# REB Application Guide

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| | **Section 1: Applicants** |
| **1.1** | The Primary Applicant is a BVC employee meeting the experience requirements set out by Applied Research.<br><br>The primary applicant accepts responsibility of the conduct of the project and is required to follow the guidelines set out in the TCPS 2 (2022). |
| **1.2** | List one co-applicant if applicable.<br><br>All communication from the REB will be directed to the primary applicant and co-applicant.<br><br>A list of all members of the research team must be included in an appendix. |
| | All members of the research team (including student researchers) are required to have completed the TCPS 2 CORE Tutorial before submitting the REB application. The CORE Tutorial is an introduction to the TCPS 2 ethics guidance for all research that involves human participants.<br><br>TCPS 2 CORE Tutorial is free, and it takes approximately 4 hours to complete. Please include a copy of the tutorial completion certificate in an appendix.<br><br>To access the TCPS 2 CORE Tutorial click HERE |
| | **Section 2: Project Details** |
| **2.1** | The title of the research project entered in the application must correspond to that provided on your other documents (e.g., consent form). |
| **2.2** | Summarize the research project in less than 500 words. Use non-expert terms and write acronyms out in full the first time they appear in the summary.<br>Include in the summary:<br>• the purpose of the project<br>• research objectives<br>• research design<br>• data collection methods<br>• data analysis plan<br>• knowledge translation activities.<br><br>The REB is composed of members from a variety of disciplines and research experience so it is important to summarize the project using plain language so it can be understood by all. |

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| **2.3** | Indicate if the research is funded and list the source(s). This could be internal funding (e.g., General Research Fund) or external funding (e.g., SSHRC).<br><br>Provide supporting documents (e.g., funding approval letters) in an appendix. |
| **2.4** | Enter the proposed start and end date of the project.<br><br>Note that REB approval of a full application can take up to one month and recruitment and data collection cannot be started until approval is received. |
| **2.5** | Specify the types of spaces where data collection will take place (e.g., public spaces in the college, classrooms, private homes). If known, detail the exact locations of data collection. |
| **2.6** | Indicate any other permissions that may be required by organizations where the research will take place.<br><br>Provide documentation of the organization's support in an appendix. |
| **2.7** | All members of the research team must disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest.<br><br>For more information about Conflicts of Interest see Chapter 7 of the TCPS 2 (2022) https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter7-chapitre7.html<br><br>The REB will be looking for an explanation of the conflict of interest as well as steps that will be taken to mitigate the conflict. Some conflicts may be addressed by disclosing the conflict in the consent process (i.e., disclosure of the conflict on the consent form). Other conflicts may need to be further managed.<br><br>Researchers should also be sure to comply with the BVC Conflict of Interest (COI) policy and update the declaration each year. The COI guidelines can be accessed HERE |
| **Section 3: Risks** | |
| **3.1** | The TCPS 2 (2018) defines **risk** as that which may cause any degree of emotional, psychological, social and/or physical discomfort to participant(s). Risks may include risk of manipulation, emotional distress or fatigue, psychological distress or trauma, deception, social-related distress, or other harms.<br><br>**Minimal risks** are those that are no greater than those encountered by the subject in aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research. For more information about minimal risk and how to access the degree of risk see a summary HERE. Also see Chapter 2 of the TCPS 2 (2022) https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter2-chapitre2.html for more information.<br><br>Identify the degree of each risk involved in the study. Provide a detailed explanation of the risk. If the risk is "More than Minimal Risk", include the benefit of research in relation to the risk. |

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| | The REB will be looking at how the risks to the participants will be mitigated. |
| **Section 4: Data Collection and Recruitment** | |
| **4.1** | Identify all research methods that will be used in data collection. Checklist includes but is not limited to interviews, focus groups, surveys, observation, tests, other.<br><br>Provide a copy of the data collection tool(s) in an appendix.<br><br>If you are conducting qualitative research see Chapter 10 of the TCPS 2 (2022) for guidance on consent, privacy and confidentiality related to qualitative data collection methods and recruitment.<br><br>If you are conducting research involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people of Canada see Chapter 9 of the TCPS 2 (2022) for guidance. The REB can also recommend completion of the OCAP Course (First Nations Information Governance Centre) to further assist the researcher. |
| **4.2** | Describe each participant group involved in the research. Identify group characteristics such as age, gender, social status, and/or occupation. |
| **4.3** | Detail how you will select participants to be included in the research, how you will select participants to be excluded from the research, and why they may be excluded.<br><br>Refer to TCPS 2 (2022) Chapter 4 for more guidance on inclusion, exclusion and fairness and equity https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter9-chapitre9.html<br><br>"Taking into account the scope and objectives of their research, researchers should be inclusive in selecting participants. Researchers shall not exclude individuals from the opportunity to participate in research on the basis of attributes such as culture, language, religion, race, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, linguistic proficiency, gender or age, unless there is a valid reason for the exclusion" (Article 4.1) |
| **4.4** | Include a detailed description of the recruitment process including:<br>• Who will do the recruitment and their relationship to the participants<br>• How you will access the participants (e.g., mailing list, social media, face-to-face)<br>• How you will recruit participants (e.g., posters, email, in class presentations)<br>• Where the recruitment will take place<br>• Duration of recruitment<br>• Who will be targeted and permissions necessary<br><br>When a person of authority over the participant is involved in the recruitment process care should be taken to avoid the possibility of coercion or undue influence (Article 3.1). This may occur, for example, in a situation where the researcher holds a position of power (e.g., instructor) relative to the participant (e.g., student). In cases such as these researchers may choose to have a third party complete the recruitment and ensure the person of authority does not have knowledge of those who do not wish to participate. |

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| | Some methods of sampling (e.g., snowball sampling) recruit participants who may be known to the researcher. In this case the researcher may use a third party to recruit. The third party must be granted consent to release participant contact information to the researcher.<br><br>Include all recruitment notices and/or scripts, advertisements, posters, and any information required by a sponsor or other organization in an appendix. |
| **4.5** | Who will collect the data? What is the relationship to the participants?<br><br>Is there a power imbalance that could in any way influence how the participants respond or any potential threat to voluntary consent? |
| **4.6** | Will you offer remuneration to the research participants?<br><br>Describe the remuneration and how the participants will be contacted/receive the remuneration.<br><br>"Because incentives are used to encourage participation in a research project, they are an important consideration in assessing voluntariness. Where incentives are offered to participants, they should not be so large or attractive as to encourage reckless disregard of risks" (Article 3.1).<br><br>Researchers must provide justification for the use of a particular protocol and incentive amount to the REB. The incentive to participate should not compromise the commitment to confidentiality.<br><br>Remuneration must be clearly stated on the consent form. Specify if the participant will be eligible for the remuneration should they withdraw from the study. How will the participant's private contact information be protected? |
| **4.7** | Accommodations for the participants' cultural, language or other differences.<br><br>What efforts will be made to accommodate multilingual participants? Will the data collection tool be translated into languages other than English? How will the researchers ensure the data collection tool is at an appropriate reading level? |
| **Section 5: Withdrawal Procedures** | |
| **5.1** | How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw?<br><br>Consent must be free, informed, and ongoing (Article 3.1, 3.2, 3.3). Therefore, researchers should strive to inform the participants of their right to withdraw from the study during the consent process and throughout data collection. Specify who to contact and how to contact them to make the participant's desire to withdraw known. |
| **5.2** | What will happen to participant's data after they withdraw? |

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| | Are you able to remove their information from the data analysis?<br><br>Note that if the data is anonymous (i.e., no identifiers to link the data to the participant) then, should the participant withdraw from the study, their data cannot be removed. This should be clearly communicated in the consent form. |
| | **Section 6: Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Data Security** |
| **6.1** | Chapter 5 of the Tri-Council Policy (2018) stipulates that researchers must protect the confidentiality of their participant's data. Specify if data in the study will be "Public and Cited", "Confidential", or "Anonymous".<br><br>Confidentiality is an ethical duty which is important in upholding the trust relationship between researcher and participant and the integrity of the research project. It refers to safeguarding entrusted information. Researchers have an obligation to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss, or theft (Article A).<br><br>Anonymity refers to information that is not identifiable by name to a specific participant, even to the researcher. The TCPS defines anonymous information as that which "never had identifiers associated with it" (TCPS 2, 2018, p.59).<br><br>As private information becomes more difficult to associate with a particular person, ethics concerns lessen. Concerns also vary with the sensitivity of the information being collected and the potential for harm to the participant or community. Ideally researchers should strive for anonymity, but this is not always possible. When anonymity is not possible then it is appropriate to promise confidentiality.<br><br>See a summary of the two terms on the REB website or by clicking HERE. |
| **6.2** | Describe in detail how the participant's privacy will be ensured.<br><br>Researchers need to explain how the confidentiality of the data and participant's privacy will be protected during data collection, analysis, and dissemination.<br><br>Confidential information should only be collected or exchanged (i.e., via email) using encrypted files (e.g., password-protected).<br><br>In disseminating the research findings, researchers may not reveal identifiable information without the consent of the participant (Article 5.3)<br><br>**De-identifying Data**<br>Provide a plan for how the data will be de-identified after it is collected. Consider the possibility of deductive disclosure (i.e., the use of several variables, in combination, which may result in identification of the participant). Consider the following ways to reduce the risk of deductive disclosure:<br>- Remove all direct identifiers (including postal code, IP address)<br>- Be aware of the cell sizes (*n* = 5 is good, *n* = 10 is better)<br>- Aggregate the categories |

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| | - Restrict upper and lower boundaries (remove the outliers)<br>- Combine variables (e.g., scales)<br><br>**Video/Audio Recording**<br>If the researcher is conducting interviews that will be video/audio recorded, identify how it will be recorded (i.e., using what device/software/platform), who will have access to the recordings, how the participants identity will be protected. For example, will interview transcriptions be de-identified? Will the participant be assigned an identification number? Will there be a master file? Who will have access to this file?<br><br>Researchers must include an option for the participant to choose which method (e.g., video, audio, online survey) they consent to on the consent form.<br><br>REB recommends the use of MS Teams (versus Zoom) when conducting online interviews or focus groups as researchers may be better able to control confidentiality and data security.<br><br>It is recommended that research team members that will have access to information which may identify participants, including student researchers, be made aware of their duty and responsibility around confidentiality, and sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the start of the research study. |
| **6.3** | Detail the procedures that will be used to protect the raw data.<br><br>Where will the raw data be housed? How will the data be securely stored? Who will have access to the raw data?<br><br>Following Bow Valley College Integrity in Research and Scholarship Procedure (#500-3-3) "all research data should be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected network drive or cloud storage accessible only to the research team" (Article 2.2.1).<br><br>If data will be stored on a portable device (e.g., laptop) or an external media (e.g., flash drive), it must be password protected and the data backed up on a regular basis (Article 2.2.2)<br><br>If you will be using an online survey platform specify which platform and if the data will be stored in Canada or another country (e.g., Survey Monkey, Qualtrics). REB recommends survey platforms where data is housed in Canada. How will the information be protected? Are their limits to confidentiality? This information should appear on the consent form so participants can make an informed decision about participating. |
| **6.4** | Specify who will have access to the data during each stage of the research project and after its completion. |

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| | Provide the research team member's name, role/title, start and end date or stage of research project, and type and form of data they will have access to (e.g., all data, raw data, anonymized data, etc.).<br><br>Research participants must be told in the consent form who will have access to their data, how their data will be used in the short term, and in the future. |
| **6.5** | Bow Valley College Integrity in Research and Scholarship Procedure (#500-3-3) requires that raw data be stored for a minimum of 5 years. If the data is anonymized (i.e., stripped of identifying information), it can be store indefinitely.<br><br>How will data be destroyed beyond the storage date?<br><br>Secure data destruction on BVC servers should be conducted with the help of BVC IT Services. Any breaches in security or loss of data should be reported to Applied Research and to the Research Ethics Board. |
| **6.6** | TCPS 2 (2018) "Researchers shall disseminate, through publication or otherwise, the analysis of data and interpretation of research results, including those that do not support the research hypotheses. The dissemination shall take place in a timely manner without undue restriction" (Article 4.8)<br><br>Describe the knowledge translation plan (e.g., publication, conference presentations, etc.) for the analyzed data. |
| **Section 7: Benefits** | |
| **7.1** | Describe the benefits of the research to the *researcher*. |
| **7.2** | Describe the benefits of the research to the *participants*. |
| **7.3** | Describe the benefits of the research to the *local community*.<br><br>"Research involving communities should be designed such that the potential benefits to the community, and the individuals within it, outweigh the foreseeable risks. Article 9.13 includes guidance on community benefit in the context of research with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. This guidance may also be helpful for research with other communities" (https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter2-chapitre2.html ) |
| **7.4** | Describe the benefits of the research to the *research community*. |
| **Section 8: Informed Consent** | |
| | Researchers must provide potential participants all information necessary for them to make an informed decision to participate in the research study. For a more detailed description of informed consent click HERE. |

Use plain language, written at a grade 7 reading level. Consider reading the consent aloud with the participants to ensure understanding of risk.

The following content should be addressed in the informed consent (see Bow Valley College template):

- Branded with Bow Valley College logo.
- Written at an appropriate language level for the intended participant group(s).
- Written in non-expert terms. Required technical terms are clearly explained.
- Written in the active voice.
- Sources of funding are disclosed.
- Basis for participant inclusion and/or exclusion in the research is provided.
- Goal of the research is clearly outlined.
- What is required of the participant, including time commitment and information to be collected.
- Level of confidentiality and how participant data will be stored and used.
- Risks and benefits of participation.
- Voluntary nature of participation.
- Conflicts of interest are disclosed.
- Withdrawal procedures and what will happen to the data upon withdrawal.
- Remuneration.
- Contact information for Principal Investigator and/or project coordinator.
- Statement that the study has received approval from the Bow Valley College Research Ethics Board and board contact information.
- Statement to the effect that, by consenting, participants have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.
- Participant is provided with a copy of the consent for future reference

Informed consent may be documented by a signed consent form. It may also be acknowledged by the actions of the participant (e.g., submission of a completed online survey) or verbally. Participants should have access to a copy of the consent form. See Chapter 3 of the TCSP 2 (2022) for more information about the consent process.

## Section 9: Completion and Supporting Documentation Checklist

Complete the checklist on the form to indicate which supporting documents will accompany your application. Attach additional documents labelled as appendices with a copy of the completed application in an email to researchethics@bowvalleycollege.ca Additional documents include:

- TCPS2 CORE Tutorial Certificate of Completion
- Informed Consent
- Data Collection Tools
- Additional Applicants
- Funding Approval or Support Letters
- Permissions from other organizations
- Recruitment Notice, Poster, or Script
- Data Collection team
- Additional documents

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| | Once your application has been received, the REB will meet to discuss it. You will receive a decision regarding your application status within two weeks of the meeting. You will have two (2) weeks to make any necessary revisions, after which final approval will be given. If your application is not approved, you may re-submit it for the next ethics deadline |

## Section 10: Digital Signatures

All applicants must digitally sign the application form. If there are more than two applicants, include the signatures in an appendix.

By signing the application form you certify that:

- the information contained in this application is accurate
- that conduct of the proposed research will not commence until ethical approval has been received
- that the Research Ethics Board will be advised of any revisions to the project arising before or after ethical approval is granted
- that the proposed research will be conducted in accordance with Bow Valley College Policies and Procedures:
    - Applied Research and Innovation Communication (#200-1-7)
    - Respectful Workplace (#200-1-11)
    - Code of Conduct (#200-1-13)
    - Intellectual Property (#300-2-14)
    - Applied Research (#500-3-1)
    - Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants (#500-3-2)
    - Integrity in Research Scholarship (#500-3-3)
    - General Research Funds (#500-3-4)
    - Research Administration (#500-3-5)