

POLICY

Policy Title	Indigenous Research Policy: Conducting Research with and for Indigenous Peoples and Communities
Policy Holder	
Policy Approver(s)	Senior Team
Related Policies	Research Administration Responsible Conduct of Research Research Involving Human Participants Policy for College Engagement with Elders and Knowledge-Keepers
Related Procedures	Procedure for College Engagement with Elders and Knowledge-Keepers
Appendices	
Storage Location	Website - https://www.confederationcollege.ca/policies-and-procedures
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Purpose

The Indigenous Research Policy and Procedure documents guide research involving Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous peoples, either as principals, co-principals, or subjects. Confederation College’s goal, as expressed through these directives, is to ensure that such research is premised on respectful relationships and ethical practices. These directives constitute a protocol that is also a tool to assist in the protection, safety and well-being of Indigenous people who are involved as research subjects while also promoting the increased capacity of Indigenous peoples and communities to exercise self-determination through research. As such, the Policy and Procedure are based upon Indigenous expressions of principles in relation to research. For example, the OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Protection) framework is an Indigenous framing of research principles. Other formulations may be used provided they relate similarly to data sovereignty: the presumption that to hold, use and protect knowledge that is generated by a community is an appropriate expression of its self-determination.

Scope

This Policy applies to all research conducted under the auspices or jurisdiction of Confederation College’s Research Administration Policy and Research Involving Human Participants regardless of location, source of funds, or use of College resources. The interpretation of what research

topics or projects would fall under this Policy may sometimes be in question, with ultimate responsibility in defining Indigenous Research falling to the REB Chair. When there is an initial doubt as to whether or not a certain project would fall within the understanding of “Indigenous Research”, the default position shall be that it does, at least until persons with the requisite experience and knowledge can say otherwise.

The enhanced process found herein arises due to the history of harms enacted upon Indigenous Peoples and upon Indigenous Knowledges through colonization, including a history of direct harm via Western research activities. This means that each and every internal Researcher has a duty to consider how this Policy applies to their project and to act accordingly.

Governing Laws and Regulations

[The First Nations Principles of OCAP](#)

[Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research \(2016\)](#)

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[House of Commons of Canada: Bill C-15](#)

Definitions

Chair

The Chair within this document shall be understood as the Chair of Confederation College’s Research Ethics Board (REB).

Community

A community is a group of people connected through some commonality, such as ethnicity, race, culture, religion, political association, and interests or even hobbies. There is often a shared history, a shared sense of identity, and/or shared sense of ethics/morals. A community may or may not be connected by a physical location.

Indigenous Knowledge(s) or Indigenous Ways of Knowing

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, Indigenous Knowledges are bodies of content, conversation and exploration that are: 1) derived through or related to Indigenous cultural practice; 2) involving the history, politics, or current affairs of Canadian-Indigenous relations, such as the history of residential schools or conversations about anti-Indigenous racism. Indigenous Knowledges necessarily include those that are created through Indigenous knowledge systems, i.e., living, listening and learning in Indigenous languages; living on the land, cultural ceremonies and practices, the use of natural resources, aesthetic and artisanal practices, etc..

Indigenous Research

For the purposes of this Policy, Indigenous Research is knowledge-gathering carried out by or involving Indigenous communities, individuals, and organizations and which directly or indirectly concern their languages, cultures, lived experiences, or knowledges, both past and

present. The potential subject matter of Indigenous Research is therefore quite broad and may not always be obvious. However, where a research project includes investigations which touch on Indigenous understandings of “the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment” (SSHRC, 2016), it falls directly within the purview of this Policy and Procedure. Additionally, the subject matter of Indigenous Research can take a variety of forms, which can include “local knowledge, lived experience, community narratives, personal stories, and spiritual expressions” (The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, 2014).

Researcher

The “researcher”, within the meaning of this Procedure, is the person or persons who is applying for review of a given project and whose research falls within the oversight of the Research Ethics Board at Confederation College.

Research Ethics Board (REB)

The Confederation College Research Ethics Board (REB), as established by the President of Confederation College, is responsible for overseeing all matters related to research involving human participants undertaken by the members of the College community for teaching and/or research purposes. In carrying out its responsibilities, the REB will act at all times guided by the Tri-Council Policy Statement, or future standards may come to stand in its place.

1. Basic Principles

General

- 1.1 This Policy is concerned with the development and enhancement of mutually beneficial research relationships between Confederation College and Indigenous community members.
- 1.2 This policy contemplates that any individuals pursuing research under the auspices of Confederation’s [Research Administration Policy](#) must ensure that they are also in compliance with this Policy and its related Procedure, which means at least an initial consideration of whether, and to what extent, this Policy applies to their proposed research.
- 1.3 To be clear, this policy and its accompanying procedures *must* be followed even if the potential for harmful impacts is minimal.
- 1.4 It shall be understood that, if researchers are uncertain whether this Policy applies to their question, they can and should refer their queries to the Chair.

2. Indigenous Rights in Relation to Knowledge

- 2.1. All Indigenous Research at Confederation begins with recognition that Indigenous peoples are sovereign peoples and as such have sovereignty over their knowledge systems—past, present, and future.
- 2.2. This recognition should include an understand that the nature of Indigenous knowledge systems must be respected throughout the research. The principles enumerated below are intended to give guidance on this point.

Engagement

- 2.3. Engagement with elders, knowledge keepers and communities is integral to respecting and ethically engaging with Indigenous or traditional knowledges.
- 2.4. When engaging with elders and/or knowledge-keepers, Researchers must be mindful of the College's Policy and Procedure for Engagement with Elders.

Control of Knowledge

- 2.5. Indigenous peoples have the right and obligation to exercise control to protect their cultural and intellectual properties and knowledges.
- 2.6. In the context of Indigenous Research, this recognition includes all stages of a particular research project from conception to completion. The principle extends to the control of resources, research and review processes, the formulation of conceptual frameworks, and collection, collation, and storage of the research product(s).

Collective Ownership of Knowledge

- 2.7. Indigenous knowledges are collectively held, shared, implemented and protected; thus use and dissemination of such knowledges must be collectively approved through mechanisms identified by the Indigenous community.
- 2.8. Researchers need to be aware that protocols and practices for knowledge-gathering and knowledge-sharing may differ from community to community, just as the content of knowledge differs from community to community. Therefore, engagement with the community in question is paramount to conducting research ethically.

Access to Knowledge

- 2.9. Indigenous communities and organizations have the right to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information. This will be achieved through community-based agreements and processes.
- 2.10. To be clear, there may be occasions where the College is asked to take on a custodial role in relation to research data. In general, the conditions for such a role will be established through agreement with the community.
- 2.11. In situations where it is unclear how the community wishes to dispose of research materials currently in the College's possession, the College will be expected to consider very carefully before archiving or destroying copies of such material.

Possession

- 2.12. Possession defines the stewardship or caretaking of data or information by an institution that is accountable to the group and is a mechanism through which ownership will be asserted and protected. Therefore, any research agreement with an Indigenous community must address explicitly the issue of who will possess original material or copies of such material.

3. Role of the REB

- 3.1. Confederation College's REB, with representatives of the Indigenous and College community, is to provide review, guidance, and approval of research at the College involving Indigenous peoples and/or Indigenous Research.
- 3.2. Should the REB require support in the review and approval of research at the College involving Indigenous peoples and/or Indigenous Research, the REB will consult with the College's Vice-President Indigenous Leadership, Partnerships and Strategies.
- 3.3. When there is no First Nations community or Indigenous organizational control of a research project, the REB will have an enhanced role in guaranteeing that Indigenous peoples and knowledges are respected through appropriate mechanisms and the creation of a Community Engagement Plan.

4. Responsibilities of the Researcher

- 4.1. The Researcher or Principal Investigator in each project has the responsibility for ensuring that research is conducted ethically, consistent with all College policies, the Tri-Agency Framework, and general principles of equity that apply to any research initiative.

- 4.2. It is incumbent upon a Researcher in any situation where Indigenous people are involved to turn their mind to the question of review by the REB. The related procedure details the process to be followed both before and after such a review.

- 4.3. The Community Engagement Plan is a document that will be used by the researcher to ensure that the requirements of this policy and related procedures, as well as any decisions or recommendations of the REB, are observed. The researcher has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the Community Engagement Plan is followed.

Non-Compliance

Lack of compliance with this policy could lead to disciplinary measures by a supervisor or from the College’s Research Ethics Board, as well as a ban on any further research.

Beyond impacts on the researcher’s personal employment relationships, there are potentially severe consequences for participants in research, whether as principals or as subjects. Moreover, lack of compliance with this policy could seriously damage the College’s relationships with Indigenous community members which could, in turn, negatively impact the educational experience of Indigenous students and jeopardize the College’s ability to meet its own goals with the Strategic Plan and the Negahneewin Vision.

Revision History

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change