

<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>A.08</b>	<b>Version Number:</b>	<b>2011 v.1</b>
<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>RESEARCH ETHICS (guidelines on ethical behaviour in research, including protection against false allegations and methods of dealing with serious misconduct)</b>		
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Academic Board</b>		
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Review Period:</b>	<b>3 years</b>

#### **Rationale:**

Staff and student educational research not only informs teaching, but is foundational to the academic credibility of a tertiary educational institution. Given its mission, and commitment to the role research has in the outworking of the BTI vision, it is important that clearly stated ethical standards for educational research by staff and students be in place. As a member of the research and scholarship community, BTI endorses well-established codes of practice recognised by that community. Ethical standards which underpin this policy include respect for human dignity, respect for free and informed consent, respect for vulnerable persons, provision for privacy and confidentiality for those involved in research (both participants and researchers), resulting in the minimization of potential harms and maximizing potential benefits.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the BTI Research Ethics policy is to ensure that participants (individual or collective) rights are protected and ethical codes of practice are upheld. This policy establishes the terms of reference for the BTI Research Ethics Committee, identifies those research studies that require an ethics review, provides guidelines for the conduct of research by staff and students, as well as outlining procedures for dealing with allegations of serious misconduct in research.

An application to the BTI Research Ethics Committee is required for all research projects undertaken by any member of the BTI community. This policy applies irrespective of the source of financial support (if any) or location of the project. Researchers from outside the BTI community who access resources or participants from that community are also required to make application for an Ethics Review. An application is not required where the research relies on data that originates from a public database where aggregated data cannot be associated with any individual or group or information already in the public domain (ie public archives or statistics)

1.0 A Research Ethics Committee shall be established as a sub committee of the Research Committee in order to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with this policy.

#### **2.0 Terms of reference**

##### **2.1 Responsibilities**

The Research Ethics Committee of Bethlehem Tertiary Institute is responsible to the Research Committee for

- 2.1.1 Developing policies regarding ethical issues relating to the use of human participants as recorded in section 3.1 below;
- 2.1.2 Reviewing policies, procedures and practices biannually to ensure that ethical review is both expeditious and effective;
- 2.1.3 Establishing procedures for the ethics review process
- 2.1.4 Maintaining up to date records of all ethical reviews undertaken under this policy
- 2.1.5 Maintaining a site on the BTI Intranet/O drive containing relevant policies, procedures, applications, checklists and sample consent forms
- 2.1.6 Submitting an annual report to be included in the Research Committee's annual report to be presented to the Academic Board.

##### **2.2 Members of the BTI Research Ethics Committee (REC)**

- 2.2.1 The REC shall be made up of no less than five and a maximum of eight voting members, including both men and women and include:

- 2.2.1.1 At least two members of the Research Committee
  - 2.2.1.2 One staff member with broad expertise and experience in the methods or areas of research, from each faculty
  - 2.2.1.3 One representative of Ngati Kahu
  - 2.2.1.4 One community representative with no formal affiliation with the BTI academic community
  - 2.2.2 The REC membership shall be the responsibility of the Research Committee
  - 2.2.3 The Research Committee Chairperson, or his/her nominee shall chair the Research Ethics Committee.
  - 2.2.4 With the exception of the Chairperson, committee members shall serve for staggered three-year terms, which normally may be renewed once. The continuity of function shall have priority taken into account when members are being changed.
- 2.3 Meetings
- 2.3.1 The REC shall meet at least biannually for education, reporting and review of policy and procedures.
  - 2.3.2 A formal meeting of the REC may be called by the Chairperson upon reasonable notice (at least seven working days)
  - 2.3.3 The REC shall require a quorum of at least half of its members at all meetings concerned with the ethical approval of research proposals, except where an expedited review occurs.
  - 2.3.4 Minutes of all meetings shall be retained and made available for all committee members.

### 3.0 Procedural guidelines for a review of a research proposal

#### 3.1 Ethics approval

- 3.1.1 All research undertaken by members of the BTI community – all staff, visiting researchers, and students, irrespective of the location or funding for the research, that involves living human participants requires review and approval by REC in accordance with this policy, before the research is started, except as outlined in 3.1.2
- 3.1.2 Research based exclusively on publicly available information, documents, records, works performances, archival materials, is not required to seek ethics approval.
- 3.1.3 The REC shall be guided by the general principle that the more invasive the research, the greater should be the care in assessing the research.

#### 3.2 Applications for Ethical Approval

- 3.2.1 Requests for ethical approval must be made on the “Application for Ethical Approval Form”, with the exception outlined in 3.2.2.
- 3.2.2 Where a member of the BTI community requires BTI ethics approval as a contributing component for another institution’s ethical process, that member will not be asked to complete the BTI Ethics Approval Application form, but rather, complete and submit “Supplementary Ethical Approval Form” with the Ethics Application for the other institution to BTI REC for approval.
- 3.2.3 “Application for Ethical Approval Form” and “Supplementary Ethical Approval Form” shall be available on the BTI Intranet or equivalent or from the BTI Research Committee chair.
- 3.2.4 The approval process may begin once sufficient information has been submitted by the researcher.
- 3.2.5 The REC shall keep an “open file” for each application for ethical approval. All documentation related to one application shall be kept in this file.
- 3.2.6 It is the responsibility of the researcher to address all the recommendations made by the REC and keep the file complete and up to date at all times. All revisions in consent letters or protocols must be filed with the REC.
- 3.2.7 When the research project is finished, the researcher(s) is to notify the REC and the file shall then be “closed”. Closed files remain the property of BTI and cannot be removed by the researchers.

#### 3.3 Approval Procedure

- 3.3.1 The Chairperson or his/her nominee will initially examine all proposals and projects received for review and approval to ensure that documentation is complete.

- 3.3.2 Where the proposal or project is suitable for expedited review, the application will be reviewed by the Chairperson and one other member of the REC as described in 3.4. All other applications will be reviewed by the entire REC.
- 3.3.3 Where an application is to be considered by the entire REC, all relevant material will be provided to each committee member. A record of each response is to be filed in the appropriate "open file"
- 3.3.4 Where the Chairperson is of the opinion that a consensus exists in favour of granting ethical approval, such approval may be granted by the Chairperson without a formal meeting of the REC.
- 3.3.5 Where the Chairperson is of the opinion that a consensus reveals ethical problems or concerns such that ethical approval cannot be granted, the Chairperson will first communicate in writing with the applicant to see if the ethical problem or concern can be addressed satisfactorily to enable approval to be granted without a formal meeting of the Committee.
- 3.3.6 Where the Chairperson is of the opinion that a consensus exists against granting ethical approval, and attempts to address the ethical problems satisfactorily are unsuccessful, the Chairperson may disallow or suspend research on ethical grounds without a formal meeting of the REC.
- 3.3.7 An application may be taken to a formal meeting of the REC where :
  - 3.3.7.1 the Chairperson is of the opinion that an absence of consensus either for or against granting ethical approval
  - 3.3.7.2 a proposal or project has been disallowed without a formal meeting of the REC and the applicant(s) requests such a meeting be held
- 3.3.8 At a formal meeting of the REC called under 3.3.7 the applicant shall have the right to appear and to be heard, but not be present during the voting. In such a circumstance the applicant shall also receive a written summary of the results of the meeting including dissenting opinions.
- 3.3.9 If the Chairperson determines that no consensus exists, of if any member of the REC requires, a resolution may be put to a formal vote' but no project shall be approved on such a vote unless at least 80% of those members present vote in favour of the approval.
- 3.3.10 Ethical approval is issued for two years from date of initial approval. If the project continues after this time, then the researcher must submit a "Renewal and Continuance Form" to the REC. If no major change has been made to the research plan or protocol, the Chairperson of the REC may provide a one-year extension. If in the opinion of the REC Chairperson, the research plan or approach includes major change, then resubmission and review is required.

#### 3.4 Expedited review

- 3.4.1 Expedited review is a review by the Chairperson of the REC and one other member rather than the full REC.
- 3.4.2 An expedited review is available when the research which is the focus for the approval application obviously involves no more than a minimal risk (ie if potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms involved in participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participation in those aspects of everyday life related to the research)
- 3.4.3 Expedited review does not require fact-to-face meetings of the REC members, but the Chairperson must report results of such reviews to other members of the REC at the next REC meeting

#### 3.5 Approval for undergraduate projects

- 3.5.1 Where a research study is part of an undergraduate teaching exercise and entails no more than minimal risk, the responsibility for review on behalf of the REC lies within the faculty in which the teaching occurs. The staff member responsible for the course within which the research activity occurs must report results of such reviews to the REC at the conclusion of the course. Student research deemed to be beyond minimal risk must be reviewed by the full REC.

#### 3.6 Process Timing

The turn around time for applications shall be as follows:

- Expedited approval is generally within two weeks
- Approval by REC is generally between two and four weeks

### 3.7 Interim approval

Interim approval may be sought and granted where:

3.7.1 A researcher needs consent for carrying out a research project with the understanding that the project cannot commence without a letter of formal approval

3.7.2 A researcher needs ethical approval in order to obtain research funds from grant agencies or commissioners of research.

## 4.0 Appeals

### 4.1 Reconsideration

Researchers may request reconsideration of decisions affecting a research project. In such instances the REC has an obligation to provide such reconsideration. The researcher shall be provided with reasons for their decision and may have one opportunity to reply before the final decision is made.

### 4.2 No individual REC member may override a negative REC decision without a formal appeal process

### 4.3 Appeal

Researchers must apply to the Academic Board to appeal a negative REC decision within two months of the date of the decision. A copy of the appeal letter should also be sent to the REC Chairperson. The Academic Board shall gain input from another recognized and reputable REC or equivalent before making and communicating its decision to the REC Chairperson. The decision of the Academic Board shall be binding.

## 5.0 Conflict of Interest

5.1 Where a member of the REC seeks approval for research or has a personal interest in the research under review, then the member may not be present when the REC is discussing or making its decision.

## 6.0 Free and informed consent

6.1 Prospective participants, or authorized third parties, must be given the opportunity to give free and informed consent about participation.

6.2 Free and informed consent must be given voluntarily, without manipulation, undue influence or coercion.

6.3 Evidence of free and informed consent by the participant or authorized third party should be obtained in writing. Where written consent is culturally inappropriate or unacceptable, or where there is good reason for not recording consent in writing, the procedures used to seek free and informed consent shall be documented and described in the application.

6.4 Sample consent forms and a checklist of required information shall be available on the BIE intranet or equivalent.

## 7.0 Acknowledgement

In preparation of this document, the Research Committee acknowledges their reliance on the following resources:

- Guidelines on Fraud and Serious Misconduct in Research, Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, Canberra, 1989, pp1-7;
- Guidelines for Responsible Practice in Research, the University of Auckland, 1992;
- Guidelines on Ethical Behaviour in Research: Protections against False Allegations and Methods of Dealing with Serious Misconduct, the University of Waikato, 1993;
- and the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education: Ethical Guidelines.
- We also wish to acknowledge our reliance on the Research Ethics Policies used at Trinity Western University.

## Appendix A: GUIDELINES for CONDUCTING RESEARCH

1. Staff and students should be committed to the highest standards of professional conduct in undertaking research, and thus protect and enhance their own and the Institute's good name in the research area.
2. Staff and students should keep appropriate and detailed records of their research activity, including ethical considerations, research design and method, data, sources for that data, and methods of analysis which should all be available for examination in the event of an allegation of misconduct.
3. Research work should conform to accepted ethical standards which staff and students are competent to handle, or on which they have taken guidance from colleagues or researcher peers in other institutions (debate and criticism of proposed research from an ethical perspective is part and parcel of the research process).
4. The Institute, as well as the staff or student researcher, have responsibility to ensure the physical and psychological safety of all those associated with research. If school students are to be involved as subjects, parents or caregivers must be consulted about the research project's nature and their informed written permission obtained. Adult subjects should also give informed permission to be involved and, in so doing, be aware of any special features of their participation that are required. If data of a confidential nature are obtained, confidentiality must be observed and staff or student researchers must not use such information for their own personal advantage or that of a third party. In general, research methods and findings should be open to scrutiny by colleagues within the Institute and through appropriate publication through refereed or professionally reputable journals.
5. Original data from a research study should be kept, preferably indefinitely, but at least for five years, unless there is good reason to the contrary. Storage may be within the Institute archives, or with the individual researcher or research group. In the event of an allegation about misconduct, if original data are not available genuine errors may be construed as misconduct.
6. In preparing material for publication, there should always be acknowledgement of any ideas that are used from other authors or researchers. It is important also that all authors listed for a publication should have contributed in a significant way to the work. The principal author is usually listed first, with others in alphabetical order or according to seniority. The principal author is responsible for the entire publication and should ensure that other authors accept, in writing, responsibility either for the entire paper or for that part of it with which they were concerned. If a publication is a collaborative one between institutions, each institution should be aware that all authors accept appropriate responsibility.
7. It should be understood that the submission of similar papers, articles or abstracts to more than one journal must be properly declared to the editors or publishers concerned.