Request for REC Review for Graduate-Level Course-Based Research Projects

# Information

There are three levels of ethics review outlined in the TCPS2. You can read more about this in [Article 6.12 of the TCPS2](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter6-chapitre6.html#12). Briefly, these levels include:

**Full Board Review:** This is for projects that present higher than minimal risk. These projects are presented to the entire board and all members submit comments and concerns. Often, the Principal Investigator is also invited to the Research Ethics Board (REB) meeting to provide some insight and answer questions.

**Delegated REB Review:** This is for projects that present minimal risk. These files are reviewed by an REB member and the Chair or Vice-Chair. Most projects at Laurier undergo this type of review.

**Delegated Review conducted by non-board member:** This is for minimal risk course-based research activities with a primarily pedagogical purpose. These files are reviewed by non-voting members of the REB who have experience, expertise, and knowledge comparable to what is expected of an REB member (e.g., the Research Ethics Committee [REC] Chair). Major research papers and theses and other projects that would meet the TCPS2 definition of ‘research’ would *not* be considered for delegated review by a non-board member.

*“An institution may decide that ethics review of minimal risk course-based research activities with a primarily pedagogical purpose can be delegated to non-REB members at the institution’s department, faculty or equivalent level. 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 (e.g., interviewing techniques). 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 (Application of*[*Article 2.1*](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2018_chapter2-chapitre2.html#1)*) and should be reviewed by the REB following a proportionate approach (*[*Article 6.12*](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2018_chapter6-chapitre6.html#12)*). The REB should establish written procedures and set out criteria for determining which categories of research proposal may be eligible for this type of review, and should specify who is responsible for implementing and overseeing the approval mechanisms.”*

The default level of review for graduate course-based research activities is Delegated REB Review. The purpose of this document is to outline the steps you should take to request that your graduate-level, course-based research activity be reviewed by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee.

**To qualify for review by a REC, your project must meet all the criteria listed in** [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A_–)**.**

# How to Apply for REC Review

## Before the teaching term begins:

1. The course instructor should submit a copy of the syllabus that provides sufficient details about the objectives of the course-based, primarily pedagogical research activity, the methods, and the “outputs” (e.g., assignment, presentation, report, etc.).
2. Within 5 working days, the REB Chair will provide a response. Please note that this response may be a request for more details if the syllabus does not provide adequate information.
3. Once a graduate-level, course-based research activity is approved for REC review, you do not need to repeat this process for subsequent teaching terms, unless the description of the research activity changes in the syllabus. You will also receive a letter to submit with your REC application.
4. The REC Chair will complete a review of the submissions following all procedures outlined for REC review, including annual reporting. These procedures are listed below.

**Please note: We will not accept applications that are received after the teaching term begins.**

## Applying to the REC

1. Complete the [REC Review Application](https://lauriercloud.sharepoint.com/teams/team-ors-facilitators/Shared%20Documents/General/ResearchServices/ETHICS/REC/Forms/REC%20Review%20Application.docx)form.
2. Attach a copy of the [TCPS 2 CORE Certificate](https://tcps2core.ca/welcome) for all individuals listed on the application (students and supervisors). CORE certificates must be renewed every four years.
3. Send all completed forms and attachments, including your [information and consent letter for participants](https://students.wlu.ca/academics/research/human-research/participant-information-and-consent.html) and all other participant-facing materials (e.g., recruitment scripts, posters, debriefing documents), REC Review approval letter, and agreement form, to your department’s REC for review.
4. Respond to comments made by the REC and resubmit revised documents.
5. Wait for clearance from your departmental REC prior to recruiting participants or beginning your research.

## REC Procedures

1. Provide a thorough, clear review in accordance with the TCPS2. We have developed a review guide to reference when reviewing applications.
2. Upon approval of each application, upload a folder containing the review(s), along with the application and associated documents, to the appropriate REC Review folder (this will be shared with REC Chairs) following the naming format: “DD-MM-YY-PI’sLastName”
3. Each year by May 1, each REC must submit an [Annual Report of Activities](https://lauriercloud.sharepoint.com/teams/team-ors-facilitators/Shared%20Documents/General/ResearchServices/ETHICS/REC/Annual%20Reports/Forms/departmental-research-ethics-committee-annual-report-of-activities.docx) to [REB@wlu.ca](mailto:REB@wlu.ca). This annual report must include a list of approved protocols, the names of the PIs and supervisors of each project (students or faculty members, where appropriate), the topic or title of the project, start and end dates, and the date of approval, if applicable.
4. In addition to the annual reporting, RECs will be responsible for keeping detailed record of submitted applications, associated materials and review and approval memos in the event the REB performs an audit or requires further information about an approved REC project.

# Appendix A – List of criteria that research activities must meet to be subject to REC review

1. The course-based research activity has a primarily pedagogical purpose (i.e., not undergraduate theses or equivalent research projects such as directed studies and major research papers). Such pedagogical activities are normally required of students with the objective of providing them with exposure to research methods in their field of study. For example, asking students to interview individuals to collect data to be used in a course assignment, or to practice interviewing techniques.
2. The supervisor will **not** be using the data as a part of their own research program and data will not be used outside of the course.
3. The research activities are considered minimal risk. Minimal risk is defined as 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 the aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research. Types of risk may include physical, psychological/emotional, and social. Examples of research topics and procedures that may be considered higher than minimal risk include:
   1. ingestion, tasting, smelling, application of a substance that pose any health risk
   2. answering questions related to sexual or physical abuse, as well as self harm and suicidal thoughts or actions
   3. providing medical/health information or clinical diagnoses (e.g., depression, anxiety) particularly if associated with identifiers
   4. reporting on illegal activities
4. The research does not aim to recruit Indigenous Peoples (including First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada), use Indigenous identity or membership in an Indigenous community as a variable for analysis, or meet other criteria that would require Indigenous community engagement in accordance with [Chapter 9 of the TCPS 2 (2022)](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2022_chapter9-chapitre9.html).
5. The research does not involve individuals, groups, or populations in vulnerable circumstances. This includes individuals who lack decision-making capacity (e.g., children, those living with cognitive impairments, persons who are not able to legally consent to participate in research).