning Resource Centres.

11. Contact Person

Director, Applied Research