

Position Statement Payment of Subjects for Research Participation

Ethical standards for participation in research emphasize that potential research subjects must be able to make a free, informed, un-coerced decision about participating in a research study (Article 3.1 Tri-Council Policy Statement 2022). Whether or not formal payment of subjects for research participation represents inappropriate inducement to participation is still a matter of debate, and empirical findings from opinion surveys on this point are equivocal.

Nevertheless, recognizing this ambiguity, the Board's policy precludes researchers from offering any inducements to participation in research other than those that arise intrinsically from the participant's interest in and altruistic motives toward the research project. To that end, the Board does not allow any substantial monetary or other payments to subjects that might induce an individual to enroll in a research project.

Specifically,

1. Researchers may not offer any payment, stipend, or honorarium to research participants of greater than \$75 CAD cash value in total.
2. Researchers may not offer gifts to research participants of greater than \$75 CAD cash value in total.
3. Researchers may not offer any other benefits to research participants as an inducement to participate beyond those that arise intrinsically from the research itself (for example, reports of test findings around physical fitness, health status, or physical or cognitive ability).

A researcher may request permission from the Board to pay subjects in particular research protocols. In such circumstances, the Board may approve payment of research participants in excess of the above amounts if

- the research is of sufficient importance to justify the payment, and
- the research cannot be conducted without the proposed payment to participants.

For all such requests, the onus is on the researcher to establish that these two criteria have been met.

Nothing precludes a researcher from reimbursing subjects for the travel and subsistence expenses they incur during their research participation (for example, parking, transit, meals or snacks).