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Interagency Advisory Panel
on Research Ethics

Groupe consultatif interagences
en éthique de la recherche

Ottawa, Canada
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**Call for Nominations from the
Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics to Establish a
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special
Working Committee**

The Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) is pleased to announce a public call for nominations for the creation of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee.

Background

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human* (TCPS) seeks to address “the interdependent duties to research subjects, which are shared by researchers, institutions and Research Ethics Boards (REBs). By addressing common issues and needs, the TCPS seeks to articulate ethical norms that transcend disciplinary boundaries.”^{*} Effective application of such norms means responding to a breadth of research disciplines, methods, and environments, as well as diverse perspectives and philosophical approaches to research ethics dilemmas.

In this context, in the autumn of 2001, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Standing Committee on Ethics and Integrity (CEI) provided the newly created Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) with a brief that identified gaps, ambiguities of language, and inadequate treatment of social sciences and humanities research ethics issues in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS). The SSHRC CEI urged the Panel “to give priority attention to these matters in setting its agenda.”

Subsequent discussions with the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), as well as recent exchanges with such communities as qualitative researchers, and anthropologists, have reinforced the need for the TCPS to address more effectively the research ethics issues and contexts in social sciences and humanities disciplines.

This led to the recommendation – which was adopted by the Panel at its June 2002 meeting – for the Panel to establish a special working committee on social sciences and humanities ethics.

* Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998.



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Terms of Reference (November 2002)

Objective

To provide the Panel with advice and recommendations on strategic approaches for addressing priority issues in social sciences and humanities research ethics for the TCPS.

Role of the Special Working Committee

To provide advice and recommendations on social sciences and humanities priorities for the TCPS based on activities such as:

1. Reviewing recent documents, reports or analyses;
2. Soliciting further insight on issues if necessary;
3. Consulting with research participants;
4. Advising on priorities issues and on how they might be addressed;
5. Identifying relevant resources or expert groups to further develop identified issues;
6. Proposing strategies and options for coherently addressing priority issues; (e.g. commissioned papers, workshops, meetings, consultations, etc.)

Responsibilities

- a. *Chair of the Special Working Committee:* A member of the Panel's Task Force on Evolution shall chair the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee.
- b. *Reporting:* The Special Working Committee shall submit its reports and recommendations to PRE as a first phase of this initiative.
- c. *Follow-up:* PRE will consider the report and refer appropriate follow-up to the PRE Task Force on Evolution, as a second phase of the initiative.

Term

The Working Committee shall have an initial mandate with a duration of one year, with the possibility of renewal.

Meetings

It is anticipated that there will be two meetings in Ottawa as well as teleconferences and e-mail exchanges. A delegation of the Special Working Group will be

encouraged to present preliminary findings and recommendations at a special session of the PRE at the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities on June 1, 2003.

Draft Calendar

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee is a work-intensive committee. It is expected that it will submit a draft report within four months of its first meeting and a final report within six months. Further consultation with the Special Working Committee may continue upon submission of the final report, as required until the end of its term.

Membership

The Special Working Committee shall be comprised of at least **five** appointed members and **four** *ex officio* members, in addition of the Chair of the Special Working Committee who will be a member of the Panel. Total membership will not exceed **10** members.

The combined expertise on the Special Working Committee shall include expertise and the representation from groups such as:

- Social Sciences community;
- Humanities community;
- Relevant social sciences and humanities professional societies;
- Ethics community, particularly those familiar with social sciences and humanities research ethics;
- Representation from all levels of the research community including students.

Members with expertise in social sciences and humanities research ethics from the following entities will be invited to serve as *ex officio* members:

- The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS) Sub-committee on Ethics and Integrity;
- The SSHRC Standing Committee on Ethics and Integrity;
- The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Standing Committee on Ethics; and
- A Council member of the National Council on Ethics in Human Research (NCEHR).

Selection Criteria for Appointed Members

Appointed members will be selected to provide broad coverage of research ethics issues relevant to the social sciences and humanities community, for their research expertise, and experience as members of a Research Ethics Board. Gender, language, and regional representation will be taken into consideration.

A statement of interest of no more than 1,000 words should address the following:

1. Experience with and expertise in human research ethics and the TCPS (e.g. REB membership, research involving humans, etc.);
2. Involvement with disciplinary-focused organizations (e.g. professional organizations or scholarly societies); and
3. A statement of why you are interested in serving on this committee and what you believe you would contribute to its work.

Selection Committee

A selection committee composed of members of the PRE, the SSHRC CEI and HSSFC will select the membership based on the selection criteria. The Chair of the selection committee will be a PRE member other than the PRE member who will chair the Special Working Committee. The final list of appointees will be approved by PRE membership.

Submission of Applications

Please send your curriculum vitae and statement of interest by e-mail, letter, or fax **by February 5, 2003** to:

Call for Nominations
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee
Secretariat on Research Ethics
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1H5

Tel: (613) 996-0072
Fax: (613) 996-7117
E-mail: secretariat@pre.ethics.gc.ca
<http://pre.ethics.gc.ca>

All information and documents received will be kept confidential and are protected under the federal *Privacy Act* and *Access to Information Act*. The Secretariat will retain the submitted information and documents for three years, for consideration for future Panel initiatives.

We ask all who receive this call for nominations to help us to distribute it as widely as possible. Please forward the call for nominations to institutions, organizations and individuals who might be interested in posting and/or responding to it.

The PRE thanks you in advance for your support in ensuring that this important initiative benefits from as broad an outreach as possible.