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Procedures Related to Course-Based and Senior Independent Undergraduate Research

1.0 This guidance document provides direction on the preparation of applications for ethics review of research conducted by senior undergraduate students, including those involved in **independent undergraduate supervised research** as well as any students that undertake **course-based research**.

2.0 Student Researcher and Course Instructor Responsibilities

2.1 Student researchers and course instructors should familiarize themselves with the current version of the TCPS and any other applicable discipline-based ethics guidelines that are relevant to the proposed research.

2.2 Student researchers MUST complete the TCPS2 [CORE](#) tutorial. A copy of the certificate must be appended to applications submitted to the Departmental Ethics Committee (DEC).

2.3 Student researchers and course instructors must ensure that proposals submitted for review are complete, and describe all aspects of the project relevant to ethics review.

2.4 Student researchers and course instructors must disclose in their proposals any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest regarding their relationship with potential participants or regarding the potential uses of the research findings.

2.5 Student researchers and course instructors must consider and resolve satisfactorily any ethical issues raised by the project they plan to undertake. No student application can proceed to review by the DEC without the sign-off of the student's instructor or supervisor.

2.6 Student researchers, whether doing research independently or as part of a course, are not authorized to undertake any project involving human participants that requires review without obtaining the necessary prior approval. The DEC will not provide retroactive ethics clearance.

2.7 Student researchers must conduct their research in accordance with the contents of their approved proposals, and report any deviations from the approved protocol and any adverse events that affect participants.

2.8 Student researchers must comply with all undertakings, reporting procedures, and monitoring procedures that form conditions of project approval.

3.0 Risk

3.1 The Tri-Council Policy Statement defines research as "an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation." Course-based projects that meet the TCPS definition of research and are **minimal risk** in nature are subject to ethics review by the Departmental Ethics Committee (DEC). Any research that is **more than minimal risk** requires full review by the University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB). Undergraduate student research is typically minimal risk and therefore reviewed only by the

DEC. Any undergraduate student research that is more than minimal risk requires review by the UHREB following a review by the DEC.

4.0 Guidance for a Successful Application

4.1 All undergraduate student ethics review applications are to be submitted using application forms available in the Forms section of the [Resources page of the Human Ethics website](#).

4.2 All applicable sections of the application form must be completed, or else marked as not applicable. ***Incomplete proposals received by the DEC will be returned for resubmission.***

4.3 The level of risk posed to the participants must be identified.

4.4 All necessary signatures must be obtained on the DEC review form. Undergraduates carrying out independent research require the signature of their supervisor.

4.5 The written project description must adhere to the page limitations indicated in the application form and must include all information that the application form indicates is required.

4.6 All responses that raise ethical questions must be addressed satisfactorily either in the appropriate spaces on the application form or in attached explanatory notes. Any other aspects of the project that are pertinent to ethics review also must be discussed.

4.7 All information must be provided that is pertinent to the assessment of risk levels, balancing of risks and benefits of the research, and the possible need for ongoing review.

4.8 Conflicts of interest (COIs) must be disclosed, whether they are real, potential, or perceived. COIs may arise in the relationships with participants and/or in the potential uses of the findings. If a COI exists or is possible or perceived, the researcher must outline steps for mitigating the conflict.

4.9 PDF copies of all research instruments must be attached. This includes:
   a) questionnaires;
   b) reproductions or adequate descriptions of visual and other sensory or electronic stimuli;
   c) in the case of observational research, the nature of observation and the behaviours to be observed;
   d) in the case of interviews, either specific interview questions or a detailed description of the parameters of interview contents;
   e) if participants are to be photographed, audiotaped, videotaped, or otherwise recorded, a detailed description of the parameters within which recording will occur; and
   f) research conducted over the Internet may require additional specifications of the conditions of data collection (see Guidance Document 7 on Research Using Crowdsourcing).

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4.10 The proposal must outline the consent process, and any deviations that may apply because of the population included in the research. The student researcher should include, as relevant, the following:

   a) a participant consent form or an explicit method of otherwise obtaining informed consent – if the student researcher considers a consent form impossible or inadvisable, a justification must be provided for deviation from normal practice;
   b) if consent is verbal or involves consent by a legally authorized representative, a copy of the consent form or the information that would be provided were a written consent form to be used;
   c) if consent forms and/or processes involve the use of translators and/or translated document, the documents must correspond exactly to the English-language forms and/or processes.

4.11 For research conducted within or in association with other institutions, a letter of permission from a person with institutional authority (e.g., a school board or school) must be provided either with the proposal or before the project begins.

4.12 The proposal must specify a mechanism for debriefing study participants and providing a summary of the study's results to interested participants where practical and appropriate.

4.13 If information is to be recorded in a manner that might permit identification of individual participants, the proposal must describe the provisions that will be made for storing such information securely and maintaining the confidentiality of the information.

4.14 Student researchers must obtain approval of the DEC before beginning any processes related to participant identification or enrolment. If, during the course of a study, any alterations to procedures described in an approved protocol must be reported to the DEC. The DEC Chair will determine whether additional review is required and, if so, what type.

5.0 Independent Undergraduate Student Research

5.1 Undergraduate students may engage in independent research as part of the fulfillment of a senior paper or honours thesis. All undergraduate students carrying out independent research are required to submit applications for ethics approval using forms available in the Forms section of the [Resources page of the Human Ethics website](#).

5.2 Student researchers are welcome to consult with their DEC Chair or the Ethics Office if they are uncertain about what information is required or how the proposal preparation guidelines apply to their project. Such consultations may help to resolve ethical and procedural difficulties, and thereby to improve the likelihood of expeditious proposal approval in the formal review process.

6.0 Course-Based Research

6.0.1 Some courses provide students with an opportunity to learn by doing research. In this way, students learn basic research skills and can see how research happens in practice. In general, course-based research is not intended for generalization. Course-based research results are to be disseminated only within the course, and not in the form of publications.

6.0.2 Course-based projects may vary widely. Course-based projects may be conducted by individuals, small groups of students, or an entire class. Course-based projects may involve the use of diverse methods of research (e.g., observations in public places, interviews within a class or with individuals outside of a class, development and administration of a questionnaire, administration of standard tests, etc.). Pedagogical exercises such as role-playing an interview or designing a questionnaire that will not be used to collect data do not require ethics review.

6.0.3 The form to be used for course-based ethics review is available in the Forms section of the [Resources page of the Human Ethics website](#).

6.1 Instructor-Designed Projects

6.1.1 In cases where all students engage in an identical pedagogical exercise designed by the instructor (e.g., all are conducting person-on-the-street surveys or all are conducting interviews with people in their social network), the course instructor submits to the DEC a single course protocol on behalf of the class. Full information is required on the research processes including consent process, sample, methods, etc. No research activity may proceed until the DEC has approved the project.

6.1.2 Normally, the DEC will review submissions within five (5) working days of receipt. (Instructors should note that the DEC may establish and publicize longer time lines for review, such as in the case of multiple-submission methods courses.)

6.1.3 The instructor is responsible for ensuring that all students understand the protocol and the importance of following it fully and correctly. In the event that the course instructor makes changes to the approved protocol, the protocol amendment must be reported to, and approved by, the DEC.

6.1.4 If an approved course-based research project is to be used in subsequent years (assuming that no substantive changes have been made to the protocol), the instructor must notify the DEC. At its discretion, the DEC may approve subsequent use of the approved protocol or the DEC may require a review of the protocol.

7.0 Student-Designed Course-Based Projects

7.1 In some courses, students may design and conduct an independent project as part of the requirements of the course (this may, but does not necessarily, include students enrolled in co-op courses or practicum placements). Students who design and conduct independent research in fulfillment of the master's degree requirements should refer to Guidance Document 3 *Procedures Related to Faculty Research and Graduate Student Research,* available in the Guidance Documents section of the [Resources page of the Human Ethics website](#).

7.2 For student-designed, course-based projects, the student prepares a complete application which is then screened by the course instructor for completeness and ethics compliance and then submitted to the DEC.

7.3 Normally, the DEC will review submissions within five (5) working days of receipt. (Students should be aware that the DEC may establish and publicize longer time lines for review, such as in the case of multiple-submission methods courses.)

7.4 In the event that the course instructor makes changes to the approved protocol, the protocol amendment must be reported to, and approved by, the DEC.