
Institutional Permission to Access Resources for Research Procedures

Policy Sponsor:	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Name of Parent Policy:	Institutional Permission to Access Resources for Research Policy
Policy Contact:	Research Ethics Officer, Research Centre
Procedure Contact:	Research Ethics Officer, Research Centre
Effective Date:	May 2, 2016
Review Date:	Annually

Purpose

To outline the process by which Researchers shall be granted access to Athabasca University (the University) staff or students (or their data which is under the care and control of the University) or resources to conduct their Research.

Definitions

FOIP	<i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter F-25.</i>
Personal Information	Recorded information about an identifiable individual. It may include, but is not limited to, unique identification numbers, date of birth, names (first, middle, surname, former, etc.), address, phone numbers, email addresses, age, educational history, disability status and citizenship.
Proprietary Information	Information that is not public knowledge and that is viewed by an organization as the property of the organization.
Student Record System (SRS)	The Student Record System (SRS) is the official system used for the collection and maintenance of student Personal Information, education history and some aspects of individual student's financial history. This system is also known as the Student Information System (SIS).



REB	Research Ethics Board at Athabasca University
REO	Research Ethics Officer at Athabasca University
Research	An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation. The term <i>disciplined inquiry</i> refers to an inquiry that is conducted with the expectation that the method, results and conclusions will be able to withstand the scrutiny of the relevant research community. (TCPS2 (2014), pg. 13)
Researcher	Anyone who conducts Research activities. This includes, but is not limited to, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and other personnel involved directly or indirectly in Research, including, but not limited to, research assistants/associates, technical staff, adjunct professors, visiting professors, and institutional administrators.
Resources	All University resources, including, but not limited to: premises, equipment, human resources, information systems, and non-public Proprietary Information.
TCPS	Tri-Council Policy Statement “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans” (2014 and as amended from time to time).

Procedure

Making a Request for Institutional Access Permission

For Research Involving Humans

Researchers must forward to the Research Ethics Office written support for their Research from:

- the Dean (or designate) or Department Head responsible for the group of students or staff being studied; or
- the Associate Vice-President, Student and Academic Services (AVPSAS) when information or participants are being sought from participants in more than one department or faculty.

Once a Certificate of Ethical Approval or a Memorandum of Exemption from Ethical Approval has been obtained (if applicable) and the Researcher has provided confirmation of support from the Dean (or designate), Department Head or AVPSAS (as applicable) to the Research Ethics Office, the Research Ethics Officer shall initiate the institutional access permission process in the Research Portal and forward the request for institutional access permission to the AVPR for review.

Where appropriate, the Research Ethics Officer will consult with the FOIP/Policy Coordinator to ensure all responsibilities under the FOIP Act are considered in the review of requests for institutional access permission.



To make a decision about granting institutional access permission for Research involving humans, the AVPR shall review the approved ethics application or exemption application, focusing in particular on the:

- description of the proposed participant pool and recruitment processes;
- confidentiality, security and retention measures described; and
- documented faculty or departmental support for the Research.

For Research that Does Not Involve Humans

For Research that does not involve human participants (or their data), the Researcher must submit a Request for Institutional Access Permission application through the Research Portal. Once received, the application will be forwarded to the AVPR for review.

The AVPR shall review the application to make a decision with respect to granting institutional access permission, and shall consider the:

- University's obligations to students and staff with regards to applicable provincial and federal privacy legislation;
- safety and security of University premises, equipment and information; and
- impact of the Research on University resources (human, physical and otherwise).

The AVPR may seek input from the University department(s) that may be impacted by the proposed Research in order to make a decision on whether to approve a request for institutional access permission for Research.

Institutional Access Permission Decisions

The AVPR shall normally review a request for institutional permission to access resources for Research within ten (10) business days of receiving notification of the request, and may:

- 1) approve the request, with (or without) conditions on the access and/or assistance extended to the Researcher(s);
- 2) seek clarification or additional information, as required; or
- 3) deny the request.

A written decision regarding the request for institutional access permission will be forwarded to the Researcher(s), with copies to the:

- Dean (or designate), Department Head or the AVPSAS (as applicable);
- Office of the Registrar (Registrar), if the request involves access to or use of the Personal Information of students;
- Human Resources Department (Director), if the request involves access to or use of the Personal Information of University staff; or



- Department Head(s) with oversight of the area(s) of the University that may be providing assistance to a Researcher for projects that do not involve human participants (or their data).

In the case of a decision to deny a request, the reason(s) for the decision shall be communicated in the notice of decision to the Researcher(s).

The Dean (or designate) or Department Head shall apprise the Research Ethics Officer of concerns arising from the access to or use of Personal Information or institutional resources during the course of the Research project so that appropriate action can be taken.

Appeals of a Decision to Deny Institutional Access Permission

When an appeal is advanced, the Research Ethics Officer will provide the VPA (or designate) the written appeal and all materials available to the AVPR when the decision to deny institutional access permission was made.

The VPA (or designate) shall commence a review within 30 days of receiving the notice of appeal and applicable materials.

Decisions of the VPA (or designate) are final and shall be communicated in writing to the Researcher(s), the AVPR and the Dean (or designate) and/or Department Head (as applicable).

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. F-25](#)
[Alberta Health Information Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. H-5](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Institutional Permission to Access Resources for Research Policy](#)

Canadian Tri Council Policy Statement: *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2nd Edition 2014, and as amended from time to time)

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>

Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions, signed with the Tri-Agency (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) (January 1, 2013, and as amended from time to time) <http://science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=56B87BE5-1>

History

Executive Group, May 2, 2016 (associated policy approved)