

**St. Thomas University**  
**Research Ethics Board Policy**  
**Approved by Senate June 2005**  
*Last Revised Nov. 22, 2022*

**Preamble**

St. Thomas University endorses the principles set out in the "**Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans**" (current version). This document describes how the University will apply the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). This policy has been worded using the language employed in the TCPS2 (2022). All references to the TCPS should be read in accordance with its most current version.

Research is an essential component of the mission of St. Thomas University and some of this research involves studying human participants. The University has a responsibility to engage in research advancing human knowledge. The use of human beings in the conduct of research confers responsibilities to the investigator(s). It is also the responsibility of the University to promote ethical research.

This policy is intended to ensure that the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants are maintained at St. Thomas University in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. These ethical standards include the core principles of 1) respect for persons, 2) concern for welfare, and 3) justice.

The term "Research" is defined in the TCPS as "an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation" where a "disciplined inquiry" refers to "an inquiry that is conducted with the expectation that the method, results, and conclusions will be able to withstand the scrutiny of the relevant

Substitute members may be appointed at the discretion of the President or their designate. Substitute members can be called in to replace regular members unable to attend or to provide expertise in a specific area.

Ad Hoc Advisors will be consulted in the event that the board lacks specific expertise or knowledge to review the ethical acceptability of a research proposal competently.

The balance and composition of the university members on the REB shall be the purview of the President of STU or their designate.

Board members shall serve for three-year terms, which normally may be renewed once. Appointments can range from one to four years to allow



performance reviews, creative practice activities and testing within the normal educational requirements (Article 2.5).

The REB will not review proposals that it deems are exempt under the above categories.

### **2.3 Scholarly Review**

a) In the case of research proposals that present more than minimal risk, the design of the project must be peer reviewed to assure that it is capable of addressing the question(s) being asked in the research and that the researcher has the experience and competence to

the appropriate case files.

The REB shall keep a confidential "open file" in a secure place in the Office of Research Services for researchers applying for ethical approval. The file shall be opened by the Chair when sufficient information has been submitted by the researcher to start the review process. The original



### **2.9.2. Researchers**

As per Article 7.4 of the TCPS, researchers shall disclose any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in the research proposals they submit to the REB, as well as any institutional conflicts of interest of which they are aware that may have an impact on their research. Upon discussion with the researcher, the REB shall determine the appropriate steps to manage the conflict of interest.

### **2.9.3 Institutional**

St. Thomas University respects the autonomy of the Research Ethics Board and recognizes that the REB must have the appropriate financial and administrative independence to fulfil its duties. For the integrity of the research ethics review process, and to safeguard public trust in that process, the University shall ensure that the REB is able to operate effectively and independently in their decision making, free of inappropriate influence, including situations of real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

## **3.0**

Chapter 8 (Multi-jurisdictional Research), Article 8.1 from the TCPS2 states that “An institution that has established an REB may approve alternative review models for research involving multiple REBs and/or institutions, in accordance with this Policy.”

Following Article 8.1 of the TCPS2, the STU REB creates one alternative review model that will not require a STU researcher to submit his/her study for regular ethics review at STU or continuing ethics review at STU as long as all the following criteria are met:

1. The study will not be conducted at STU, does not involve any STU resources or personnel other than the STU researcher’s activities, and has no additional STU-related ethical issues arising from the STU researcher’s involvement in the study
2. The study is considered minimal risk\*
3. The STU researcher is not the principal investigator
4. The STU researcher provides the STU REB with documentation showing that the study has been approved by the REB of the principal investigator’s institution
5. The study in question has been reviewed and approved by a Canadian REB that adheres to the TCPS

The STU REB has authority to determine if these criteria have been satisfactorily met. If any criteria are not met, the researcher must submit his/her study to the STU REB for review. Further, if a study meets the above requirements and has been approved by the STU REB, the STU researcher is still obligated to inform the STU REB Chair of any ethical problems that arise in or from the study.

\*As defined in Chapter

- Establishing departmental-level ethical review committees as needed
- Advising their faculty