
Indigenous-centred Research

Academic Operations Manual

Approving Authority: SJU Senate Council

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Office of Accountability: Vice President Academic and Dean

Administrative Responsibility: Research Officer

1. Policy Statement

St. Jerome's University embraces the principles of Catholic social teaching, which emphasizes human dignity, social justice, and the common good. In line with these principles, the University recognizes that conducting Indigenous-centred research requires specific care to ensure research practices are ethically sound and respectful of Indigenous Peoples and Cultures. Similar to Tri-Council granting agencies' guidelines, the University recognizes the need for Indigenous-centred research to adhere to "protocols that guide and govern" both "how, why and by whom research is conducted" and how "knowledge is accessed and shared" (SSHRC, "[Indigenous Research Statement of Principles](#)"). The University recognizes that when administering funds in support of Indigenous-centred research, it has an added responsibility to ensure that the wrongs of the past, which continue to have intergenerational impact on Indigenous communities, are not repeated.

2. Scope

This policy applies to St. Jerome's University academic staff who are using research funds administered by the University, including, but not limited to, the Faculty Research Grant (FRG), Professional Development (PD), Additional Professional Development Fund (APDF), Aid to Scholarly Publications Fund (ASPF), and Academic Support Fund (ASF).

3. Principles of Indigenous-centred Research

All Indigenous-centred research conducted through St. Jerome's University must demonstrate awareness of and compliance with TCPS 2 and OCAP:

- [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (TCPS 2), specifically, [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#);
- Assembly of First Nations Principles of OCAP ([Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession](#)).

4. Definitions

The University defines "Indigenous-centred Research" according to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) definition of "Indigenous Research," which is as follows:

Research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present. Indigenous research can embrace the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment.

Whatever the methodologies or perspectives that apply in a given context, researchers who conduct Indigenous research, whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous themselves, commit to respectful relationships with all Indigenous peoples and communities.

This understanding of Indigenous research reaffirms SSHRC's support of research by and with Indigenous peoples. Research by and with Indigenous peoples and communities emphasizes and values their existing strengths, assets and knowledge systems.

All research involving Indigenous peoples must be undertaken in accordance with the second edition of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and, in particular, Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada. (SSHRC, "[Definition of Terms](#)").

5. Adjudication of Applications for Internal Research Funds

Applications for internal research funds in support of Indigenous-centred research conducted through St. Jerome's University must demonstrate awareness of and compliance with TCPS 2 and OCAP.

Indigenous or non-Indigenous external assessors of applications for Indigenous-centred research will have experience and expertise in Indigenous-centred research.

When considering applications, external assessors and adjudicators are encouraged to consult the Assembly of First Nations Principles of OCAP ([Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession](#)) and the SSHRC [Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#) particularly the following sections: Key Concepts for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research and Key Considerations for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research.

APPENDIX

Additional Resources to Facilitate Respectful Engagement in Indigenous-centred Research

Assembly of First Nations, 2009. “First Nations Ethics First Nations Ethics Guide on Research Research and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.”

[First Nations Ethics First Nations Ethics Guide on Research Research](#)

Bell, Catherine and Paterson, Robert, K. editors, 2009. Protection of First Nations Cultural Heritage: Laws, Policy, and Reform. Vancouver: UBC Press, 476pp.

[Protection of First Nations](#)

In Canada, issues concerning repatriation and trade of material culture, heritage site protection, treatment of ancestral remains, and control over intangible heritage are governed by a complex legal and policy environment. This book considers the key features of Canadian, US, and international law influencing indigenous cultural heritage in Canada. Legal and extralegal avenues for reform are examined, including ethics codes, research protocols, institutional policies, human rights law, and First Nations legal orders. The book also discusses the opportunities and limits of existing frameworks and questions whether a radical shift in legal and political relations is necessary for First Nations concerns to be meaningfully addressed.

First Nations Centre, 2007. Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP).

[Ownership, Control, Access and Possession](#)

Kovach, M. 2010. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. Toronto: UT press, 207pp.

Indigenous-research methodologies stem from tribal knowledge and remain distinct, even though they are allied with several western qualitative approaches. Margaret Kovach’s study offers guidance to those conducting research in the academy using Indigenous methodologies. Kovach includes topics such as Indigenous epistemologies, decolonizing theory, story as method, situating self and culture, Indigenous methods, protocol, meaning-making, and ethics. The book interweaves perspectives from six Indigenous researchers and includes excerpts from the author’s own journey into Indigenous methodologies. *Indigenous Methodologies* is an innovative and important contribution to the emergent discourse on Indigenous research.

Nagy, Murielle, Guest Editor, 2011. Introduction: “Intellectual Property and Ethics [online]” in *Etude Inuit. Inuit Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1/2: 21-33.

[Introduction: Intellectual property and ethics](#)

Reder, Deanna and Morra, Linda M. Editors, 2016. *Teach, Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures*. Waterloo: WLU Press.

This book includes essays by a number of Indigenous and settler scholars. Please note that “Indigenous literatures” is not confined to the western concepts of literature and literary works. Aboriginal scholars are

members of each and every academic discipline; therefore, settler researchers should incorporate the work of Aboriginal scholars whenever possible.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, 2nd ed.

This book explores the intersections of imperialism and research - specifically, the ways in which imperialism is embedded in disciplines of knowledge and tradition as “regimes of truth.” Concepts such as “discovery” and “claiming” are discussed and an argument presented that the decolonization of research methods will help to reclaim control over indigenous ways of knowing and being. Tuhiwai Smith provides definitions and emphasizes the long history of Aboriginal peoples’ objectification at the hands of researchers.

[University of Waterloo, Office of Indigenous Relations](mailto:j2becker@uwaterloo.ca)., contact: Jean Becker, Director,
<mailto:j2becker@uwaterloo.ca>

[University of Waterloo, Office of Research](#).

Wilson, S. 2008. *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 144 pp.

This book describes a research paradigm shared by Indigenous scholars in Canada and Australia, and demonstrates how this paradigm can be put into practice. Indigenous research is the ceremony of maintaining accountability to relationships. To be accountable, careful choices must be made in the selection of topics, methods of data collection, forms of analysis and finally in the way information is presented. Wilson is an Opaskwayak Cree from northern Manitoba currently living in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales, Australia. He has spent much of his life straddling the Indigenous and academic worlds.

York University, n.d. [“Guidelines for Research Involving Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples”](#)

This website offers a useful list of general principles to consider when conducting Indigenous-centred Research

Younging, Greg, 2018. *Elements of Indigenous Style*. Edmonton: Brush Education.

This book offers guidance regarding matters of writing style and publishing practices when conducting Indigenous-centred Research.

A number of university libraries have developed research portals specific to Aboriginal studies. One especially useful option is the University of Saskatchewan’s [Indigenous Studies portal](#).