



Summer
2021

Research Ethics Matters

Mount Saint Vincent University

Message from the REB Chair

Greetings to all Faculty, Administration, Staff and Students,

It would seem from the volume of files that not even a pandemic or third wave can stop the MSVU community from pursuing their programs of research. We keep busy year after year because our members are engaging in vigorous, novel, interesting, and ground-breaking research. As Chair for the 2021/2022 year, I will continue to work diligently alongside the UREB members, our two Vice-Chairs (Dr. Karen Blotnicky and Dr. Jeff Young), and Ms. Brenda Gagné, to ensure that all ethics files are meticulously reviewed in good time. With the dynamic and ever evolving changes that have come as the result of COVID-19, I encourage all researchers to visit the Research Ethics website to familiarize themselves of our membership, forms, policies and procedures, and explanation of the ethics process. It is even more important now that researchers are knowledgeable on our policies and procedures as well as the ethics submission process.

Congratulations goes out to all researchers for their successes this past year. This is my sixteenth year on the UREB and I have sat in the Chair or Vice-Chair positions for more than a decade of those years. With the approach of every new year, my excitement builds while I anticipate the projects that will come to our committee. On that note, I'd also like to express my gratitude to all members of the UREB who tirelessly volunteer their time to ensure that applications are reviewed quickly and also to Ms. Gagné who is able to help researchers successfully navigate every research ethics concern or question, no matter how minor or complex.

For those submitting to our committee for the first time (or the tenth time!), Ms. Gagné and I can assist with questions while preparing an application for submission. It is always better to gain the clarity needed before submission so that applications can be processed efficiently. I have never taken my membership on the UREB lightly, and I am honoured to be in a position that allows me to appreciate the diversity that is THE MOUNT. We anticipate additional exciting news as the year moves on – stay tuned!

Best wishes for a successful and safe year,



Dr. Daniel Séguin

Daniel G. Séguin, PhD
Professor and Chair (UREB)

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PROJECT/THESIS/DISSERTATION STUDENTS

The ethics application can be a very grounding complement to a research proposal. Sometimes, students think about the ethics application and review as a hoop through which to jump or a barrier to moving forward with their research. A more constructive way to think about the ethics application and review process is as an integral part of the scholarly development of your research. Often, a research proposal can focus on more abstract or theoretical elements of your proposed research rather than on the finer details of research design. Students can feel discouraged to discover that, even though a proposal might be approved by a supervisory committee, there are still many procedural details to think through in preparation to begin a research project. The ethics application can be very helpful in this regard. A useful strategy is to work on your proposal and ethics application in tandem. Being asked detailed design questions from the perspective of ethical considerations, can well prepare you to move your proposal into informed action.

REB REVIEW AUGUST HIATUS

- ◆ **Please be advised that the University Research Ethics Board will not be processing any New research ethics applications in August 2021.**
- ◆ The UREB will still process the following:
 - ◆ Modifications (REB.FORM.002)
 - ◆ Unanticipated Research Events (REB.FORM.008)
 - ◆ Adverse Events (REB.FORM.007)
 - ◆ Privacy Breaches (REB.FORM.015)
 - ◆ Requests for Renewal (REB.FORM.003)
 - ◆ Final Reports (REB.FORM.004)
 - ◆ Changes to Study Personnel (REB.FORM.014)
- ◆ Forms are located online at: [Forms and Applications \(msvu.ca\)](https://www.msvu.ca/forms-and-applications)



COVID-19 ALERT for RESEARCH ETHICS – Updated June 30 2021

COVID-19 - Researchers are reminded that they and their research team must abide by all **Public Health** directives and **MSVU** requirements ([Resumption of Human Research \(msvu.ca\)](https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/covid-19-research-information/)) regarding in-person contact with participants. In-person research requires additional clearance and may not proceed until the second level clearance is obtained.

Updates to procedures for **Research with Human Participants** can be located on-line at <https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/covid-19-research-information/>

- In-person participant interactions (recruitment and data collection) should continue to be replaced with telephone, online communications or other **remote** measures.
- As per the federal government advisory, research ethics applications directly addressing COVID-19, or pandemics generally, will be given first **priority** for ethics review.
- Researchers should be aware that any data collected in this pandemic environment may alter, skew or contaminate your results, unless your focus includes COVID 19 questions. Further, researchers may need to address/disclose this in publications and other knowledge dissemination activities when documenting method and timeframe of data collection.

As per the federal government advisory, research ethics applications directly addressing COVID-19, or pandemics generally, will be given first **priority** for ethics review.

UPDATES TO REB.SOP.109—DREB

The University Research Ethics Board (REB) has undertaken steps to ensure that MSVU's REB has written Standard Operations Procedures (SOPs) that are acceptable and approved Canada and US-Wide. The REB recently approved the 100-series of SOPs which deal directly with Research Ethics Administration. In an effort to maintain the standardized numbering system and national harmonization attempt, it was necessary to re-number our DREB SOP. While reformatting to conform with the new SOP template, the REB also provided some minor housekeeping to the SOP.

Former: REB.SOP.109

New: REB.SOP.110

The REB SOP portion of the website is in the process of being updated and refreshed.

[Policies, Procedures & Guidelines \(msvu.ca\)](https://www.msvu.ca/policies-procedures-guidelines)



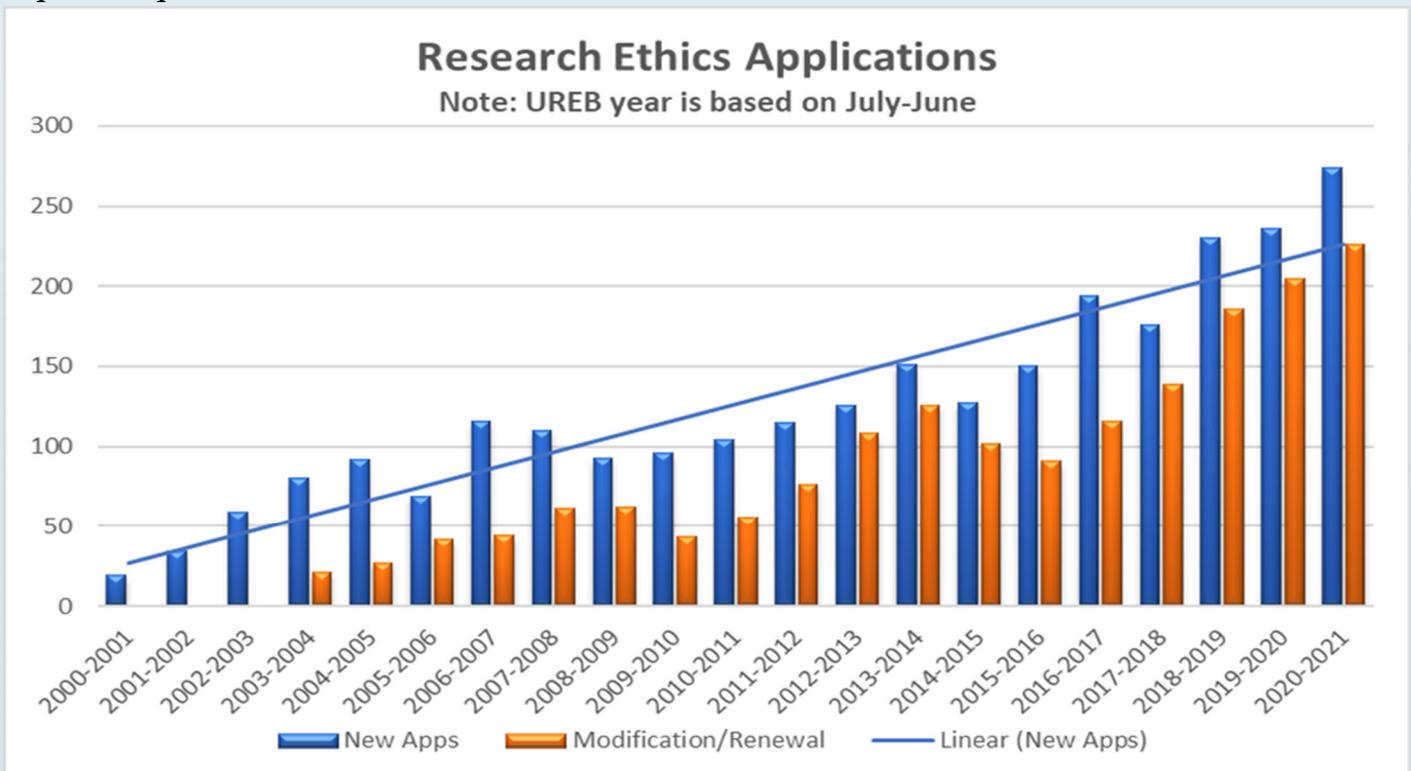
Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) and Changes to REB SOPs

As announced in May 2021, the REB has obtained and FWA—[Research Ethics \(msvu.ca\)](#). With this designation comes a requirement to update and change many of our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure compliance. The new SOPs will be compliant with both Canadian and American requirements. The REB has released the 100 -series of SOPs—[Policies, Procedures & Guidelines \(msvu.ca\)](#) and will be working on the remaining SOPs in the coming months. Changes will be made to many of our former SOPs to capture the information as Guidance or Information documents. The move to change and update our SOPs will bring us in line with many other North American institutions.

MSVU Standard Operating Procedures Concerning Research with Human Participants

- Scope REB.SOP.101 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Membership REB.SOP.102 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- REB Training and Education REB.SOP.103 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Management of REB Office Personnel REB.SOP.104 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Conflict of Interest – REB Members and REB Office Personnel REB.SOP.105A July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Conflict of Interest – Researcher REB.SOP.105B July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Conflict of Interest – Organization REB.SOP.105C July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Signatory Authority REB.SOP.106 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Uses and Disclosure of Personal Information REB.SOP.107 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- SOP Maintenance REB.SOP.108 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Addendum for US-Regulated Research REB.SOP.109 July 2021: [Click for document](#)
- Departmental Research Ethics Boards (DREBs) REB.SOP.110 July 2021: [Click for document](#)

REB Statistics—The REB has processed its largest volume of applications with 274 new applications, 105 modifications, 83 renewals and 38 changes to study personnel. These applications and requests required a total of 1216 reviews.





REVIEW TIMES

The UREB is pleased to report the following statistics on our turn-around times:

Initial UREB Response	
*from receipt of protocol application to sending the initial comments from reviewers	
Average turn-around time	7 days
Shortest	1 day
Longest	48 days
Response times relating to Goals*	90% of protocols received initial comments within 1-2 weeks 7% of files received initial comments within the desired goal of 3-4 weeks 3% of files received initial comments more than 4 weeks after initial receipt.



HONOURABLE MENTIONS

The REB would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to our community members, Mr. Kenneth Long, Ms. Megan Muise and Mr. Justin Hiltz. Our Community Members continue to be an integral part of the committee and their perspectives provide valuable insight for the REB and the research community. Sincere gratitude is also extended to all the REB members who worked diligently this past year through a record number of new files, including face-to-face research applications during a pandemic. The REB is made up of amazing, dedicated volunteers who always strive to ensure the protection of participants and facilitating the research of the MSVU community.



Research Resources SharePoint site

The Research Office, including the University Research Ethics Board, has launched a resources site aimed at helping to guide and inform our research Community.

Main Site: <https://msvuhfx.sharepoint.com/sites/myMount/MSVUResearchResources/Pages/default.aspx>

UREB Section:

<https://msvuhfx.sharepoint.com/sites/myMount/MSVUResearchResources/Pages/Research-Ethics.aspx?csf=1&e=eO8KcR>

Recent Additions to the UREB section include:

- Safeguarding your research (English and French)
- Research Data Management FAQs
- DREB Review Process



Sensitive Data Toolkit

MSVU's Research Ethics Coordinator Co-Chairs a Sensitive Data Working Group with the Portage Network of Experts (<https://portagenetwork.ca/>).

Portage has recently released the Sensitive Data Toolkit for Researchers created by the working group that includes:

- [Sensitive Data Toolkit for Researchers Part 1: Glossary of Terms for Sensitive Data used for Research Purposes](#), September 2020
- [Sensitive Data Toolkit for Researchers Part 2: Human Participant Research Data Risk Matrix](#), September 2020
- [Sensitive Data Toolkit for Researchers Part 3: Research Data Management Language for Informed Consent](#), September 2020

These documents are available in English and French. The documents are also available on the MSVU Research Resources SharePoint Site. More tools will be launched as they become available. For more information: <https://portagenetwork.ca/>