



Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Guidelines and Procedures: Research Review and Oversight Committees

These guidelines and procedures apply to the following research committees: Senate Research Committee, Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee, Biosafety Committee, and other internal peer review committees. A copy of these guidelines and procedures will be provided to all committee members with their letters of appointment.

Lakehead University must meet the highest ethical and integrity research standards in its review processes in order to continue to merit the trust and confidence of the research community, the Tri-Agencies, and the public. Review committee members, ad hoc reviewers and observers must meet the highest standards of ethical behaviour to maintain and enhance confidence in the University's ability to act in the best interest of the research community for the long-term public good. Where a conflict arises between private and public interests, review committee members, ad hoc reviewers, and observers will be expected to disclose a conflict of interest to ensure that the public interest is protected. These guidelines and procedures apply to all members of the Senate Research Committee (SRC), Research Ethics Board (REB), Animal Care Committee (ACC), and Bio-Safety Committee (BSC) with respect to activities involved in peer review and grant adjudication activities. Guests to all of the above committees, with the exception of those invited to meetings for a specific amount of time to provide specific information (i.e. researchers discussing their submissions) must also comply with the contents of these guidelines.

1. Conflict of Interest

A **Conflict of Interest** is a conflict between a person's duties and responsibilities with regard to the review process, and that person's private, professional, business or public interests. There may be a real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest for the review committee member, ad hoc reviewer or observer under the following circumstances:

- would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the application being reviewed;
- has a personal relationship with an applicant; and/or
- has a direct or indirect financial interest in an application being reviewed.

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when review committee members, ad hoc reviewers or observers:

- are a relative or close friend, or have/had a personal relationship with the applicant(s);
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the application going forward;
- have had long-standing professional or personal differences with the applicant(s);
- are closely professionally affiliated with the applicant(s), as a result of having in the last six years:
 - been a supervisor or a trainee of the applicants;
 - collaborated, published or shared funding with the applicants, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; and/or

- feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

The Committee reserves the right to resolve areas of uncertainty and to determine if a conflict exists.

Disclosure and Compliance Measures

Any review committee member, ad hoc reviewer or observer who becomes aware of a conflict of interest must promptly disclose the conflict to the Committee Chair. The Chair will determine if it constitutes a conflict of interest and what measures--such as recusal--are required. No review committee member, ad hoc reviewer or observer may participate in the review process of an application with which he/she is in conflict of interest. The conflict of interest depends on the role and level of involvement of a review committee member, ad hoc reviewer or observer and the size of the research team. Such disclosures and compliance measures shall be documented and retained for the record. In the event there is a conflict of interest with the Chair, the review committee member, ad hoc reviewer or observer must promptly disclose the conflict to the Committee Vice-Chair, or in the absence of a Vice-Chair, a designate.

In addition, in the event a researcher/applicant requests that a committee member not participate in the review/assessment of their application or protocol due to a conflict of interest, the Administrative Officer responsible for the Committee shall not share the application/protocol with the member in conflict and shall request in advance of the meeting that the committee member remove themselves from the meeting when the application/protocol is being discussed.

2. Confidentiality

Lakehead University is bound by the privacy protection provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*. This Act applies to Ontario's provincial ministries and most provincial agencies, boards and commissions, as well as community colleges, universities, Local Health Integration Networks and hospitals (as of January 1, 2012). The Act requires that these organizations protect the privacy of an individual's personal information existing in their records.

Applications reviewed by University Committees and other matters discussed at meetings disclose personal information and other information, which is confidential and proprietary to Lakehead University and its personnel.

Members of Lakehead University research review and oversight committees (Senate Research Committee, Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee and Biosafety Committee, including ad hoc reviewers and observers) will comply with Lakehead University's Employee Code of Conduct (<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/human-resources/employee-code-of-conduct>), specifically the following sections that pertain to confidentiality and protection of intellectual property:

2.5.5. Individuals may collect personal information for University purposes, and use, disclose, and dispose of information in the University's custody or control, only as permitted by provincial and federal information access and privacy legislation (such as FIPPA, Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act["PHIPA"], and Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act["PIPEDA"]) and the University's Freedom of Information and Protection of Individual Privacy Policy and related policies and regulations. For example, Individuals may have access to and use personal

information in the University's records (e.g. personal addresses and contact information, medical, counselling, registration, academic, financial, and employment records) only to the extent necessary to carry out their University duties and must otherwise hold this information strictly confidential. In addition, non-personal confidential information (e.g. research records, teaching materials, confidential advice, plans relating to the management of the University's personnel or administration that have not yet been put into operation or made public, information that has monetary or potential monetary value, or information whose disclosure could prejudice the economic interests or competitive position of the University) cannot be used or disclosed without authorization by the appropriate University authority. All questions about the collection, use, disclosure, and disposal of information should be directed to the Director of Risk Management and Access to Information.

2.5.6 No Individual shall sell, transfer, disclose, or in any way authorize the use of any intellectual property, including copyrighted works, patented inventions or processes, trade secrets, and trademarks, belonging to the University or to persons or entities that have shared the intellectual property with the University in confidence, without express authorization from the appropriate authority. When issues concerning intellectual property arise, reference should be made to the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

Confirmation (signatures required for Student Members and Community Members)

I confirm that I have read and understand the *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Guidelines*. I agree to comply with the requirements detailed above.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE

Name of Committee (i.e. Senate Research Committee, Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee, Biosafety Committee) for which you will participate in the review process

DATE

Effective Date: July 1, 2016
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