

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY

POLICY ON ETHICAL REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

Passed by the Departmental Research Ethics Board, April 7, 2011

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. It is the policy of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology that undergraduate students will not undertake any research on human subjects that poses more than minimal risk to participants, or that involves deception in any form.
2. It is department policy that no student may undertake, or be required to undertake research on human subjects as part of her/his course work unless:
 - 2.1. the course in which the research is undertaken contains a component dealing with ethical conduct in research; or
 - 2.2. the student has already completed a required course on research methods that has a component dealing with ethical conduct in research.
3. Before an individual or group research project involving human subjects is undertaken, it must be reviewed and deemed compliant with the standards outlined in the current approved *MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans*. This review is the responsibility of the Department Research Ethics Committee. This committee consists of two faculty members, chosen annually. Where necessary, the department chair will act as a third member to decide unresolved matters. The department will keep a permanent file of all documents relating to the work of the committee. At the end of each academic year, the committee will provide the University Research Ethics Board with a written report of its activities.

B. REVIEW PROCEDURES

4. Where research involving human subjects is to be undertaken as part of a class assignment, the professor will provide the following information for review to the Department Research Ethics Committee no less than two weeks in advance of the project's planned commencement:
 - 4.1. a succinct description of the research assignment, including assessment of the level of risk involved, and a statement of how the professor will monitor compliance with ethical standards;
 - 4.2. copies of any research instruments(s) to be employed;
 - 4.3. copy of a standard, succinctly worded letter, reproduced on department letterhead, which student researchers are required to provide each participant in her/his study and which contains the following information:
 - 4.3.1. that the research in which the student is involved constitutes a required component of course work in (provide course title);

- 4.3.2. that the research is being carried out under the supervision of professor (provide name);
 - 4.3.3. that participation in the project is strictly voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time;
 - 4.3.4. who has access to the data and, if appropriate, that the anonymity and/or confidentiality of participants will be respected;
 - 4.3.5. a description of what the participants will be asked to do if they choose to participate;
 - 4.3.6. how and where the data collected will be stored;
 - 4.3.7. what will happen to the data once the project is complete and who has access to it; and
 - 4.3.8. that questions pertaining to any aspect of the project should be directed to the supervising professor and the chair of the UREB (provide name and contact information).
5. Where research involving human subjects is to be undertaken by an individual student as part of an **honours thesis requirement**, the student will provide the same information outlined in Sections 4.1 through 4.3 above for review by the Department Research Ethics Committee **no less than three weeks in advance of the project's planned commencement**.
 6. Where project submissions are deemed unacceptable, the Department Research Ethics Committee and/or the University Research Ethics Board will recommend change(s) necessary to make the proposal compliant with the principles and guidelines described in this statement. **Data collection cannot begin until final approval is received.**
 7. Appeal of a negative decision of the Department Research Ethics Committee may only be initiated by the faculty member supervising the project or honours thesis. Procedures governing such appeals are outlined in Section 9 of *MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans*.
 8. The syllabi of courses that include student research involving humans as a requirement should contain the following statement:

Students who conduct research involving human participants must have their research reviewed in accordance with the *MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans* **before** starting the data collection. Check with your course professor or Chair of the Department about proper procedure.