Purpose: This policy describes the general requirements for storage and potential destruction of data

Policy: TCPS2, Article 5.3, states “In considering the adequacy of proposed measures for safeguarding information its full life cycle, REBs should not automatically impose a requirement that researchers destroy the research data. Stored information may be useful for a variety of future purposes. Appropriate data retention periods vary depending on the research discipline, research purpose and the kind of data involved.”

The SFU REB does not have a requirement for data destruction. The Principal Investigator (PI)’s plans for preserving or destroying participants' data should be appropriate to the field of research in light of its best practices and professional, ethical and legal norms. The SFU REB requests that the PI ensure that participant confidentiality will be maintained no matter the length of retention. The PI must ensure that the arrangements for the retention and/or destruction of data are clearly stated in the consent form.

A SFU PI must include information regarding the retention and potential destruction of data in the study protocol (study details). The PI must include the following information:

- How long the data will be kept.
- If and/or when the data will be destroyed.
- Where the data will be kept (stored in locked cabinet in SFU office etc.).
- In what format the data will be retained (e.g. memory stick, paper files, etc.).
- How the confidentiality of the subjects will be preserved during the period in which the data will be kept.
- If the data is to be kept for an extended period, the PI must clearly state what will happen to the data if the PI leaves the University and, in the event of indefinite retention, provision should be made for appropriate
disposition of the data in the event of the death or prolonged illness of the PI.

- If data is to be obtained or maintained electronically, please state if a secured server will be used, describe the location of the server, and how access is protected

**Audio and Video Recordings**

Audio and video recordings are considered identifiable information. Special care must be taken when storing this type of information. Recordings should be destroyed soon after transcription. However in some circumstances the SFU REB may grant extended storage of the audio recordings, if the PI justifies the extended storage and provides clear details on how confidentiality will be maintained; this plan for storage should be appropriate to the field of research in light of its best practices and professional, ethical and legal norms.

If video recordings are to be stored for an extended period, the PI must justify the extended storage and provide clear details on how confidentiality will be maintained (e.g. blurring of images, distortion of voices etc.).

Some research may require the retention of unaltered audio and video recordings (e.g. oral histories). If the study requires the retention of unaltered videos, the PI must justify this format of retention in the study details and this information must be clearly explained in the consent form to participants.

**References:**

The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, Article 5.3).