

RE08 Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants

Classification: Research
 Responsible Authority: Director, Applied Research
 Executive Sponsor: Senior Vice President, Academic
 Approval Authority: Algonquin College Executive Team
 Date First Approved: 2023-06-07
 Date Last Reviewed: 2023-06-07
 Date to Complete Mandatory Review: 2024-12-07

PURPOSE

To outline the scope, limitations, and procedures for course-based research projects involving human participants at Algonquin College.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and students participating in or overseeing course-based research projects involving human participants. Course-based research projects involving human participants that are part of larger projects that are separately approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB) do not fall under this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Course-Based Research	Course-based research is defined as minimal risk research that occurs within the context of a specific course offering and that involves an assigned research activity. Course-based research activities are intended solely for pedagogical purposes and are normally required of students. The objective is to provide students with exposure to research methods in their field of study.
Human Participant	A Human Participant is an individual (living or deceased) whose data, biological materials, or responses to interventions, stimuli, or questions by a researcher are relevant to answering a research question; also referred to as “research participant,” “participant,” “human subject,” “subject,” and/or “research subject.”
Minimal Risk Research	Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

Professional Skill Development	Professional Skill Development is an activity intended to help students develop their skills within a given profession, such as interviewing clients, providing diagnostic information, or observing participants for the purposes of designing an intervention.
Research	An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.
Research Ethics Board	The Research Ethics Board is a body consisting of representatives from Algonquin College and the community with the mandate to approve, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate any proposed or ongoing research involving human participants, which is conducted within, or by members of the College.
Supervised Faculty Review	A Supervised Faculty Review is an ethical review of potential student course-based research projects involving humans conducted by the supervising faculty under the delegated authority of the Research Ethics Board.
TCPS CORE Tutorial	The TCPS CORE Tutorial is an introduction to the TCPS 2 for the research community. It focuses on the TCPS 2 ethics guidance that is applicable to all research involving human participants, regardless of discipline or methodology.
Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022)	The joint policy of the three primary Canadian federal research funding agencies—The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)—which sets out the ethical requirements by which research involving human participants must follow.

POLICY

1. All Course-based Research that involves data or biological samples collected from human participants, whether the project is developed by individual students, small groups, or as a whole class, falls under the review of the Research Ethics Board and the guidelines of this policy.
2. Course-based research involving human participants may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Students conducting interviews, administering standard tests, or distributing questionnaires outside the class to hone their interviewing or questionnaire-design skills;
 - b. Students conducting small-scale research projects where they pose research questions, gather data from human participants, and analyze the data for class presentations or reports.

3. Professional skill development activities intended to help students develop their skills within a given profession do not require REB review. This includes when:
 - a. they are intended to provide advice, diagnosis, identification of appropriate interventions, or general advice for a client (e.g. observing a child to determine an educational plan).
 - b. they are intended to develop skills which are considered standard practice within the profession (e.g. observation, auditing, assessment, evaluation).
 - c. the information-gathering process is part of a normal student-client relationship (e.g. teacher-student, nurse-patient, lawyer-client).
4. Information-gathering activities are considered primary research and require REB review when all the following criteria are met:
 - a. They are intended to help students understand the research process.
 - b. They employ the scientific method to answer a research question and/or to advance the body of knowledge of a discipline, irrespective of an intent to publish results.
 - c. Primary data is collected from human participants and organized for analysis.
5. A supervising faculty member must complete the TCPS 2 CORE training module and the Faculty Application Form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants and submit their completed application to the REB, before undertaking supervision of a course-based research project. If approved by the REB, the REB can delegate the responsibility of reviewing and approving student projects to the supervising faculty member.
6. The supervising faculty member is responsible for preparing students to conduct their course-based research projects involving human participants in accordance with the TCPS 2 and Algonquin College's Research Policies.
7. When course-based research involving human participants meets minimal risk criteria according to TCPS 2, the supervising faculty member can undertake review and approval of student projects under the guidance of the REB. Questions regarding eligibility or scope of this policy should be directed to the REB.

PROCEDURE

	Action	Responsibility
1.	Obtain REB approval for delegated Faculty review.	
1.1	Inform Chair of the intent to include a course-based research project as part of an academic course and provide a brief background of the parameters of the project.	Faculty
1.2	Complete the TCPS 2 CORE training module and the Faculty Application form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants.	Faculty

1.3	Submit CORE tutorial completion certificate and completed application to the Research Ethics Board a minimum of 15 Academic business days in advance of project commencement to provide sufficient time for REB review.	Faculty
1.4	Review Faculty application and approve if appropriate, thereby delegating authority to the supervising faculty member to approve student applications for course-based research involving human participants.	REB
2.	Prepare students for ethical conduct of course-based research involving human participants.	
2.1	Provide all students/groups with the Student Application Form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants.	Faculty
2.2	Provide guidance to students for their completion of the TCPS 2 CORE training module.	Faculty
2.3	Submit the completed Student Application Form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Humans, including all required documents and their CORE tutorial completion certificates to the supervising faculty member for approval prior to starting any data collection.	Student
2.4	If applicable, obtain documented permission to conduct research involving human participants from any outside agencies (e.g. companies, school boards, hospitals).	Student and/or Faculty
2.5	Submit a copy of any outside agency permission to the REB.	Faculty
3.	Supervise student projects to ensure ethical compliance.	
3.1	Review students' applications for course-based research projects involving human participants and approve, return for revision (Section 2.3), or refer to the REB as applicable.	Faculty
3.2	Submit a brief application summary report to the REB listing each student/group's research question, project name, and participant population as soon as possible.	Faculty
3.3	Notify the REB of any changes to the projects as they are ongoing.	Faculty
3.4	Ensure ongoing ethical compliance in the conduct of course-based research projects as per TCPS 2, College Policy RE03: Research Involving Human Subjects, and this policy.	Faculty and Student
3.5	Submit the Project Completion Form to the REB.	Faculty
4.	Retain documents related to ethical approval.	

4.1	Faculty to compile and submit all finalized Student Applications to the REB. Faculty member and REB to retain these documents for three years.	Faculty and REB
4.2	All course-based research projects involving human participants that have received delegated Faculty approval are to be tracked and reported annually according to Policy RE03: Research Involving Human Subjects.	REB

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None

RELATED POLICIES

AA26: Course Outlines and Course Section Information

AA35: Confidentiality of Student Records

AA47: Scholarly Activity

AA48: Academic Integrity

AD02: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

RE02: Integrity in Research and Scholarly Activities

RE03: Research Involving Human Subjects

RELATED MATERIALS

[REB Faculty Application Form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants](#)

[REB Student Application Form for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants](#)

[REB Guidelines for Ethical Review of Course-based Research Projects Involving Human Participants](#)