

Course-Based Research Ethics Guidelines for Instructors

Student Research Activities Within a Course

Course-Based Research Ethics applications and approvals cover course instructors¹ and their students when students practice and acquire research skills that fall under “research involving human participants.”

The research skills and activities are identified and supervised by the instructor and may include a range of skills or focus on one or two skills, depending on the course level and discipline.

These Guidelines describe the activities and situations that are covered under a Course-Based Ethics application. The Research Ethics Board reserves the right to make determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Course-based research activities are by definition developed and constrained by the course instructor, aimed at achieving specific pedagogical goals for students while in the course. As such, it is possible for instructors and students to refine these activities during the course, but the instructor is ultimately responsible for what students take with them into the field.

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Overview of Document

- I. Inclusion criteria for using the *Course-based Ethics Application Form*.²
See “Table 1 Research Activities Exempt and Requiring Human Ethics Review”
See “Impromptu Research”
- II. Exclusions: When Course-based Ethics Applications are NOT accepted. When data collected under a Course-Based approval may NOT be used. How to proceed.
- III. Exemptions: Course-based research activities vs. professional training activities

¹ UVic faculty, sessional instructor, post-docs, and graduate students

² TCPS 2, Article 6.12: see review of course based research activities <http://www.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter6-chapitre6/#toc06-1>

- IV. Instructor's responsibilities in course-based research
- V. Special considerations: Community-engaged learning
- VI. How to Complete the Course-based Application Form

Section I: Inclusion Criteria for Course-Based Ethics Applications

A Course-based Ethics Application is submitted by the course instructor as the "Principal Investigator."³ When issued, the **Course-based Approval** covers students' research activities, including the data they collect, *while they are enrolled in the course*.

In the Course-based Ethics Application, the instructor must demonstrate how they will provide guidance and instruction to students to ensure that students adhere to the university's policies and procedures for research.

[Research Policy RH8100](#)

[Policy RH8105 Research Involving Humans Associated Procedures for Conducting Human Research](#)

Instructors are **eligible** to complete a **Course-based Research Ethics Application** for students' activities and assignments under the following conditions:

- Instructors set parameters and instructions for students as to the research skills and conditions under which students will undertake activities within the course syllabus or outline.
- Instructors supervise and teach students on conducting one or more integrated research activities (e.g., students practice recruiting participants, collecting data, interpreting data, compiling the data in various formats, explaining and writing about findings and conclusions in an academic manner).
- The content of questionnaires, interview questions, and observations etc. do not need to be fully defined but the application should include draft and suggested content/questions, written by the instructor, to support the ethical review.

³ To access the UVic-RAIS Online System as principal investigator, permission may need to be set up for sessional instructors, post-docs, and graduate students by the Human Research Ethics Office. Please contact us at 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

- The research activities may be carried out by individual students, small groups, or as a single, coordinated mini class project; regardless of format, all activities will be supervised by the instructor.
- Instructors may provide a choice of activities in the course syllabus for students to engage in a research activity to fulfill a class assignment.

Impromptu Research

In the event that an instructor has not planned a course assignment involving human participant research but their student(s) proposes the idea *after the course has started*, the instructor should first decide whether they have time and expertise to provide supervision and training to the student(s) in the area that is being proposed.

If the answer is no, this means that the student's project will not proceed, and then no action is required through the Human Research Ethics Board.

If the answer is yes, the instructor will: 1) Explain the situation in their Course-based Application Form; and 2) Outline the student(s) activities.

- ❖ When students propose impromptu research, instructors and students are required to follow the University's policies for research involving human participants.
- ❖ See also "**Section V Special Considerations: Community-engaged Learning.**"

Renewal and Amendments

- Course-based Ethics Approvals are granted for one year and must be renewed if there are no changes in the next course offering. In the event the course is taught every other year, or different instructors may teach the course, we recommend that the approval is renewed so that it is maintained. **Once closed, approved protocols cannot be re-opened; a new application is required.**
- If there is a change to the course activities or to the instructor, an Amendment Form with the "Notification of change of PI" form must be submitted through the online UVic-RAIS system (launched June 2018) with the new instructor's name and contact information. For more information on how to change the PI go to RAIS support site under Guidance and Tools/Accessing RAIS."
- If the course received research ethics approval via the paper-based system (prior to June 2018), the instructor will submit a Request for Modification Form from the [Human Research Ethics homepage](#).

- If there are substantive changes to the approved course-based activities, please contact the Ethics Office as soon as possible, as a new application may be required, at ethics@uvic.ca or 250-472-4545.

Data Collected by Students

- In most course-based research, data destruction is the default because: 1) the use of the data is restricted to fulfilling the course requirement; and 2) destruction ensures that instructors teach students how to properly destroy paper and electronic data to avoid breaches.
- Instructors must ensure that data collected by students is destroyed by the students at the conclusion of the course (e.g., when the assignment has been submitted to and graded by the instructor).

Only in very specific and limited circumstances is data destruction waived in a Course-based Research Ethics Application or under a Course-based Approval:

- When the course instructor has partnered with an Indigenous community and, in keeping with engaged research practices with Indigenous participants and communities, the community has requested the data for their use and/or archiving purposes (e.g., audio tapes of Indigenous language speakers, stories, photos, etc.).
- When the course instructor has partnered with community-based organization(s) and not-for-profits before the course starts, and the specific organization has asked that the data be provided to them. The instructor will have arranged this before the course starts. *(See Section 5 on Community-based Research and Community-Engaged Learning.)*
- Similar to the above, when the course has a “client” (usually, a person in an organization, government office etc. for whom a report will be prepared) and the data may be used by the client. The instructor will have arranged this before the course starts.
- ❖ If there are other reasons for waiving the destruction of data before the conclusion of the course, please see “Section II: Exclusion Criteria for Course-based Ethics Applications.” Other intended uses of the data normally require the submission of a Standard Research Ethics Application and are not covered under a Course-based Application or Course-based Approval.

1.1 Table 1 is a list of common research activities which are subject to human ethics oversight.⁴

More invasive activities are normally outside the scope of Course-based Research (see Section 1.2 Minimal Risk Research).

Table 1: Research Activities Exempt from (L) and Requiring (R) Human Ethics Review

Research activities exempt from human ethics review (examples include, not limited to)	Research activities requiring human ethics review and approval (examples include, not limited to)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review (published academic articles) • Meta-analysis of published research • Writing a curriculum • Policy analysis, policy report • Writing a training manual using published information • Researching a public figure (e.g. artist, politician, activist) using public documents, published materials • Documenting a community issue using only public documents, information • Observations in public venues of public events** • Viewing movies, works of art, listening to radio broadcasts, podcasts <p><i>*Online posts from websites and online groups that <u>DO NOT</u> require a log-in, membership etc. are considered publicly accessible with no reasonable expectation of privacy.</i></p> <p><i>** Videotaping and photographing of people that allow people's image to be recognized, and surreptitious recording, even in public spaces, must recognize people's right to a reasonable expectation of privacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys, questionnaires (in-person, online, web) • Interviews (in-person, Skype, phone) • Group discussions/focus groups • Observations of people in non-public venues (permission for access required e.g., classrooms, meetings) • Audio-recording people in non-public venues when observing them (audio recording people while in <u>non-public spaces and events</u> requires an ethics review, regardless of whether the people are identifiable or not) • Video-recording people in non-public venues when observing them (video-recording people in <u>non-public events and spaces</u> requires an ethics review, regardless of whether the people are identifiable or not) • Taking observational notes of people in non-public venues • Engagement with people and their information via Facebook or other non-public social media platforms* • Autobiographical and auto-ethnographic studies, self-reflective studies • Using EEGs, MRI, equipment/devices on people and apps on participants' electronic devices (Note: These usually require training with the devices and are usually outside a Course-based Application) • Using protected databases and data where you must apply for access/permission from

⁴ These activities are drawn from the University's list of activities that require review and approval by the Human Research Ethics Board. They are not limited to Course-based Ethics Applications but are used also for the Standard Ethics Application for a student thesis, dissertation, honours project, or capstone project.

	<p>government, health authorities, hospitals, school boards, institutions, companies, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using protected or confidential reports and information where you must apply for access/permission from government, health authorities, hospitals, school boards, institutions, companies, etc. • Biological materials you collect or receive from other researchers such as cells, blood, urine, feces, sweat, etc. <p><i>*Online posts from sites and groups that <u>DO</u> require a log-in, membership etc. are not considered publicly accessible because there is reasonable expectation of privacy by people in those groups and sites.</i></p>
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1.2 Minimal Risk Research

While the Human Research Ethics Board anticipates a variety of knowledge and skills between undergraduate and graduate students and between different disciplines and courses, instructors must demonstrate in the Course-based Ethics Application that the characteristics and contexts of students' research activities will reflect "minimal risk" research activities.

Minimal risk means that, "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." (TCPS2 Chapter 2.B)

The Research Ethics Board assesses minimal risk for Course-Based Applications in key areas:

Participants Involved in Student Research Activities

- Participants are usually competent adults, youth, or children
- Participants live freely in the community (i.e., not hospitalized, do not reside in prison)
- Participants are not considered vulnerable, or, where a vulnerability is identified, it is not the focus of the research and complex risk mitigation plans are not required.

Characteristics of Research Activities

- The choice of research activities and methods identified by instructors and selected by students must be non-invasive, such as the use of observations, questionnaires, focus groups, or interviews. Invasive activities, requiring a Standard Application, could include the student collecting blood samples, human tissues etc. This will depend on the pedagogical aims of the course (e.g., the course teaches biology students how to collect and analyze blood spots for certain proteins.)

- The research activities do not involve the use of deception.⁵

Topics and Risk to Participants and Potential Risks to the Students Conducting Research Activities

- The activities to be conducted with the participants (e.g., the kinds of questions they are posed in an interview) present little or no risk to them.
- The student conducting the activities are not themselves exposed to risks.
- The topic areas that students propose to the instructor fall within the instructor's realm of expertise such that the instructor has the background to provide training and support to the student(s).
- Research risks do not outweigh benefits.

1.3 When students in the course are research participants for each other:

- A Course-based Application is required when students collect data from other students enrolled together in the same course (e.g., students interview each other, analyze data collected from each other). The reason is that students are conducting human research regardless of being enrolled together in the same course.

1.4 Students using secondary data and biological materials:

- In the Course-based Ethics Application submission, instructors must clarify whether the secondary data or biological materials contain identifiers and if yes, explain why.
- Attach the institutional data access request and approval from the data custodian (e.g., Ministry of Health).
- If the data custodian is another faculty member at UVic or another university, attach an email from the faculty member allowing access/use and the ethics approval certificate as applicable.
- Ensure that any conditions on data use, as required by the data custodian, are clarified in the application and attach documentation of such.

⁵ Deception involves the use of limited or partial disclosure about the purpose of the study or its hypothesis during the consent process where full disclosure would render the proposed research *impossible* to carry out.

Section II: Exclusions - When Course-Based Ethics Applications are Not Accepted and When Data Collected under a Course-based Approval May Not be Used

A Standard Research Ethics Application must be submitted in the following scenarios:

Purpose for and uses of data

- Graduate and undergraduate honours projects, capstone projects, theses, dissertations⁶
- Data collected under a course-based approval may not be used to fulfill the same student's future candidacy paper, major paper, project, etc. program requirements.
- To fulfill the requirements of a directed studies course.⁷
- Using the data for a *current or future* academic program, degree, or project already started (or contemplated) at UVic or another post-secondary institution, or for a publication.

Risk levels associated with student activities

- Research activities designed by the instructor where the participant population may be considered vulnerable and the risks to participants are not negligible.
- A student(s) intending to engage in a research activity which, by its nature and character, is determined by the Human Research Ethics Board to be higher risk research.

Instructors' own research project and/or program of research

- The instructor is researching their own students in a course or lab they teach (e.g., students are providing data as research participants).
- Course-based research activities in which research assignments are part of a larger-scale project, such as their instructor's (or another faculty member's) own research program/project.

⁶ From TCPS2 Article 6.12: "If these activities are used for the purposes of research (e.g., as part of a researcher's own research program), they should be reviewed by the regular institutional REB procedures. Theses or equivalent research projects involving human participants typically meet this Policy's definition of research (see Application of [Article 2.1](#)), and should be reviewed by the REB following a proportionate approach (see [Article 6.12](#)).

<http://www.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter6-chapitre6/#toc06-1>

⁷ Directed studies courses reflect a different ethical context compared to regular courses. Directed studies courses are offered by instructors to an individual student when a regular course does not cover a specific curricular area. The syllabi and assignments are co-constructed by the instructor and student based on agreed-upon pedagogical aims. For this reason, the student and instructor may, if they elect, have the student undertake research that is higher risk and sensitive. Directed studies are therefore similar to honours projects, which are also ineligible for Course-based Applications.

- The instructor provides research skills development to their students **and** the students collect data for the instructor's own program of research or project (e.g., the students are *de facto* research assistants for the instructor's own research).

Other situations where a Standard Application must normally be submitted in lieu of a Course-based Application

- As part of a course assignment, when instructors require students to design and conduct their own series of research activities or a fully executed project from start to finish that would be considered by the Research Ethics Board as research project equivalent to an undergrad honour's project.

SECTION III: Exemption - Course-based research activities vs. Professional training activities

Program courses that provide professional training activities for students where the training involves collecting information from and about people, are usually exempt from human ethics review when the courses are mandatory for professional degree completion in the following types of courses/programs. The courses include and are not limited to the following:

- ❖ Clinical training courses: Psychology Clinical Counselling, School of Nursing, Island Medical Program and practicum placements
- ❖ Legal training courses where students must interact with a client to provide legal advice
- ❖ Teacher certification and student teaching courses and practicum placements
- ❖ Social work practical courses and practicum placements
- ❖ Child and Youth Care courses and practicum placements

Activities that are considered **professional training activities** share the following characteristics:

- The intent is to use the information collected from an individual for **the sole purpose** of providing clinical or legal advice, diagnosis, identification of appropriate interventions, or advice/counsel for a client or patient.
- The intent is for the student trainee to develop skills which are considered standard practice within a profession (e.g., assessment, intervention, evaluation, auditing).
- The information collected from an individual reflects the professional interaction between the student trainee and an individual who they would be interacting with as part of their professional training.
- ❖ If a student trainee has identified to their instructor that they propose to use the information collected from an individual from their clinical, legal, or practicum interaction to fulfill a program requirement (e.g., undergraduate honours project, graduate capstone project, graduate project, thesis, dissertation), a Standard Research

Ethics Application must be submitted to cover these situations. Please contact the Research Ethics Office as soon as possible, since practicum placements may be short.

Exemption from Research Ethics Review for Student(s) in a Course

Instructors should be aware of when their students' activities fall under the university's policy of "Research Involving Human Participants," even in cases where the course objective is not to teach students how to conduct research. Instructors should contact the Human Research Ethics Office if they require clarification or guidance. ethics@uvic.ca 250-472-4545

Instructors should email the Research Ethics Office for a determination of an exemption for a student's activity or proposed activity in their course. Decisions are made in writing. They usually take no more than two or three business days.

SECTION IV: Instructor's Responsibilities in Course-based Research

The instructor takes on the role of "Principal Investigator" and submits a single completed application for *Ethical Review of Course-based Research Activities Involving Human Participants* to cover all of their students' research activities/assignments in the course.

The application for *Course-based Research* must be submitted by the instructor in the UVic-RAIS System and signed off by the Departmental Chair or Director. The signatory is affirming that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of the course-based research project.

Involvement of and permission from external entities in research (companies, community agencies, school districts)

In some courses, instructors plan for students to conduct their research activity or activities at an external host organization or in collaboration with external entities. Instructors are strongly advised to contact organization(s) as early as possible *before the start of the course and before preparing the Course-based Ethics Application* to find out the expectations the other entities, and whether permissions (informal or formal) must be sought from them (if so, from whom, etc.).

- School Districts/Public Schools
- Private Schools and Colleges
- Indigenous communities and/or Indigenous organizations
- BC Health Authorities: Please contact the Research Ethics Office for special instructions when involving health authorities: 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca

- BC “ethics partner” universities UBC, SFU, UNBC: Please contact the Research Ethics Office for special instructions when involving these universities: 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca

SECTION V: Special considerations - Community-engaged learning

Instructors who approach their courses and pedagogical practices from a community-engaged learning perspective create an array of learning activities and opportunities for their students. Usually community-engaged learning opportunities involve a community organization(s) or host organization(s) that has agreed—ahead of the course—to partner with. This organization often plans key aspects of the course-based research activities, goals, and outcomes together with the instructor.

Common Challenges for Community-Engaged Courses and Instructors and Organizations:

Depending on the parameters that the instructor has set for their course, a specific student’s placement situation, a specific organization, and/or the partner/host organization, once a community-engaged course has begun, it can be challenging for the instructor (and students) to anticipate whether some student activities fall under, or start to look like, research involving human participants. In summary:

- Instructor or student(s) unsure of whether or not the students’ activity is getting close to or “crossed the line” into research involving human participants
- The nature of the student activity changes at or with the partner organization and/or the student during the course
- Impromptu research is proposed by the student and/or the partner organization(s)

Given the potential for uncertainty and transitions during the course, instructors are strongly encouraged to be pro-active.

When community-engaged learning requires or may require Course-based Research Ethics review

Each community-engaged learning course and the assignments are unique and determined by the instructor and usually the host organization. In general, the following characteristics of community-engaged learning course assignments require Course-based Research Ethics review: (* Items are most important).

- Instructor and partner (and student) co-create a student project or set of activities.
- *Using activities or methods from Table 1 “*Requiring Human Ethics Review*,” gathering information at, with, or from the community partner to fulfill a course assignment.
- *Student analyzes and/or compiles this information.

- * Student presents this information in any form (written, presentation, visual) as a course assignment. Under normal circumstances the assignment is graded.
- * The student must remove the gathered information from the organization, and retain it *for themselves* for a period of time to complete their UVic assignment.

When community-engaged learning activities do not require course-based human research ethics review

In general, the following characteristics of a community-engaged learning assignment does NOT require Course-based Research Ethics review:

- The student(s) participates in the operations and programs of the community partner to provide their expertise and to learn skills, The activities may include those from the Table “Requiring Ethics Review” however, the information collected from people is solely for the organization’s use and not for the student’s use. (e.g., a student conducts a group discussion and the information is retained by the organization).
- Information that the student gathers from or at the organization or accesses remains at all times exclusively with the partner and is not brought back or transmitted for the students’ use to fulfill the course assignment(s).
- Activities during the course such as debriefings, check-ins, and class discussions about what students are learning, their impressions etc. are considered standard pedagogical practice and not research involving humans.

Section VI - How to Complete the Course-Based Ethics Application

As the PI, the instructor will:

1. Upload a complete course outline or syllabus that includes teaching of research ethics as well as the research activities/assignments related to and involving human participation specific to the course-based application.
2. Prepare students to undertake the research assignment(s) for this course, in compliance with the ethical standards set out in the University of Victoria ethical guidelines and policies, and the [Tri-Council Policy Statement \(TCPS2\)](#) in particular. Students will be instructed to:
 - ✓ Explain the nature and purpose of the research project to their participants.
 - ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of recommended recruitment strategies (e.g., by letter; through an organization; presentation to a group; etc.), and the necessary

safeguards required to ensure that no coercion is used if there is the potential of a relationship (e.g. relative, friend, coworker, etc.) as is often the case between students and participants in course-based research.

- ✓ Obtain and document free and informed consent from participants.
 - ✓ Explain the voluntary nature of participation and the participants' right to withdraw at any time without consequences.
 - ✓ Assess any potential risks and/or benefits related to the study and explain them to participants (nb. research assignments must be minimal risk).
 - ✓ Describe compensation offered to participants (if applicable).
 - ✓ Address anonymity with their participants (i.e., protection of the identity of participants along a continuum, from complete to no protection, as appropriate and as agreed to by participants).
 - ✓ Address confidentiality issues with participants (i.e., including limits to confidentiality due to selection, the nature of group activities, etc. as well as maintenance and disposal of data; including secure storage of, and controlled access to the raw data and personal information). In the case of course-based research activities all data will be destroyed at the end of the course.
 - ✓ Explain how the results will be reported and where.
 - ✓ Explain any other procedures relevant to complying with the ethical guidelines and policies of the University of Victoria.
3. The instructor will provide a completed Participant Consent Form Template that the students must use that is specific to the course-based research activities developed by the instructor as outlined in the course-based application and the course outline. Please complete and upload with the application.
 4. If there is more than one possible research activity/option, then the Instructor should describe these in the course outline and on the course-based application and ensure that the options are clearly indicated on the informed consent form template, as necessary (e.g. separate consent forms or single consent outlining the options where appropriate).