

CFREB Guidance for Faculty Level Course-Based Instructors

Introduction

This document provides guidelines for delegated review of course-based research and provides Instructors with details on their responsibilities. Questions about the information contained within this document should be directed to the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) staff or the CFREB Chair at cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

CFREB Delegated Ethics Review for Course-Based Research

Instructors designing a course assignment that involves *research with human participants* must obtain the necessary ethics certification before the course-based research begins. For instructors in the Faculty of Arts and Haskayne School of Business (HSB), the CFREB delegates review and approval of course-based applications to the faculty-level course-based committees ([as per TCPS2, Article 6.12](#)). For all other faculties, instructors submit applications to the CFREB via [Institutional Research Information Services Solution \(IRISS\)](#).

Applications must meet the following requirements to qualify for course-based delegated review:

- 1. Scope of activities:** the *intent of the research* activity is *primarily to provide students with exposure to methods used in their field of study* (e.g. interview techniques, survey design), as part of their skill development. In other words, course-based research activities are pedagogical in nature. The objective of the research project/data collection is for the students to acquire skills for conducting academic and scholarly research in a rigorous manner. Course-based research is typically instructor designed (where all students do the same project and use the same participant materials) or instructor guided (where students plan their own research projects within the parameters established by the instructor). The design of course-based research activities can vary widely, from teaching students how to create a survey, conducting interviews or asking students to hone their observational data collection skills. Instructors who allow students to design their own data collections measures as part of the course assignment must maintain oversight over all of the individual student projects.
- 2. Risk:** The proposed research is *confidently expected to involve minimal risk* as defined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). Harm is anything that has a negative effect on the welfare of participants, and the nature of the harm may be social, behavioural, psychological, physical or economic. Risk is a function of the *magnitude* or seriousness of the harm, combined with the *probability* that it will occur. The TCPS2 defines [minimal risk research](#) 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 those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research” (Chapter 2, pg. 22).

Instructors should attempt to assess, to the greatest extent possible, potential harm from the perspective of the participants. Please contact the CFREB for guidance if you are unsure whether the planned research is minimal risk. Research activity that may involve greater than minimal risk must be routed to the CFREB for review.

- 3. Dissemination:** Following completion of the course, *data collected in fulfillment of course requirements should only be used within the parameters of the course*. Dissemination of information gathered through course-based research must not occur for scholarly research purposes (e.g. publishing in an academic journal, presenting at a research conference) unless a separate application is submitted and approved by the CFREB. Participants in course-based research must be given the opportunity to re-consent for their data to be used for research purposes beyond the context of the course.

Course-based approval does **NOT apply** to research that meets the following conditions. These human participant research activities require a standard research ethics application in IRISS or a modification to an existing IRISS application:

1. Any research activity involving collection of data by students that is planned to have or has the potential to be used for *scholarly research* purposes.. Students conducting research as part of undergraduate and graduate theses or independent study research courses, therefore, do not qualify for delegated course-based review. The CFREB cannot provide retroactive approval to use data gathered under a course-based ethics certificate for scholarly purposes.
2. Projects that pose *greater than minimal risk* to participants. Instructors overseeing course-based research projects should be encouraged to direct students toward low risk projects. Any student projects that do not meet minimal risk criteria (as defined above) must have an application submitted to the CFREB in IRISS. Please allow 4-6 weeks for review.
3. Research that involves ethical issues or content that the faculty level delegated reviewer(s) does not feel comfortable reviewing. Moreover, if delegated reviewers are considering a *negative decision* (i.e., one that would refuse ethics approval), they shall refer the decision to the CFREB for review. Instructors may appeal course-based delegated review decisions through the CFREB via the CFREB Chair.
4. Research activity that students conduct as part of the *instructor's or another researcher's research* program.

When instructors are uncertain as to whether an application qualifies for course-based ethics review, they should contact the CFREB for guidance.

Requirements

To apply for course-based research review, all instructors must complete the TCPS2 online tutorial CORE (Course on Research Ethics): <http://tcps2core.ca/welcome>