

Is Research Ethics Board (REB) review required?

The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) provides guidance on whether REB review is required. The TCPS also stipulates that **when in doubt, researchers should consult their REB**. More details can be found in the TCPS.

What is the definition of 'research'?

- [Article 2.1](#)

An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.

What research requires REB review before it commences? - [Article 2.1](#)

- Research involving **living human participants**, including their data, biological materials, or responses to interventions, stimuli or questions.
- Research involving **human biological materials**, as well as human embryos, fetuses, fetal tissue, reproductive materials, and stem cells. This applies to materials derived from living and deceased individuals.

Is REB review required for pilot studies?

- [Article 2.1](#)

Researchers shall submit proposals for pilot studies **prior** to the start of recruitment of participants, data collection or access to data.

Is REB review required for the exploratory phase of research ? - [Article 6.11](#)

REB review **is not required** for the initial exploratory phase, which is intended to establish research partnerships or to inform the design of a research proposal, and may involve contact with individuals or communities.

Is REB review required for creative practice activities ? - [Article 2.6](#)

Creative practice activities **do not require** REB review. However, research that employs creative practice to obtain responses from participants that will be analyzed to answer a research question **requires** REB review.

Is REB review required for program evaluation, quality assurance, improvement, or management studies? - [Article 2.5](#)

Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements, when used **exclusively** for assessment, management or improvement purposes, **do not** require REB review.

Is REB review required for research that relies exclusively on information that is publicly available or in the public domain? - [Article 2.2](#)

Review **is not** required when research relies **exclusively** on information that is:

- publicly available through a mechanism set out by legislation or regulation and that is protected by law; **or**
- in the public domain and the individuals to whom the information refers have no reasonable expectation of privacy.

[Article 9.21](#) also states that...

Where the information can be identified as originating from a specific community or a segment of the Indigenous community at large, seeking culturally informed advice may assist in identifying risks and potential benefits for the source community.

Is REB review required for research that relies on secondary use? - [Article 2.4](#)

Review is **not required** for research relying **exclusively** on **secondary** use of anonymous information, or anonymous human biological materials, so long as the process of data linkage or recording or dissemination of results **does not** generate identifiable information.

[Article 9.20](#) also states that...

Researchers shall engage the First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities from which the data or human biological material originate, prior to initiating secondary use.

In the TCPS, **anonymous information** is information that never had identifiers associated with it. Risk of identification of individuals is low or very low.

