THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Office of Research Ethics
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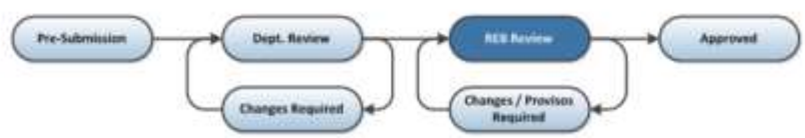
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3
https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/

Research Ethics Tips and Tricks for recipients of Mitacs Accelerate funding

If your research is being funded by Mitacs, the following guidance applies to you!

1. Timing: Don't leave yourself short. Time for completing, submitting and responding to provisos on your ethics application needs to be factored into your plan. In addition to the lead time recommended in the Mitacs application, ensure you also have sufficient time to complete the ethics application and respond to change requests from the REB. For minimal risk studies, review is expedited (one reviewer, processed in the order they are received). For Above Minimal Risk studies, meetings occur monthly and deadlines are provided on the ORE website. See below (How long does review take?) for more details.
    a. As shown in the RISe workflow (on the homepage of your ethics application), your ethics application will go through a Department Review before it is received by Ethics for review.



2. Release of funds: Note that funds can not be released until ethics approval has been given. A certificate of approval is released by the BREB once all required changes have been addressed.
3. Contacts in the Office of Research Ethics are available to assist you through the ethics application process. https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/about-human-research-ethics/contact-us

FAQs for completing the ethics application

1. *Who can act as the Principal Investigator (PI) on my ethics application?*

   The PI will be your academic supervisor/faculty member. Please ensure that references to the "lead researcher" are consistent. Although your project may be supervised by a non-academic partner contact, they are not able to act as your PI and should not be identified as such in any supporting documentation (e.g. as "Lead Researcher"). The PI must be listed on all supporting documents and is required to sign off on your ethics application before it is submitted for review.

2. *How long does it take for review and approval of an ethics application?*

   Once the application has been approved by the Departmental approver, it will be "pre-reviewed" by a REB staff member and then assigned to one reviewer (minimal risk study) or scheduled for the next full board meeting (reviewed by a primary and secondary reviewer). For minimal risk studies, we endeavor to complete the pre-review within 24 hours of receipt and ask the volunteer faculty board members to complete their review within 7 to 10 working days. Once you have completed the changes required and resubmitted, it will be assigned for review in the order received. Turnaround depends on the volume of studies in the queue for review. We recommend that you anticipate a <u>minimum</u> of three weeks for the entire review process.

3. *I have already answered questions about my research in the grant application. Can I copy the information into my ethics application?*

   Please note that the questions in the ethics application differ in focus and intent; for example, a primary (but not the only ethical) concern is how your proposed research will affect participants and how any risks to participants will be mitigated. Please ensure that you carefully read the questions in the ethics application and adapt your responses appropriately. Excessive, non-relevant detail will slow down the review process.

4. *How should I list the non-academic partner organization on my ethics application?*

   Your contact in the partner organization should be listed in Box 1.5A of the ethics application and their involvement in your research project needs to be described in Box 1.5.B. Information is needed on the partner organization's/partner lead's relationship to participants. The partner's involvement in the recruitment, consent and data collection will also need to be described in the relevant sections.

5. *I am doing my research abroad. Do I need to list the non-UBC supervisor on my ethics application?*

   The person listed as your Academic Supervisor Abroad will need to be listed as a member of the research team, in most cases as a Co-investigator (Box 1.3). If this individual does not have a CWL account, they can be listed in Box 1.5.A. Please ensure that this person's role in the research is clearly explained (1.3.B or 1.5.B) and that their qualifications to oversee the research are briefly described in Box 7.3.

6. *My project involves international travel. Do I need to disclose this in my ethics application?*

   If travel is involved in any aspect of your project that requires ethics approval you will need to confirm (in Box 7.3) that UBC safety abroad registration has been completed.

7. *Do I need to declare a conflict of interest?*

   The Mitacs application asks whether any academic supervisors or interns have declared a Conflict of Interest (3.5 and 3.6) and whether the supervisor or intern has a fiscal relationship with a partner organization (4.1, and 4.3). If you have completed an Internal Conflict of Interest Declaration as part of your MITACS application process, this will need to be attached to your ethics application (Box 9.1) AND you will need to fill in the section of the ethics application relating to conflict of interest. The response in Box 2.6 must be "Yes," and page 3 will need to be completed.

   Note that in the context of research ethics, conflicts of interest are not exclusively financial in nature. A conflict of interest in the research context occurs when "the researcher(s), members of the research team, and/or their partners or immediate family members [are] in a situation in which they have or could be perceived to have a personal interest in connection with this study that conflicts with or could conflict with their obligations to the participants, their institution or where applicable to the sponsor…." (Behavioural Ethics application)[1]

> **Example 1**: A technology being used to conduct the research has been developed by Company X (the non-academic sponsor) and the data gathered from this research will be used to further the design and development of the technology. UBC and its researchers are potential clients for the technology. By the use of the technology for this research project, the company's profile will be raised in the research community that is its target market.
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> **Example 2**: An intern may be under consideration for future employment and wants to deliver satisfactory results to the partner organization. This could influence how the research is reported, especially if the results are negative.

Conflict of Interest considerations in the research ethics context relate to potential impact on research participants. For this reason, conflicts (potential or actual) must be disclosed in the consent form; additional steps may be required to manage the conflict over and above what has been required during the MITACS application process.

Example of a consent form disclosure:

> This study involves a Conflict of Interest. The researcher [insert name] owns/has a future interest in… [insert company name and its role in the research **&/or** other relevant details, including benefits of research to the sponsoring partner and benefits of the relationship with the sponsor to researchers].

If the conflict requires a management plan, this will need to be in place and approved before research ethics approval will be granted. Please reach out to the BREB office before submitting your ethics application if you believe you may have a conflict that requires management.

8. *Do I need to attach a research proposal to the ethics application?*

   Your Mitacs grant application must be attached to Box 9.1. If you have a research proposal, this may also be attached.

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[1] TCPS 2 (2018) defines Conflict of Interest as: "The incompatibility of two or more duties, responsibilities, or interests (personal or professional) of an individual or institution as they relate to the ethical conduct of research, such that one cannot be fulfilled without compromising another." The Mitacs definition of a conflict of interest is provided in https://www.mitacs.ca/en/conflict-interest-policy.