



## CODE OF ETHICS

Compiled 2014-2015 by the Ethics Subcommittee  
Approved October 2015

Updated January 2019 in accordance with the recommendations of the Subcommittee on  
Diversity and Decolonization

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## I. PREAMBLE

Physical anthropology is a diverse field of study, with research interests ranging from the biology and evolution of human and non-human primates and their ancestors, to forensic anthropology and the study of human skeletons from past populations. Physical anthropologists are also part of the overall discipline of anthropology, as well as members of various other professional, scholarly, and stakeholder communities. In their professional conduct, physical anthropologists have ethical responsibilities to their research subjects, their discipline, their scholarly partnerships, the public, and to the environment.

Canadian researchers have had a profound impact on the ethical treatment of human remains (see Buikstra 2006:408-412). For example, the CAPA-ACAP 1979 Committee Report included a ground-breaking statement on the ethical study of human remains (Cybulski et al. 1979). The report represented a response to public concern over the study of human skeletal remains from Canadian archaeological sites and was the first of its kind for any anthropological organization worldwide. While much discussion focused on the concerns of living Indigenous people regarding their cultural and biological heritage, recommendations presented within the report included increased interaction and collaboration with local communities and the equal treatment of all human remains, regardless of heritage (Cybulski et al. 1979). Buikstra (2006:410) notes this stance contrasted markedly with the position taken by the American Journal of Physical Anthropology in 1982.

Although approaches to the ethical treatment of human remains and collaboration with Indigenous groups have a long history in Canadian research (e.g., Buikstra 2006:408-412; Cybulski 2011; Cybulski and Katzenberg 2014), an overarching document outlining the general ethical responsibilities and guidelines for the conduct of research and scholarly and professional work in all aspects of physical anthropology in Canada has been lacking. The present document represents the first CAPA-ACAP Code of Ethics to address ethical concerns relevant within the various subfields of physical anthropology. It is consistent with the most recent ethical codes developed by related professional associations and societies, including the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA), the American Anthropological Association (AAA), the International Primatological Society (IPS), and the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), as well as the most recent Canadian TriCouncil Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2014) These documents, and other related materials, are available on the CAPA-ACAP website (<http://www.capa-acap.net/ethics-physical-anthropology-0>).

## II. INTRODUCTION

Physical anthropology is a varied academic field that embraces a multidisciplinary approach to the biological study of human and nonhuman primates (in contemporary, forensic, historic, or archaeological contexts), and our close and ancient ancestors. Physical anthropology is based in both the natural and social sciences, with approaches ranging from basic to applied research and scholarly interpretation. The purpose of the Canadian Association for Physical

Anthropology/L'Association Canadienne D'Anthropologie Physique (CAPA-ACAP) is to contribute to the advancement of the discipline of physical anthropology, and to promote the study of this varied field in Canada (<http://www.capa-acap.net/about-capa-acap/mission-statement>).

The study, teaching, and application of physical anthropology pose choices for which practitioners of this field are individually, and sometimes collectively, responsible. Because physical anthropology is such a varied field, every attempt has been made to ensure the *CAPA-ACAP Code of Ethics* encompasses all potential areas of interest to CAPA-ACAP members. Thus, the guidelines presented herein address general contexts, obligations, and relationships that should be considered in all ethical decision making processes. While no code or set of guidelines can anticipate every possible ethical situation, the *CAPA-ACAP Code of Ethics* outlines the primary responsibilities expected of its members and provides a framework within which to make informed ethical decisions. It is the responsibility of all CAPA-ACAP members to abide by this Code of Ethics, and to pursue research and academic endeavours related to physical anthropology in a dignified, understanding, and professional manner that reflects the ethical principles stated herein.

### III. RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of CAPA-ACAP must consider the opinions of all relevant stakeholders regarding the purpose(s), potential impact(s), and source(s) of support for research projects during all phases of research. Stakeholders include sources of funding (e.g., individuals, agencies, etc.), colleagues, collaborators, the people/animals being studied, and any others affected by the research. In order to guide CAPA-ACAP members in making ethical decisions, this section outlines members' responsibilities to the people, to non-human primates and other animals of study, to the descendants of human skeletal remains, to scholarship and science, and to the public in general.

#### A. *Responsibility to the People of Study*

When working with populations and culture groups, CAPA-ACAP members must follow the most recent edition of the TriCouncil Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (currently, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2014). In addition, members have the following responsibilities:

1. CAPA-ACAP members have primary ethical responsibilities to the people they study and to the people with whom they work. This can lead to decisions not to undertake or to discontinue a project when this primary obligation conflicts with other responsibilities (i.e., those owed to sponsors or clients) regardless of the contribution of new knowledge. These ethical obligations include:
  - i. Respecting the well-being of living people and the dignity of the deceased, including proper handling and treatment of skeletal remains, tissues, and other biological samples.
  - ii. Working for the long-term conservation of the archaeological, fossil, and historical records.

- iii. Actively consulting with stakeholders to establish a working relationship that is beneficial to all parties.
2. Members must ensure their research does not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people with whom they work, conduct research, or perform other professional activities.
3. CAPA-ACAP members must determine, in advance, whether their hosts/providers of information wish to remain anonymous or receive recognition, and make every effort to comply with those wishes. Members must present the possible impacts of either choice, and how both could be compromised despite their best efforts.
4. Members should obtain and document in advance the informed consent – in writing if possible – of persons being studied, providing information, owning or controlling access to material being studied, or otherwise have interests which may be impacted by the research. The degree and breadth of informed consent required will depend on the nature of the project and may be affected by other codes, laws, and ethics of the country or community in which the research is pursued. It is the responsibility of the CAPA-ACAP member to identify and comply with other codes, laws, or ethics that may affect their project. Although the informed consent process should be initiated during project design, it should continue throughout the duration of the project by way of dialogue and consultation with those studied.
5. CAPA-ACAP members who, during the course of their research activities, have developed close and enduring relationships with either individual persons or communities providing information or with hosts must adhere to the obligations of openness and informed consent, while carefully and respectfully negotiating the limits of the relationship.
6. While members may gain personally from their work, they must not exploit individuals, or groups. They should recognize their debt to the societies in which they work and their obligation to reciprocate in appropriate ways.

### ***B. Responsibility to Descendent Groups***

When working with unidentified human remains, CAPA-ACAP members are expected to abide by local legislation, and to treat the remains with care and respect. Coroners or medical examiners typically designate a qualified forensic anthropologist to determine the nature of the remains (forensic, historic, archaeological, etc.) and are responsible for contacting family members in modern cases. Archaeological and historic remains are under the jurisdiction of government agencies such as the Registrar of Cemeteries, or Archaeology Branch, which have provisions for contacting descendant groups. The guidelines provided here are intended for research contexts not normally covered by legislation and where permission is sought to excavate and/or examine historic or archaeological skeletal remains. As such:

1. CAPA-ACAP members should obtain permission for any destructive analysis (e.g., isotopic, histological, and/or DNA analyses, etc.), during the project planning stage.
2. Members should respect descendants' instructions regarding the skeletal remains of their ancestors, including but not limited to storage, handling, study, analysis, access to the remains, and repatriation.
3. In addition to the responsibility of disseminating research in general (see Sections E and F), if applicable, members should apprise the appropriate representatives of involved descendant groups of research findings and consider their opinions prior to the dissemination of the results.

4. CAPA-ACAP members should treat both descendants and the remains of their ancestors with dignity and respect (see Section A).

### ***C. Recognition of the Particular Nature of Research with Indigenous People***

Members whose research impacts Indigenous people, as subjects, descendant populations, or in any other way, must be aware of the particular nature and history of research with Indigenous communities which requires adherence to ethical standards that respect the principle of Indigenous self-determination and reflect sensitivity to Indigenous knowledge and the rights of Indigenous communities. Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2014) contains guidelines for interpreting ethical frameworks with Indigenous people in Canada and in other countries. These guidelines include the responsibilities of community engagement, respect for welfare, and a commitment to justice for Indigenous people. In addition, many Indigenous communities have developed their own protocols and guidelines for ethical approval, including in some cases the adoption of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) Principles (National Aboriginal Health Organization 2007). Members have a responsibility to follow all ethical guidelines and protocols relevant to their research community and to respect the wishes of Indigenous communities regarding their research participation.

### ***D. Responsibility to Non-Human Primates and Other Animals of Study***

The Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology is committed to the ethical treatment of animals in research. CAPA-ACAP follows the guidelines developed by the International Primatological Society (2014) regarding the ethical treatment of animal research subjects. This includes the following:

1. Members accept the responsibility of stewardship for nonhuman primates and other animals, and this responsibility must be reflected in our management and conservation practices and research protocols whether in the field, laboratory, or other setting.
2. The number of nonhuman primates, and other animals, used in research should be the minimum required for valid research results.
3. Research should avoid pain and distress to nonhuman primates and other animals at every opportunity.
4. The potential benefits of any research should be evaluated against the potential risks to the nonhuman primate or other animal subjects. Such risk should be minimized.
5. Information on a species' natural history should be used to improve the management of nonhuman primate or other animal research subjects, including enrichment of their captive environments, to maximize physical and psychological well-being.
6. CAPA-ACAP recognizes that the concern of its members should be extended to nonhuman primates once they have become "surplus" to our research needs. This obligation entails ensuring quality care to the end of their natural lives whenever possible. Only in rare circumstances when all other solutions have been completely exhausted may euthanasia be considered as a means for dealing with surplus animals.

### ***E. Responsibility to Scholarship and Science***

All academics have the responsibility of clearly and respectfully disseminating their work. Responsibilities of CAPA-ACAP members to scholarship and science include:

1. Anticipating potential issues of ethical concern at all stages of research and develop strategies to eliminate or mitigate them.

2. Being responsible for the integrity and reputation of their discipline, of scholarship, and of science. Thus, CAPA-ACAP members are subject to the general moral rules of scientific and scholarly conduct and should not deceive or knowingly misrepresent (e.g., fabricate evidence, falsify, or plagiarize) their own research or that of others, obstruct the scientific/scholarly research of others, or attempt to prevent reporting of misconduct.
3. Preserving opportunities for future researchers to follow them into the field, laboratory, or classroom to the best of their ability.
4. Utilizing the results of their work in an appropriate fashion, and disseminating their findings to the scientific and scholarly community.
5. Seriously considering all reasonable requests for access to their data and other research materials for purposes of research. Each member should also make every effort to ensure preservation of their fieldwork data for use in posterity while respecting specific ethical contexts (e.g., partner peoples, communities, and organizations may negotiate the forms in which data may be preserved, disseminated, and re-used for research).

#### ***F. Responsibility to the Public***

The responsibility of disseminating research should not only include publications in the academic realm, but should also encompass public venues (e.g., town meetings, public school classes, popular magazine articles, etc.). The following points should guide CAPA-ACAP members when they engage with the public:

1. Members should make the results of their research appropriately available to all interested members of the public, including sponsors, students, decision makers, and other non-anthropologists. In doing so, members are responsible for the following:
  - i. Ensure any statements made are factual.
  - ii. Consider the social and political implications of the disseminated information.
  - iii. Ensure such information is well understood, properly contextualized, and responsibly utilized.
  - iv. Clearly state the empirical basis on which their reports are founded.
  - v. Recognize their qualifications, and philosophical or political biases.
  - vi. Recognize and clarify the limits of their expertise.
  - vii. Be aware of possible harm their data may cause the people they work with or their colleagues.
2. Members may choose to move beyond disseminating research results to a position of advocacy. Generally, this is an individual decision, not an ethical responsibility.

### **IV. TEACHING**

#### ***A. Responsibility to Students and Trainees***

Another aspect of the dissemination of knowledge in academia is teaching and training the next generation of researchers. Educational institutions and wider organizations have ethical and legal codes which govern relations between teachers/mentors and their students/trainees, which may be more or less applicable depending on the discipline. For example, the nature of physical anthropological field studies often means teachers/mentors and students/trainees work closely with one another. In such situations, teachers of physical anthropology should be particularly

sensitive to ways in which relevant ethical and legal codes apply. The following outline some widely recognized precepts all teachers/mentors should follow:

1. Teachers/mentors should conduct their programs in inclusive environments that preclude discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, "race," ethnic background, national origin, social class, political convictions, disability, religion, age, or any other criteria irrelevant to academic performance.
2. Teachers'/mentors' duties include the following:
  - i. Make an effort to continually improve teaching/training techniques.
  - ii. Be available and responsive to student/trainee interests.
  - iii. Provide realistic counsel to students/trainees regarding career opportunities.
  - iv. Conscientiously supervise, encourage, and support students'/trainees' studies.
  - v. Be fair, prompt, and reliable in communicating evaluations.
  - vi. Assist students/trainees in securing research support (financial or otherwise).
  - vii. Help students/trainees when they seek professional placement (e.g., provide reference letters, etc.).
  - viii. Ensure students/trainees receive formalized safety training appropriate to their field and/or lab contexts (i.e., biohazard training, WHMIS training, lab safety training, blood-borne pathogen training, etc.).
3. Regarding their students/trainees, teachers/mentors should:
  - i. Inform them of the ethical challenges involved in every phase of research.
  - ii. Encourage them to familiarize themselves with the content of this document, as well as other relevant materials.
  - iii. Encourage them to form a dialogue with colleagues on ethical issues.
  - iv. Discourage participation in ethically questionable projects.
  - v. Publicly acknowledge student/trainee assistance in research and preparation of their work (e.g., give students/trainees appropriate credit for co-authorship, etc.).
  - vi. Encourage students/trainees to publish worthy papers.
  - vii. Compensate students/trainees justly for their participation in all professional activities.
4. Regarding sexual relations:
  - i. Teachers/mentors should beware of the exploitation and serious conflicts of interest which may result if they engage in sexual or romantic relations with students/trainees. They must avoid sexual or other inappropriate liaisons with students/trainees for whose education and professional training they are in any way responsible.
  - ii. All CAPA-ACAP members have the responsibility to report cases of harassment and sexual assault, regardless of those involved (e.g., a supervisor, mentor, colleague, student, etc.) or where it occurred (e.g., in the lab, in the field, at a conference, on campus, etc.) to the authorities.

## V. APPLIED PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Applied physical anthropologists should also consider the American Anthropological Association (1998) *Code of Ethics* and the Society for Applied Anthropology's *Statement of*

*Ethics and Professional Responsibilities* (<http://www.sfaa.net/about/ethics/>). Irrespective of the specific circumstances of their employment:

1. Applied anthropologists have the same ethical responsibilities to the people (living and dead), to non-human primates and other animals of study, to descendent groups, to scholarship and science, and to the public, as do academic physical anthropologists. This includes planning and conducting research, obtaining consent, and disseminating results in an ethical, respectful, and consciences manner, as outlined above.
2. In all dealings with employers, physical anthropologists hired to pursue research or apply knowledge should be honest about their qualifications, capabilities, and aims.
3. Prior to making any professional commitments, they must review the purposes of prospective employers, taking into consideration the employer's past activities and future goals. In working for governmental agencies or private businesses, they should be especially careful not to promise or imply acceptance of conditions contrary to professional ethics or competing commitments.

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document was compiled by the Ethics Subcommittee formed during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual CAPA-ACAP General Meeting (Fredericton, 2014). We give thanks to the various associations whose ethical codes and guidelines formed the basis of our own, including the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA), the American Association of Archaeology (AAA), and the International Primatological Society (IPS), among others. Finally, we are thankful to numerous CAPA-ACAP members who took the time to read, comment on, and approve this document and those voted to accept this Code of Ethics during the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting (Winnipeg, 2015).

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## IX. OTHER RELEVANT ETHICAL STATEMENTS

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