

NAIT *Policy*

IR 10.0

Research Involving Human Subjects

Implementation Date: February 2007

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1.0 PURPOSE

This document contains the Institute's policy and procedures for the review of ethical considerations arising from research involving human subjects. This policy document is compliant with national standards concerning ethical behaviour in the conduct of research involving human subjects as outlined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans"¹. This policy governs the rights and responsibilities of both the Institute and of researchers acting under the auspice of the Institute.

There is a professional and moral responsibility of researchers to adhere to the ethical norms and codes of conduct appropriate to their respective disciplines. When researchers are engaged in research supported by or conducted at NAIT, the Institute has responsibilities and liabilities that are consequential to the investigations conducted by these researchers. It is also the case that funding agencies require ethics review of research proposals which involve the use of human subjects. For these reasons, policy and procedures are required to ensure that appropriate safeguards are provided. This policy will enable NAIT to ensure that research conducted on human subjects meets the standards of the major granting agencies and regulatory bodies.

¹ The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* describes the policies of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Norms for the ethics of research involving human subjects are developed and refined within an ever-evolving societal context, elements of which include the need for research and the research community, moral imperatives and ethical principles, and the law. All research at NAIT must demonstrate that appropriate methods will be used to protect the rights and interests of the subjects in the conduct of research.

Research involving human subjects is premised on a fundamental commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge and understanding, and to examining cultural dynamics. Research involving human subjects is undertaken for many reasons. All research involving human subjects is guided by two moral imperatives:

- the selection and achievement of morally acceptable ends, and
- the selection of morally acceptable means to achieve those ends.

The first component is directed at defining acceptable ends in terms of the benefits of research for subjects, for associated groups, and for the advancement of knowledge. The second component is directed at ethically appropriate means of conducting research.

NAIT endorses the principles set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans” and this document describes how NAIT will apply the Tri-Council policy. NAIT subscribes to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), (<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>), as the reference and educational resource in developing and implementing this Policy. These principles and guidelines have been widely adopted by diverse research disciplines. As such, they express common standards, values and aspirations of the research community: respect for human dignity, respect for free and informed consent, respect for vulnerable persons, respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for justice and inclusiveness, balancing harms and benefits, minimizing harm, and maximizing benefit. Accordingly, this policy is intended to ensure that the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants are maintained at NAIT in compliance with the TCPS.

The law affects and regulates the standards and conduct of research involving human subjects in a variety of ways, such as privacy, confidentiality, intellectual property, competence, and in many other areas. Human rights legislation prohibits discrimination on a variety of grounds. In addition, most documents on research ethics prohibit discrimination and recognize equal treatment as fundamental. Research should also respect the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly the sections dealing with life, liberty and the security of the person as well as those involving equality and discrimination.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Research** is a systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge.
- **Human research** refers to any project that involves the collection of specimens, data or information from persons, through intervention or otherwise. Included are procedures that have a low degree of invasiveness (e.g. surveys, interviews, naturalistic observations, exercise or psychometric testing, examination of patient records), as well as more invasive procedures (e.g. blood sampling, administration of a substance).
- A **subject** in human research is a person, who by virtue of his/her involvement in a data-gathering situation or activity, is a source of primary data or information.
- A **research ethics protocol** is a document submitted by the applicant for consideration by NAIT. This document contains a detailed description of the rationale/purpose of the study, procedures to be followed in soliciting participants for the research, obtaining their informed consent when possible, collecting their information or data, protecting their privacy or anonymity, and providing feedback regarding the study at its conclusion.
- **Minimal risk** means that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater or more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

3.0 PARAMETERS

All research projects involving human subjects undertaken by members of or conducted at NAIT – including all faculty, staff and students, including students carrying out research as part of class assignments – shall fall within the jurisdiction of a committee called the **NAIT Research Ethics Board (REB)**, irrespective of the source of financial support (if any) and irrespective of the location of the project, in the latter case, so long as the investigator represents the work as NAIT research. Projects conducted by researchers from outside the NAIT community who access Institute resources (either equipment or personnel), will also fall within the jurisdiction of the NAIT REB.

The NAIT REB shall apply the principles set out in the TCPS “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans” according to the procedures described in this document. These procedures may be varied to accommodate future approved amendments to the Tri-Council Policy.

Related Policies:

- IR 1.0 Academic Freedom
- IR 2.0 Academic Integrity and Responsibility
- IR 3.0 Conflict of Commitment
- IR 4.0 Conflict of Interest in Research
- IR 5.0 Intellectual Property
- IR 6.0 Research Administration
- IR 7.0 Research in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
- IR 8.0 Approval to Forward an Application for Research Funds to an External Sponsor
- IR 9.0 Recovery Costs of Research
- IR 11.0 Student Rights in the Conduct of Research
- IR 12.0 Use of Animals in Teaching and Research
- IR 13.0 Research Involving Bio-hazards
- IR 14.0 Research Involving Radioactive Materials

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