



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

UW-UHREB 3.001	Departmental Ethics Committees (DEC)
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Approving Body	
Responsible Officer	Vice-President, Research and Innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to:

- State the organizational authority under which the Departmental Ethics Committees (DECs) are established and empowered;
- State the principles governing the DECs to assure that the rights and welfare of research participants are protected; and
- State the authority of the DECs in relation to the University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB).

2. SCOPE

This SOP pertains to the DECs that review course-based research and independent senior undergraduate research applications.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the DECs are responsible for ensuring the requirements of this SOP are met.

4. DEFINITIONS

See Glossary of Terms.

5. PROCEDURE

The Departmental Ethics Committees (DECs) will maintain and follow all written policies and procedures consistent with federal and provincial regulations, and the ethics principles and guidelines outlined in the latest version of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, currently TCPS2 (2018).

5.1 Statement of Organizational Authority

The authority of University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) has been established by the University of Winnipeg Board of Regents pursuant to the University of Winnipeg Act. In order to facilitate the expeditious review of human subject research, the UHREB delegates authority to the DECs.

5.2 Purpose of DECs

The DECs conduct ethics reviews of course-based and independent senior undergraduate research.

5.3 Responsibilities of the DECs

- a. Each department will establish and maintain a DEC that is registered with the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation. The DECs ensure that all course-based and senior undergraduate research applications are reviewed as required. In small departments or those that infrequently conduct human participants research, the Department Chair (or a designate) may fulfill the responsibilities of the DEC, and in so doing, may seek consultation from the Ethics Office and/or the Chair of the UHREB.
- b. The DEC will report to the Ethics Office on an annual basis the names of the DEC Chair and DEC members.
- c. All members of the DEC are required to have completed the TCPS2 CORE tutorial and copies of their certificates shall be submitted to the Ethics Office before members conduct any ethics reviews.
- d. The DECs will establish and maintain guidelines for the ethical conduct of human participants that include the latest version of the TCPS and the UHREB Policies and Procedures, as well as any accepted discipline-based guidelines, and will report to the Ethics Office on an annual basis a list of any disciplinary guidelines that are used to inform departmental reviews;
- e. The DECs will abide by UHREB Procedures for ethics review.
- f. The DECs will ensure that all departmental faculty and staff are aware of these policies and procedures, and that students and research assistants who are expected to design and/or conduct projects covered by these policies and procedures are informed of them as well.
- g. The DECs will ensure that all course-based and independent senior undergraduate research proposals within their department are complete, appropriately reviewed,

address all ethical issues, and do not proceed without the DEC approval. The DEC will ensure that any proposals received that are more than minimal risk are forwarded to the UHREB for review at that level. The DEC is responsible for referring to the UHREB any matter of ethical concern that, by reason of disagreement or otherwise, the DEC is unable to resolve, or is more than minimal risk as defined by the TCPS2; and

- h. The DEC must keep official records of their deliberations and decisions and, every January 15 and July 15, provide a list of approved projects to the UHREB.

5.4 Review of Independent Senior Undergraduate Student Research Involving Humans

The DEC reviews all independent senior undergraduate student protocols. This includes honours theses, fourth-year projects, independent studies courses, and other undertakings in which the student takes substantial responsibility for the design and conduct of a full-scale project. At its discretion, the DEC may refer an independent senior undergraduate student's proposal for further review by the UHREB. (See *Guidance Document 4, Procedures Related to Course-Based and Senior Independent Undergraduate Research* for additional information.)

Departmental level review cannot be used when a student's project is part of a faculty member's own research program. Such research must receive ethics approval from the UHREB.

5.5 Review of Course-Based Research Projects

All course-based research projects are reviewed by the DEC. The processes for the review of course-based research projects are outlined in *Guidance Document 4, Procedures Related to Course-Based and Senior Independent Undergraduate Research*.

5.6 The DEC Review Process: Timelines and Communication of Decisions

The DEC will, to the fullest extent possible, carry out its ethics reviews of research expeditiously. The DEC's ability to meet its deadlines depends on submitted applications having all essential information.

Within five (5) working days of receiving an electronic application with all necessary attachments, the DEC will carry out its review.

For applications in which there are questions and/or concerns, the researcher will receive correspondence outlining recommendations for revision or clarification. If the DEC recommends revision, the DEC will have another five (5) working days to carry out its review once it has received the revised proposal and/or responses to questions raised by the DEC.

Proposals received by the Ethics Office from the DEC that are greater than minimal risk will be reviewed at the next scheduled UHREB meeting. Because the UHREB needs sufficient time to distribute and read submissions prior to the meeting, proposals received between the submission deadline and the meeting date will not be reviewed until the subsequent scheduled UHREB meeting.

Communication of Decisions: Investigators will normally be notified of the outcome of the DEC review within two (2) working days following its completed review. For proposals referred to the UHREB for full review, the researcher will normally be advised within two (2) working days following its completed review. More time may be required if issues arise in the UHREB meeting that necessitate consultation or proposal revision, and/or if the UHREB requires that the proposal be revised and considered further at the next scheduled UHREB meeting.