



Fact Sheet #9—March 2010



Guidelines for Research Involving Inuit

This fact sheet provides a brief overview of existing guidelines for research involving Inuit, and lists several relevant documents for further information.

In Canada, researchers are expected to work with Aboriginal Peoples in a way that respects individuals, communities and their culture. Aboriginal organizations, governments and universities have worked to create ethical guidelines for researchers with the goal to ensure that research *about* Aboriginal people works *for* Aboriginal people.

Inuit organizations have provided documents on how to develop partnerships where people, communities and researchers are equal partners. Region-specific guidelines help researchers to consider governance systems and local customs.

What are ethical guidelines for research?

“Ethics” is a term that captures the values of society and tells us how to behave appropriately and treat each other with respect. **Ethical research means that researchers working in Inuit regions understand and respect that Inuit have their own protocols for behaviour.** Ethical standards and requirements are set out in documents called ‘guidelines’, ‘protocols’ or ‘codes’. Researchers—including those who want to study Inuit—must follow guidelines to make sure their work is fair and respectful (ethical). Research guidelines address questions such as these:

- ▶ What is research?
- ▶ What are the rules for researchers?
- ▶ What are the rights of research participants?
- ▶ How are the rights of research participants protected?
- ▶ How do we build good research relationships?

- ▶ How can we evaluate the risks and benefits for the individual and the community that participates in the research?

Who is making sure that researchers follow ethical guidelines?

All research involving people carried out in connection with Canadian universities follows ethical guidelines found in a document called *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Every researcher seeking funding from one of Canada’s research funding agencies is required to apply the ethical principles and the articles of this policy, also called the *TCPS*. This policy is based on three core principles: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice.

Ethical review boards or ethics committees are part of universities and research organizations. They review research plans and make sure that researchers are following ethical guidelines. For example, they can send project plans back to the researcher if the project doesn’t meet the requirements. The researcher then needs to change the research plan and submit it again to the board or committee.

Government departments also conduct research and follow ethical guidelines. For example, as of April 2010 Health Canada shares the Research Ethics Board (REB) with the Public Health Agency of Canada. This board reviews all research involving human subjects that is carried out by either one of these federal departments, including research conducted under a contract. All reviews are guided by the principles set out under the *TCPS*.

Below, we provide a selected list of research guidelines applying to research involving Inuit.

Guidelines applying to research in Inuit regions

Association for Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS). (2003). *Ethical Principles for Conduct of Research in the North*. Ottawa. www.acuns.ca/ethical.htm

Aurora Research Institute. (2009). *Guide for Research in the Northwest Territories*. <http://wiki.nwtresearch.com/ResearchGuide.ashx>

Nunavut Research Institute. (2006). *Licensing Process*. Iqaluit. www.nri.nu.ca/lic_process.html

Guidelines produced by Inuit organizations and governments

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2005). "Checklist: Inuit Involvement in Research Projects". *ITK Environment Bulletin*, 3, pp. 25-26.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (1998). *Negotiating Research Relationships: A Guide for Communities*. Iqaluit and Ottawa: Nunavut Research Institute and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. www.itk.ca/publications/negotiating-research-relationships-guide-communities

Nickels, S., Shirley, J. and Laidler, G. (2006). *Negotiating Research Relationships with Inuit Communities: A Guide for Researchers*. Ottawa and Iqaluit: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute. [Revised edition of the original from 1998] www.itk.ca/publications/negotiating-research-relationships-inuit-communities-guide-researchers

Nunatsiavut Government. (2008). *Nunatsiavut Government Interim Research Process*. Updated December 2008. Contact John Lampe, the Nunatsiavut Inuit Research Advisor for updates of this document. (john_lampe@nunatsiavut.com)

Canadian Guidelines for Ethical Research

Canadian Archaeological Association. (1997). "Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples". *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, 21(1): pp. 5-6.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. *Considering Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Environmental Assessments Conducted under the Canadian Environment Assessment Act – Interim Principles*. www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=4A795E76-1

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities

Research Council of Canada. (1998). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. (with 2000, 2002, 2005 amendments). Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa. www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/. This document is currently being revised, for information, see: www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/readtcps-lireeptc/

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. *Requirements for Certain Types of Research*. www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/certaintypes-typescertaines_eng.asp

Guidelines concerning research involving Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2007). *CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People*. Ottawa: Canadian Institutes of Health Research. www.irsc.gc.ca/e/29134.html

Grenier, L. (1998). *Working with Indigenous Knowledge: A Guide for Researchers*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. www.idrc.ca/openebooks/847-3/

Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC). (2004). *The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples*. Report of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre to the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE). IPHRC. www.iphrc.ca/IPHRCresearchdocs.php

Kenney, C. (2004). *A Holistic Framework for Aboriginal Policy Research*. Ottawa: Status of Women Canada. <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/SW21-114-2004E.pdf>

Kenney, C. (2002). *North American Indian, Métis and Inuit Women Speak About Culture, Education and Work*. Ottawa: Status of Women Canada. <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/SW21-90-2001E.pdf>

National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO). (2007). *OCAP Principles*. First Nations Centre. Ottawa. www.naho.ca/firstnations/english/documents/toolkits/FNC_OCAPInformationResource.pdf

National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO). (2005). *Interviewing Elders – Guidelines from the National Aboriginal Health Organization*. Ottawa. www.naho.ca/english/tk_Guidelines.php

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). "Appendix E: Ethical Guidelines for Research", in *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Government of Canada. www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/

Research and research ethics are the key focus of the Inuit Nipingit – National Inuit Committee on Ethics and Research. Inuit Nipingit is co-ordinated jointly by Inuit Tuttarvingat of the National Aboriginal Health Organization and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Fact Sheet #9: "Guidelines for Research Involving Inuit" can be retrieved from www.naho.ca/inuit/e/ethics

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