



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada



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Dear Colleagues:

We are writing to inform you of a recently-launched consultation on the governance of research ethics. We hope there will be strong participation by the research community in this process.

The [consultation](#) is being conducted by the [Sponsors Table](#), a group of organizations with a shared interest in promoting research involving humans that meets the highest standards in excellence and ethics. Canada's three federal funding agencies ([CIHR](#), [NSERC](#) and [SSHRC](#)) sit at the Sponsors Table and are working together to ensure that the experience and perspectives of post-secondary institutions and researchers are represented in the discussions.

In the fall of 2006, the Sponsors Table created an [Experts Committee](#) to provide advice on the development of a system of governance for the protection of human participants in research in Canada. This mandate addresses the ongoing debate over what an enhanced system of ethics governance should consist of, particularly for research that is not covered by the provisions of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(TCPS\)](#). The committee was asked to consider accreditation and other models of protection, taking into account different levels and types of risk in research.

The Experts Committee has submitted a draft report, which forms part of this consultation exercise. The consultation process has been structured around a series of broadly framed questions, intended to assess the general needs, concerns, and opinions of respondents, as well as their reactions to the specific governance model proposed in the Experts Report. Submissions will be made available to the Experts Committee to assist in finalizing its recommendations; they will also be shared with Sponsors Table members, to help them evaluate the report's final recommendations and consider next steps. A high-level summary of the feedback received will be posted on the Sponsors Table website.

Institutional support for the adoption of the TCPS in 1998 and the Tri-Council Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2002 and for the activities of the Panel and the Secretariat on Research Ethics (PRE and SRE) have contributed significantly to strengthening the culture of research ethics throughout academe. We are committed to building on these landmark achievements as the work of the Sponsors Table proceeds.

We encourage you to contribute to this consultation and to promote participation by other stakeholders. While institutional-level submissions to the consultation are particularly encouraged, submissions by individuals are also welcomed. The deadline is November 30, 2007. Please refer to the [Sponsors Table website](#) for details.

Yours sincerely,

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