



Research Ethics and Integrity Policy

1. Policy Statement

Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies (GNI) upholds the highest standards of academic and research integrity. All research and scholarly activity conducted under GNI's auspices by faculty, staff, students, or external collaborators must be characterized by **honesty, accountability, transparency, and respect for human dignity**.

Ethical research is central to GNI's mission of advancing knowledge, promoting social responsibility, and contributing to the public good. This policy ensures that all research activities safeguard the rights, welfare, and privacy of participants while maintaining public confidence in the integrity of the institution's academic work.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes GNI's institutional framework for the **ethical conduct, oversight, and governance** of research.

It sets expectations for the responsible design, conduct, review, authorship, and dissemination of research; defines procedures for ethics approval and integrity review; and ensures institutional compliance with:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2022);
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia); and
- Recognized international standards governing human-participant and secondary-data research.

3. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to:

- All faculty, staff, administrators, students, visiting scholars, and external researchers conducting research under GNI's auspices;

- Any project involving human participants, identifiable personal or community data, biological materials, or secondary datasets;
- Course-based research, including capstone seminars, research methods courses, and community-engaged learning; and
- Collaborative or externally funded research in which GNI is a signatory, partner, or host institution.

4. Guiding Principles

1. **Respect for Persons:** Free, informed, and ongoing consent, including the right to withdraw without penalty.
2. **Concern for Welfare:** Protection of privacy, confidentiality, and participant well-being.
3. **Justice:** Equitable treatment, fair inclusion, and balanced distribution of research benefits and burdens.
4. **Academic Integrity:** Honesty and accuracy in proposing, conducting, reviewing, and reporting research.
5. **Stewardship:** Responsible management of resources, records, and results.
6. **Transparency:** Open disclosure of methods, findings, and conflicts of interest.
7. **Community and Indigenous Engagement:** Research involving Indigenous peoples must respect **OCAP® principles** (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) and community protocols for collaboration and data governance.

5. Institutional Responsibilities

GNI shall:

- Establish and maintain a Research Ethics Committee (REC) with delegated authority from the Academic Council to review all research involving human participants;
- Provide ongoing training and resources on research ethics and integrity;
- Require completion of the TCPS 2 CORE online certification for all faculty supervisors and students before data collection;
- Maintain secure records of all REC applications, decisions, and related correspondence; and
- Report annually to the Academic Council and Board of Directors on research-ethics compliance and integrity outcomes.

6. Research and Ethics Committee (REC)

1. Purpose

The **Research & Ethics Committee (REC)** oversees ethical standards and scholarly integrity for research conducted under the auspices of GNI.

The Committee ensures that research involving human participants, communities, or sensitive data complies with recognized ethical standards and institutional policies.

2. Mandate

The Committee shall:

- Review and approve research proposals involving:
 - Human participants
 - Indigenous communities or knowledge systems
 - Sensitive personal or cultural information
- Ensure ethical compliance consistent with:
 - Canadian post-secondary research norms
 - Respect for participants, communities, and knowledge holders

3. Scope of Responsibilities

The Committee shall:

- Review research ethics applications prior to data collection
- Ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and risk mitigation
- Monitor approved research, where necessary
- Provide guidance on ethical research practices and integrity

4. Composition

Appointment Authority

- Appointed by the Academic Council, on recommendation of the Provost / VP Academic.

Chair

- Appointed by the **Academic Council**
- Must have demonstrated experience in **research ethics**.

Minimum Membership

- **3-5 members**
 - At least **1 member with ethics expertise**
 - At least **1 external member (recommended)**
 - At least **1 community representative** (non-academic)
 - Faculty majority

5. Authority and Limits

- The Committee has authority to:
 - Approve, require revisions to, or decline ethics applications
- The Committee does **not** evaluate academic merit beyond ethical considerations

6. Meetings and Records

- Meetings shall be held **as required**
- Decisions shall be documented and retained for regulatory and audit purposes

7. Reporting

- The Committee reports annually to the **Academic Council**
 - Aggregate data may be used for institutional quality assurance
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7. Research Integrity and Authorship

7.1 Authorship and Acknowledgment

Authorship must reflect significant intellectual contribution (conceptualization, design, analysis, or interpretation). Honorary or ghost authorship is strictly prohibited.

7.2 Data Management

Researchers must ensure data accuracy, secure storage, and retention for five years, with appropriate destruction thereafter. Confidential data must be de-identified before dissemination.

7.3 Collaborative and Student Research

Supervisors share responsibility for ensuring ethical compliance in all student or team projects. Any research using interviews, surveys, or personal narratives must receive **REC approval prior to commencement**.

8. Research Misconduct and Breach Procedures

Misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, failure to acknowledge contributors, misuse of funds, and violation of participant rights.

Procedure:

1. Written complaint submitted to the **VPA**.
2. Preliminary assessment within **10 business days**.
3. Formal investigation by a committee appointed within **30 days**.
4. Findings reported to the **Academic Council** and **Board of Directors**.
5. Sanctions may include written reprimand, remedial training, suspension of research privileges, or termination for cause.

9. Capstone and Research Methods Ethics Pathway

All students undertaking research, interviews, or community engagement within GNI's programs must follow these steps:

1. Complete the TCPS 2 CORE training module and upload the certificate to Moodle.
2. Submit a Student Research Ethics Application Form endorsed by the supervisor.
3. Instructor reviews for completeness and forwards to the REC.
4. REC conducts an expedited or full review within 10–30 business days.
5. Written approval must be issued before data collection begins.
6. Upon completion, the student submits a Research Completion Form and retains data securely for one year.

10. Student and Collaborative Project Requirements

To ensure all student, collaborative, or externally affiliated research meets ethical and legal standards, the following criteria apply:

1. Institutional Ethics Approval

- Research involving human participants, personal data, or community-based research must obtain prior ethics clearance from an authorized Research Ethics Committee (REC).
- Ethics review may be obtained from either:

- The student's home university REC (for joint or visiting projects); or • GNI's Research Ethics Committee, when GNI is the host or primary site.
- Written evidence of REC approval must be filed with the Director of Research or Academic Board Secretary before data collection begins.
- Projects initiated without prior written approval are deemed non-compliant and subject to suspension.

2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Agreement

A written MOU or agreement between the student (and/or their home institution) and GNI must specify:

- Project title, objectives, and scope;
- Roles and responsibilities of all parties;
- Use of GNI resources (data, facilities, staff, participants);
- Intellectual-property ownership and authorship rights; • Confidentiality, data-sharing, and publication terms; and
- Supervisor(s) and project timelines.

Signed copies are retained by the **Academic Council Secretary**.

3. Informed Consent and Participant Protection

Researchers must:

- Obtain free, informed, and ongoing consent explaining purpose, procedures, risks, and withdrawal rights;
- Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and secure data storage in compliance with FOIPPA (BC);
- Avoid conflicts of interest, coercion, or misuse of GNI's name, logo, or institutional authority; and
- Provide participants with contact details for the REC for concerns or complaints.

4. Transparency and Acknowledgment

- Students and collaborators must acknowledge GNI's contribution in all presentations, theses, reports, and publications.
- GNI must be notified prior to any public dissemination or external use of institutional or community-derived data.
- All published materials must include an institutional acknowledgment statement approved by the Director of Research.

11. Education and Capacity Building

GNI provides annual research-ethics training, orientation for new faculty, and embedded instruction in student courses.

Completion of the TCPS 2 CORE certification is mandatory before supervising or conducting research involving human participants.

12. Reporting and Accountability

The REC submits an annual report to the Academic Council summarizing applications, review outcomes, and recommendations.

The Academic Council incorporates this report into its Annual Report to the Board of Directors for institutional oversight and public accountability.

13. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every **five (5) years** or sooner if required by amendments to federal or provincial research-ethics standards, institutional growth, or regulatory requirements.

Appendix A – REC Application Process Flow

1. Researcher completes TCPS 2 CORE training.
2. Application submitted to REC Secretary.
3. Administrative completeness review (within 5 days).
4. Expedited or Full Board review (10–30 days).
5. REC decision: Approved / Modify / Reject.
6. Written approval issued with conditions (if any).
7. Researcher submits final report and confirms data storage upon completion.

Appendix B – Related Documents

- ADM-004 Institutional Quality Assurance Policy
- ADM-017 Academic Freedom and Integrity Policy
- SP-011 Student Conduct and Discipline Policy
- Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS 2, 2022)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC)