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**[Program or faculty name] Ethics Review Committee**

**Procedures for Ethical Review of Course-based Student Research Involving Human Participants**

# 1. PURPOSE

Vancouver Island University (VIU) is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in research involving human participants. The VIU Research Ethics Board (REB) supports this goal by educating the VIU community and ensuring research associated with VIU and involving human participants complies with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2018)*.

The [insert program or faculty name] is committed to providing its students with opportunities to pursue their educational goals through course-based student research and scholarship. The [program or faculty name] actively works to ensure that students engaged in research and scholarship are well prepared and properly supported to perform at the highest level, and in accordance with accepted standards such as the TCPS (2018).

A primary consideration is that unless explicitly exempt from review, all research and scholarly activity associated with VIU and involving human participants must be approved the VIU Research Ethics Board (REB) or by a Departmental or Faculty Ethics Review Committee (DERC) in accordance with documented procedures approved by the REB. The purpose of this document is to establish procedures by which the [insert program or faculty name] ERC Review Committee (ERC) will review and approve Applications for Ethical Review under delegated authority of the REB.

# 2. JURISDICTION

## 2.1 What types of activities require ethical review?

Unless explicitly exempt from ethical review, all research and scholarly activity associated with VIU involving human participants must be approved by the REB or by an Departmental or Faculty Ethics Review Committee with delegated authority of the REB. VIU Policy (31.10) defines ‘Scholarly activity’ as “research, scholarship and professional activities associated with the university and consists of contributions made by a Researcher to his/her discipline or profession which result in the presentation of work for formal or informal peer or public review outside the institution.”

In accordance with the TCPS (2018), ethical review is required prior to commencing research involving humans or human biological materials, and this “includes course-based research activities, the *primary* purpose of which is pedagogical, because of the possible risks to those recruited to participate in such activities…” (Article 2.1, emphasis added).

The REB is of the opinion that ethical review is not required for course-based student activities *solely* for pedagogical purposes, because these activates are not intended to produce knowledge that would be shared outside the institution.

Moreover, some types of research are explicitly exempt from REB and thus DERC review. These types of ‘research-like’ activities are described in TCPS (2018) Articles 2.2-2.6 and include:

* Activities that rely exclusively on information that is:
	+ publicly available through a mechanism set out by legislation or regulation and that is protected by law; or
	+ in the public domain and the individuals to whom the information refers have no reasonable expectation of privacy (TCPS 2018, Article 2.2);
* Activities involving the observation of people in public places where:
	+ It does not involve an intervention staged by the researcher or direct interaction with the individuals or groups;
	+ Individuals or groups targeted for observation have no reasonable expectation of privacy; and
	+ Any dissemination of research results does not allow identification of specific individuals (TCPS 2018, Article 2.3);
* Activities that rely exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information or anonymous human biological materials, so long as the process of data linkage or recording or dissemination of results does not generate identifiable information (TCPS 2018, Article 2.4);
* Quality assurance, quality improvement and program evaluation studies when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, where such studies are within the mandate of an organization and are normally administered in the ordinary course of the operation of the organization (TCPS 2018, Article 2.5); and
* Creative practice activities, through which an artist makes or interprets a work or works of art (TCPS 2018, Article 2.5).

Nonetheless, all personnel associated with VIU should adhere to TCPS (2018) guidance relevant to their scholarly activities even if their activities are exempt from ethical review (see [Tri-Council Panel on Research Ethics](http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_interpretations_scope-portee.html) interpretation on scope). Researchers, course instructors, and the [insert program or faculty name] ERC should contact the REB if they are uncertain whether ethical review is required for a proposed project.

## 2.2 What types of activities may be review by the [insert program or faculty name] ERC?

In accordance with VIU REB Policy (31.03) and Procedure (31.03.001), the REB may delegate its responsibility to review course-based student research that meets all of the following conditions:

* The research will be undertaken as part of course requirements;
* The research is ‘minimal risk’, 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;
* The research does not involve deception or withholding of information from participants; and
* The research does not involve persons or groups in vulnerable circumstances, invasive methods, sensitive subject matter, or occur in a cultural context/s unfamiliar to the researcher/s.

**3. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF APPLICATION**

All applications for ethical review of course-based student research are to be submitted using the REB’s Application Form, as amended from time to time. Required elements of a complete application include a recruitment instrument, consent instrument, and research instrument (as appendices to the application form).

**4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEVEL OF REVIEW ASSESSMENT**

The REB Chair and/or the Research Ethics Officer will complete a Level of Review Assessment on all applications to determine whether an application is to be reviewed at a REB meeting, by a REB subcommittee, or by the [insert program or faculty name] ERC.

Once the [insert program or faculty name] ERC is well-established, and if the parties both agree, the responsibility for completing level of review assessments may later be delegated to the [insert program or faculty name] ERC.

**5 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In accordance with VIU REB Procedure (31.03.001), the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will be comprised of a Chair and at least one other identified Member, one of whom must have served on the REB or be currently serving on the REB.

The term of membership is [???] years.

For the current term, the Chair of the ERC is [insert name of Chair] and regular committee members are [insert name/s of regular committee members]

The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC is responsible for:

* Receiving application for ethical review;
* Ensuring applications are complete, coherent, and include all necessary appendices;
* Forwarding applications to the REB for Level of Review Assessment;
* Reviewing applications to ensure compliance with the TCPS and consistency with REB interpretations, guidelines and standards;
* Documenting [insert program or faculty name] ERC decisions;
* Communicating decisions of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC with applicants;
* On a twice-yearly basis, providing to the REB a record of all [insert program or faculty name] ERC decisions, and copies of all applications approved by the [insert program or faculty name] ERC during the reported period;
* Attending monthly REB meetings.

Regular Members of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC are responsible for reviewing applications to ensure compliance with the TCPS and consistency with REB interpretations, guidelines and standards.

# 6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chair and regular Members of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC shall not review Applications for course-based student research being conducted as part of courses they are teaching. In even of real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, Applications shall be reviewed by the REB.

# 7. REVIEW PROCEDURE

## 7.1 Submission of Applications

Applications for ethical review are to be submitted by the course instructor to the Chair of [insert program or faculty name] ERC.

## 7.2 Preliminary Review

The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will complete a preliminary review of Applications to ensure applications are complete, coherent, and contain all necessary appendices.

## 7.3 Level of Review Assessment

The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will submit complete Applications to the REB for Level of Review Assessment. Each application for ethical review is to be submitted to the REB as one PDF (i.e. the application form and all appendices in one PDF).

The REB will communicate to the [insert program or faculty name] ERC the results of Level of Review Assessments within three business days of receiving a complete Application.

## 7.4 Detailed Review

When an application has been delegated by the REB to the [insert program or faculty name] ERC, the Chair and at least one member of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will complete a detailed review of the application, and, when required, seek consensus on aspects of the application that are inconsistent with TCPS guidance and/or REB guidelines and standards.

If the [insert program or faculty name] ERC is unable to reach consensus on aspects of the application that are inconsistent with TCPS guidance and/or REB guides and standards, the Application shall be promoted to REB review (discussed below).

The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will document and communicate to the Applicant any deficiencies with the Application, suggest remedies, and encourage the applicant to revise and resubmit the Application.

The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will receive and review revised Applications and ensure identified deficiencies have been address. The Chair of the [insert program or faculty name] ERC will continue to communicate with the applicant until all deficiencies with the Application have been addressed.

# 8. PROMOTION OF LEVEL OF REVIEW

Applications shall be promoted to REB review in the event it becomes known that the proposed research involves greater than minimal risk of harm to participants (or any other exclusionary criteria listed in section 2.2, above), or the is unable to reach consensus

# 9. APPEAL

The [insert program or faculty name] ERC is obligated to reconsider its decisions when requested to do so by applicants, and provide comprehensive documentation of the reasons for its decision. Because ethical review is based on the collegial relations between the [insert program or faculty name] ERC and course instructors, a request for appeal should be a last resort. The [insert program or faculty name] ERC shall not issue a final decision until after all reasonable efforts to reach a mutually-agreeable outcome have been exhausted. In the event that an applicant believes that the [insert program or faculty name] ERC has, in its final decision, misunderstood the application or applied an inappropriate standard of review, the applicant has recourse to the appeal to the REB.

# 10. RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

The [insert program or faculty name] ERC will twice yearly provide to the REB PDF copies of all Applications approved by the [insert program or faculty name] ERC.