



Conducting Social Science Research with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Department of National Defence (DND)

A Quick Guide for Researchers External to CAF/DND

Social science research with members of the Defence Team (DT) requires review and approval from the Social Science Research Review Board (SSRRB) before proceeding.

The SSRRB is located within the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA), under the Chief of Military Personnel, and consists of researchers working within the CAF/DND.

The SSRRB is committed to enabling the conduct of research, whose intent is to better understand and improve the lives of Defence Team members.

The SSRRB is mandated by policy ([DAOD 5061](#) and [5062](#)) to review social science research from an **ethical**, **methodological**, and **technical/contextual** perspective, to ensure that proposed research is:

- **Ethical:** that it adheres to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2022) and that it is in keeping with the DND and CAF commitment to respect the rights of DT personnel, including the protection of their privacy and personal information.
- **Methodologically Robust:** that it is conducted in accordance with accepted professional practices and is of sufficiently high quality to result in reliable, accurate, and valid findings.
- **Technically/Contextually Sound:** that it conforms to DND/CAF organizational aims and policies; that it does not conflict or otherwise interfere with priority efforts within the DND/CAF (e.g., operations, training, deployments, ongoing or previous research activities); that it considers and incorporates organizational and contextually appropriate factors that are unique to the CAF (e.g., terminology, recruitment strategies, operational security, safety, data, and privacy requirements of DT personnel); that it considers the potential vulnerability of CAF members and their families; and that it demonstrates appropriate organizational support from internal sponsors and Commands for the research to occur.

Who are members of the Defence Team?

- Actively serving Regular Force and Primary Reserve CAF members and their families
- DND civilian Public Servants
- Cadets
- Applicants and prospects

Research exclusively with CAF Veterans does NOT require SSRRB review.

SSRRB Review Process for multi-jurisdictional research:

There are three options for SSRRB review of external research submissions where another Research Ethics Board (REB) is involved:

1. Simultaneous independent reviews by the SSRRB and an academic/external REB.
2. Where academic REB approval has already been granted, the SSRRB will waive the *ethical* component of the review process but will still conduct a *methodological* and *technical/contextual* review of the research proposal.
3. Conduct collaborative reviews with the academic/external REB.
 - Requires discussion and agreement of the terms of the collaboration between the REBs before the submission is reviewed by either the academic/external REB or the SSRRB.

DGMPRA
Director General
Military Personnel
Research and Analysis



DGRAPM
Directeur général
recherche et analyse
sur le personnel militaire

Contact the Social Science Research Review Board at: SSRRB-CERSS@forces.gc.ca to obtain forms, standard operating procedures, or with any questions.

SSRRB

REVIEW PROCESS

INITIAL CONTACT

Researcher contacts the SSRRB at SSRRB-CERSS@forces.gc.ca.

Researcher and SSRRB Ethics Officer conduct a virtual meeting to discuss the research, determine if a SSRRB review is required, explain the process, and provide forms and templates.



SUBMISSION

Researcher completes the submission package (including obtaining a sponsor and Command Approval-in-Principle) and sends to SSRRB-CERSS@forces.gc.ca.

SSRRB Ethics Officer reviews the submission for completeness and liaises with researcher to set up a review meeting.



SSRRB REVIEW MEETING

Virtual meeting with the SSRRB Chair, Ethics Officer, Board Members, CAF Command Research Officers, and Researcher to collaboratively discuss the technical/contextual, methodological, and ethical components of the research submission.



POST-REVIEW FOLLOW UP

Ethics Officer returns annotated documents with action items to Researcher for revision.

Researcher revises and resubmits.

SSRRB Ethics Officer sends to Chair for decision: approved, requires re-review by Board Members, or requires a second meeting.



SSRRB APPROVAL

SSRRB Chair approves submission.

SSRRB Ethics Officer provides the SSRRB Clearance Certificate and Approval Number. Study can commence.



SSRRB Timelines:

The SSRRB typically reviews one submission per week. Submissions are handled on a first come, first served basis.

Following receipt of a **complete** submission (including having secured a sponsor and Command Approval-in-Principle), the review process can take 4-6 weeks (to schedule and conduct the review meeting, revise, and obtain final approval), depending on how many submissions are in the queue.

SSRRB Requirements for External Research:

- ✓ Complete SSRRB submission form
- ✓ Copy of lead researcher's TCPS 2 CORE-2022 Certificate
- ✓ All project documentation (e.g., full survey contents; interview/focus group moderator guides; information and consent forms; recruitment invitations, emails, newsletter text, social media text, etc.; any other relevant project documentation)
- ✓ Researcher agreement form(s)
- ✓ Sponsorship form
- ✓ Command Approval-in-Principle for participants to take part in the research (if applicable)
- ✓ Academic/external REB approval*

* Can submit without REB approval but final SSRRB approval will not be provided until the academic/external REB approval is obtained.

What is a Sponsor?

A sponsor's role is to endorse social science research, and to provide support to facilitate/enable the research (e.g., by coordinating access to participants, by providing contextual support, by ensuring that participants have Command approval to participate in the research) while ensuring that organizational interests are considered.

Who can be a Sponsor?

A sponsor is a Commander or a Director (or higher) in the CAF/DND, who has direct authority over the organization where the research will be conducted or has functional authority in the topic area of the research.

It is the sole responsibility of a researcher to acquire a sponsor *before* the SSRRB can review the submission; however, the SSRRB may be able to provide advice about which organization could be approached for sponsorship. Securing a sponsor has the potential to affect timelines.

What is Command Approval-in-Principle (AiP)?

AiP provides the permission from the Commands to use personnel from within those organizations as research participants.

When is Command AiP necessary?

- Whenever a study specifically targets one or more Command(s) as the research topic or question.
- When there intends to be purposeful sampling within/across the Commands/organizations.

How to obtain AiP?

Researcher or sponsor connects with the Command Research Officers to request AiP. SSRRB can facilitate this connection.

Command AiP must be in place *before* the SSRRB can review the submission. Securing Command AiP has the potential to affect timelines.