

***REB Guidelines for Minimal Risk, Course-based Student Research  
Involving Human Participants<sup>1</sup>***

The application procedure described in this document provides an efficient process for CapU faculty to receive REB approval for minimal risk student research involving human participants conducted under their supervision as a requirement of course completion.

An advantage of an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research is that it enables REB approval of student research activities within a course on an annual basis, rather than REB review of each student research project individually. Once approved by the REB, CapU course instructors may apply to renew an approved REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research on an annual basis.

Once approved by the REB, an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research documents the scope of projects, methods, risks, and participant populations that student researchers may undertake with REB approval as part of a course under the supervision of the course instructor.

The REB is a resource intended to support course instructors to develop knowledge and documentation required to ensure research conducted under their supervision complies with relevant law and policy, particularly the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (TCPS2, 2022). Please see the [REB website](#) for REB application forms, guides, and examples.

**REB approval is required for research involving human participants conducted under the auspices of CapU, including course-based student research intended primarily for pedagogical purposes.<sup>2</sup>**

**These guidelines describe:**

1. Types of student activities that require REB approval;
2. Types of student research NOT eligible for approval within an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants;
3. Guidelines for REB approval of course-based student research involving human participants;
4. Instructions for applying for REB approval of course-based student research involving human participants; and
5. Resources to support REB approval of REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants.

**1. Types of student activities that require REB approval**

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from UBC Office of Research Ethics, "Course-Based Research Project Applications for Undergraduate and Graduate Projects"; UVIC Research Services, Human Research Ethics, "Course-Based Research Ethics Guidelines for Instructors"; SFU Research Ethics, "Course Approvals"; UoT Office of Research ethics, "Undergraduate ethics review protocol form course template."

<sup>2</sup> TCPS2 Article 2.1.

REB approval is required for *research involving human participants*, which “includes course-based research activities, the **primary** purpose of which is pedagogical. Such pedagogical activities are normally required of students (at all levels) with the objective of providing them with exposure to research methods in their field of study.”<sup>3</sup>

‘Research’ is defined as an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation.<sup>4</sup>

‘Human participants’ are those from whom information and/or materials are collected, and/or who are observed, for the purpose of research.<sup>5</sup>

Course-based student activities intended **exclusively** for teaching and learning, where the products of these activities are not distributed outside the University, **do not** require REB approval.<sup>6</sup> Course-based student research that may result in the distribution of research findings outside the university requires REB approval.

For example, REB approval is required for course-based student research intended to result in the distribution of research data and/or findings through conference presentations, journal articles, the CapU institutional repository, and/or provision of project report to an external partner, etc.

## 2. Types of student projects not eligible for approval within an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research

The scope of projects approved within an REB Protocol for Course-Based Student Research is limited to ‘minimal risk’ research, “in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research are no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.”<sup>7</sup>

The following types of projects will **not** be approved within an REB Protocol for Course-Based Student Research Involving Human Participants. Student researchers and their supervisors are required to submit a project-specific REB application for any of the following types of projects:

- Faculty research, even if student researchers are involved;
- Projects completed as a requirement of an honours project or thesis;
- Projects involving interaction with human participants that begin before or extend after course completion;
- Projects engaging in subject matter outside the pedagogical scope of the course;
- Projects involving persons affiliated with another institution that requires approval of its own ethical review process;
- Projects involving Indigenous communities or organizations, focusing on Indigenous people, or focusing on Indigenous peoples’ language, cultural heritage, artifacts, or traditional knowledge;
- Projects involving collection of information that may disclose potentially illegal activities;

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<sup>3</sup> TCPS2 Article 2.1.

<sup>4</sup> TCPS2 Glossary.

<sup>5</sup> See, also, TCPS2 Article 2.3 for discussion on non-participant observation.

<sup>6</sup> [CapU REB Policy S2021-02](#); see, also, TCPS2 Articles 2.2-2.6 for activities exempt from REB review, such those involving the use of publicly available data, non-participant observation, secondary use of anonymous data, and quality improvement activities.

<sup>7</sup> TCPS2 Glossary.

- Projects involving invasive methods, sensitive subject matter, deception, or withholding of information from participants;
- Projects involving persons or groups in vulnerable circumstances, including but not limited to individuals with diminished capacity to consent, incarcerated individuals or groups, or youth or children under the age of 17; and
- Projects involving greater than minimal risk.<sup>8</sup>

Student research involving any of the above criteria are **not** eligible for approval through a REB Protocol for Course-Based Student Research. Research involving human participants meeting any of the above criteria must be submitted to the REB using the regular REB Application for Ethical Review Form.

If a student research project begins with approval of an REB Protocol for Course-Based Student Research and later may expand outside the scope of approved activities, a regular application for ethical review must be approved by the REB prior to recruitment of participants and/or collection of research data.

### 3. Guidelines for Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants

The REB may approve an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research under the following conditions:

- The REB approves an application for course-based student research submitted by the course instructor;
- Once approved, an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research covers students' research activities and the data they collect while enrolled in the course, only;
- The course instructor defines and documents the scope of allowable student research activities within the course, and provides clear instructions for students regarding the conditions under which students may undertake research activities involving human participants;
- The course instructor provides training and supervises students on the application of research methods, including but not limited to recruitment of participants, consent, collection and interpretation of data, protection of privacy, production of research findings, and destruction of data;
- The course instructor ensures that students are aware of and adhere to all policy and law relevant to the research methods proposed, including but not limited to privacy law, Tri-agency policy, and University policy and procedures relevant to research involving human participants;
- The course instructor develops and submits to the REB for approval a set of *template* research instruments relevant to the research activities proposed within a course, including but not limited to:
  - Template recruitment instrument/s that advertise the research to prospective participants, such as recruitment posters, posts to social media, verbal recruitment scripts, recruitment email, etc.;
  - Template consent instrument/s, such as consent forms specifically tailored to the research methods proposed, such as consent form/s for interviews, online surveys, and focus groups;
- The course instructor submits for REB approval guidelines that students must follow relevant to the research methods proposed, including but not limited to guidelines for conducting online surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and use of third-party service providers (e.g., online survey platforms, video conference services, and/or audio recording and transcription applications);
- The course instructor closely reviews and approves all research instruments to be deployed by students in the conduct of research activities involving human participants, and documents their

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<sup>8</sup> The TCPS2 glossary defines minimal risk research as "Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research are no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research."

approval by signing an Instructor *Approval Form for Student Research* for each research project to be conducted under the auspices of the course;

- The course instructor and all students conducting research involving human participants complete the Tri-agency Course on Research Ethics;
- Research projects may be conducted by individual students, groups of students, or as a single course/class project; and
- The course instructor is responsible for the ethical conduct of all student research activities conducted under the auspices of the course.

#### **4. Instructions for applying for an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research**

To apply for REB approval of an REB Protocol for Course-based Student Research, please submit the following by email to [reb@capilano.ca](mailto:reb@capilano.ca):

- REB Application Form for Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants with *all* sections completed;
- Current course syllabus or course outline;
- Student research assignment instructions;
- Template recruitment and consent instruments consistent with the research methods proposed;
- Guidelines for research methods relevant to the research methods proposed, such as guidelines for conducting online surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and the use of third-party service providers;
- Instructor Approval Form for Student Research; and
- TCPS2 CORE Certificate of Completion of the course instructor.

#### **5. Resources to support REB approval of Protocol for Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants.**

Please see:

- REB Application Form Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants; and
- [REB guides, forms, and examples available on the REB website.](#)

**Please be reminded that prior REB approval is required for research involving human participants conducted under the auspices of Capilano University, *including course-based student research conducted primarily for pedagogical purposes.***