
Who can be a Principal Investigator for a BC Cancer research project?

BC Cancer Research Ethics is responsible for determining who may be a Principal Investigator “PI” (note: they may also make recommendations to the Vice President, Senior Executive Director Research, Department Heads, or other institutional officials to restrict or limit the ability of an individual to serve as a PI on a research project). All researchers must make available, upon request, their current CV and medical license number (if applicable) and relevant training and experience in sufficient detail for BC Cancer Research Ethics to make an objective judgment regarding the researcher’s qualifications.

The following criteria are considered by BC Cancer Research Ethics when assessing whether someone is eligible to be granted PI status. The person MUST:

- have a formal appointment/affiliation with BC Cancer (for example, individuals who are employed by BC Cancer/PHSA or have an academic/research appointment/affiliation);
- be qualified by education, training, and experience to fulfill the role;
- complete the TCPS2 online tutorial “Course on Research Ethics” (CORE) that is offered free of charge by the Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) or, alternatively, the following CITI modules: Good Clinical Practices, Health Canada Division 5, Social and Behavioural Research, Biomedical Research Ethics and Responsible Conduct of Research¹

The following are examples of personnel who might be eligible to be a PI:

- medical or radiation oncologists;
- PhDs;
- registered nurses and clinicians who are masters-qualified: clinicians nurse, pharmacist, audiologist, respiratory therapist; and, other employees of BC Cancer if they also meet the following criteria:
 - research is part of their job description and the project is not to meet a training or degree requirement; and
 - appropriate and significant research training and experience and confirmed research competencies; and

¹ All persons who are involved in human research at BC Cancer (eg., co-investigators, students, volunteers, residents, research staff, data coordinators, etc.) need to complete the TCPS2 (or equivalent) training.

- a demonstrated track record of research productivity, e.g. publications, receipt of funding, supervision of students, peer reviewing, etc.; and,
- approval from the applicable Department Head.

NOTE: Clinical Trials

For clinical trials that are regulated by Health Canada, the PI is referred to as a Qualified Investigator, and must meet the criteria below:

“The person responsible to the sponsor for the conduct of the clinical trial at the clinical trial site, who is entitled to provide health care under the laws of the province where that clinical trial site is located, and who is:

- a. in the case of a clinical trial respecting a drug to be used for dental purposes only, a physician or dentist and a member in good standing of a professional medical or dental association; and*
- b. in any other case a physician and a member in good standing of a professional medical association (see Food and Drug Regulations, CRC, c 870)”*

The following personnel are **not** eligible to obtain PI status for a BC Cancer research project:

- researchers who are not formally affiliated with BC Cancer;
- students (or ‘trainees’), including fellows, residents, masters or doctoral candidates, or postdoctoral researchers. Students may not serve as the PI for research conducted as part of their thesis or dissertation to support an academic degree. The restriction of students applies equally to physicians, dentists, PhDs, and other patient services professionals. Students may serve as a co-Investigator under the supervision of an individual qualified to serve as a PI.
- research associates/assistants;
- adjuncts or visiting scientists;
- technical support staff;
- patient services professionals.

If you have any questions, please contact BC Cancer Research Ethics: reb@bccancer.bc.ca