

Applying for Course-Based Research Ethics Review Background and Determining Eligibility

Frequently, undergraduate courses incorporate class projects and other activities for the purposes of developing research skills. These projects may be carried out by individual students, small groups or as a single class project. **Research activities included within a course for pedagogical purposes (i.e. the objective is to provide students with exposure to research methods in their field of study) are defined as research and are therefore governed by ethics review policies.**

To qualify for approval under course-based ethics student research assignments must be:

- (1) no more than minimal risk;
- (2) the participants must be drawn from the general population, and;
- (3) be capable of giving free and informed consent.

In addition, the student projects must not involve major deception, sensitive topics, physically invasive contact with the participants, or require ethics approval from another institution.

Examples of research activities that **could be approved** under course-based review include:

Having students conduct interviews, administer standard tests, or distribute questionnaires to individuals recruited from outside of class to help develop interview or questionnaire design skills.

Conduct "mini" research projects where students pose general questions while gathering responses from participants recruited from outside of class and using those responses for presentation.

Example of a research activity that **would not be approved** course-based ethics approval:

*Children recruited through public elementary schools will be shown an educational video to see if it enhances their learning of that topic. This project **would not be approved** under course-based ethics because it would require ethics review from Edmonton Public Schools. This study would require regular REB approval.*

Example of a research activity that **would not require** course-based ethics approval:

*Students distributing questionnaires to classmates, or students collecting data from computer administered tests from classmates; where data will be analyzed and presented only to classmates. **Ethics would not be required.** Course based ethics approval is only required if participants are being recruited from outside of class.*

Determining Eligibility

Note that the following questions should be used as a general guide to determine if the research assignment(s) within your course can be covered by a course-based ethics review. Please use this guide prior to completing and submitting the ethics application. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, contact the Ethics Officer to discuss further.

Part I

In order for your course to be considered appropriate for course-based ethics review, the following questions should be answered YES:

1. Do the projects potentially involve human subjects (beyond classmates) who are 18 years or older and are not considered part of a special or vulnerable population (children, Indigenous or minority groups, those with mental illness, etc)?
YES NO
2. Is the primary purpose of the research to teach students about research or how to conduct research?
YES NO
3. Will the research only be disseminated within the classroom/agency involved, or within the MacEwan University community? (e.g. in a university poster session)
YES NO
4. Is the application for a set of minimal risk research projects occurring within the scope of a course at MacEwan University?
YES NO

If the answer to any of the above is NO, please contact the Ethics Officer at (REB@macewan.ca) to discuss your project further.

Part II

In order for your course to be considered appropriate for course-based ethics review, the following questions should be answered NO:

1. Is this an Honour's Thesis or Independent Study research project?
YES NO
2. Is this an undertaking that can potentially extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation? In other words, is there a possibility that any of these projects will further knowledge in the field and may be published or disseminated outside the university (i.e. by disseminating at conferences outside of MacEwan University, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, reports to the media)?
YES NO

3. Will the projects be health-related (i.e. obtaining biomedical samples, collecting health information)?
YES NO
4. Will any of the projects involve physically invasive contact with the participants?
YES NO
5. Will projects involve any sensitive or incriminating topics/questions or information that could place participants at risk (e.g. participation in an illegal activity)?
YES NO
6. Will any of the research projects involve major element(s) of deception for the participants?
YES NO
7. Are any of the projects a direct extension of the course instructor's research?
YES NO

If the answer to any of the above is YES, please contact the Ethics Officer (REB@macewan.ca) to discuss your project further.