



Research Ethics Board

Standard Operating Procedure

SOP File #	REB.SOP.110
Title	Departmental Research Ethics Boards (DREBs)
Effective Date	July 1, 2021
Next Review	2026
Next Administrative Review	2023

1. Purpose

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to:

- 1.1. State the organizational authority under which the Departmental Research Ethics Boards (DREBs) are established and empowered;
- 1.2. Define the purpose of the DREB;
- 1.3. State the principles governing the DREB to assure that the rights and welfare of participants are protected;
- 1.4. State the authority of the DREB.

2. Definitions

See the MSVU **REB Glossary of Terms (REB.INFO.001)**

3. Scope

- 3.1. This SOP pertains to the DREBs at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) that review human participant research in compliance with applicable policies and guidelines.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The responsible DREB members and DREB Office Personnel are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this SOP are met.

5. Procedures and/or Specific Policies

All research with human participants by the Mount Community is required to undergo research ethics review. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) allows the Research Ethics Board (REB) to delegate some of this responsibility to Departmental Research Ethics Boards (DREBs). DREBs are an extension of the REB and therefore under its direction as per article 6.12 of the TCPS. DREBs should consult with the REB regarding policies and procedures, or any other issues that may arise while reviewing research ethics proposals.

- 5.1. DREBs must ensure that researchers or supervisors of student researchers who use human participants and/or are members of DREBs have completed the CORE Tutorial as outlined in **REB.POL.001**. The CORE requirement came fully into practice on June 30, 2017.

- 5.1.1. Please note that except for members of DREBs, this applies only to researchers who will be using human participants or their data. Members must complete the CORE tutorial prior to commencing duties on the DREB.
- 5.2. DREBs may not review research that exceeds minimal risk, as defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). Research that exceeds minimal risk must be submitted to the REB for review and clearance.
- 5.3. All departments that have any potential for conducting undergraduate or graduate research with human participants shall have a committee and policy in place for departmental ethics review.
- 5.4. Student research projects shall be designed and conducted with the same level of research professionalism as faculty research and graduate thesis research, and the rigor of ethics review must follow this policy as well as the TCPS. This document is located on-line at [Policy: The Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics \(PRE\)](#)
- 5.5. All student research must be supervised by a faculty member or university-approved supervisor who accepts responsibility for overseeing the ethical conduct of the student's research project. The supervisor must co-sign the student's submission to the appropriate REB to affirm these responsibilities. Once research ethics clearance is received, the supervisor has an on-going responsibility to ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with all applicable ethical requirements.
 - 5.5.1. The supervisor must ensure that the student is familiar with research ethics policies (e.g., TCPS, MSVU) relevant to the research being conducted and must ensure that the student has had the training and has acquired the competence required to carry out the research in an ethical manner.
 - 5.5.2. In the case of undergraduate individual or course research, it is the sole responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the student's project receives the appropriate ethics approval before any research is carried out.
 - 5.5.3. In the case of graduate or postdoctoral research it is the joint responsibility of the faculty supervisor and the student to ensure that the project receives the appropriate ethics approval before any research is carried out, except for course research projects.
- 5.6. Departmental Ethics Boards are not eligible to review the following (please note that this list is not exhaustive and DREBs are encouraged to contact the REB with any questions or concerns):
 - 5.6.1. Any research study which exceeds minimum risk;
 - 5.6.2. Research studies which use any form of deception. DREBs at MSVU shall direct any applications using deception for review by the REB;
 - 5.6.3. Research studies which use survey or storage platforms that are located outside of Canada.
- 5.7. Departmental Research Ethics Boards are required to review the following items:
 - 5.7.1. Research conducted for undergraduate and graduate level in-course assignments or class projects that involve human participants. For courses that are cross-listed within the university, the specified home department for the current course shall be the designated DREB. For courses that are cross-listed with other universities, the department within the designated host institution for the current course shall be the designated DREB.
 - 5.7.1.1. Class research assignments or projects which involve human participants and that are conducted by students using only other students in that particular class for research participants and used only as exercises to learn how to conduct research do not require review by the REB or DREB. This exemption is based on the assumption that such projects involve no more than minimal risk and that the tenets of research ethics are followed.
 - 5.7.1.2. Class research assignments or projects that are conducted with human participants solicited from outside of the classroom setting, whether or not with an expectation that the results of the research will be made public

through publication, must be reviewed and approved by the DREB before the project begins and shall not exceed minimal risk.

- 5.7.2. Honours theses using human participants shall be reviewed for scholarly merit as well as ethics at the DREB level. Upon final clearance from the DREB, these applications shall be sent to the REB for final review and clearance. No research with human participants shall begin until REB clearance is secured. Students conducting research for a thesis must follow the reporting procedures as per the research ethics clearance certificate.
- 5.7.3. Independent and directed studies at the graduate or undergraduate levels that include human participants shall be reviewed for scholarly merit as well as ethics at the DREB level and cannot exceed minimum risk. These shall be reported in the annual report to the REB in June of each year. No research with human participants shall begin until REB clearance is secured.
- 5.7.4. Graduate theses are to be vetted by the appropriate thesis committee. Once approval is received from the thesis committee, the student and supervisor must submit the REB application and appropriate appendices as well as a copy of the Graduate Studies "*Thesis Proposal Presentation Report*" to the REB for review and ultimate clearance prior to beginning any research with human participants. Students conducting research for a thesis must follow the reporting procedures as per the research ethics clearance certificate.
- 5.7.5. Research conducted during training, practicum, internship, or co-op shall not exceed minimum risk and shall follow the following procedures:
 - 5.7.5.1. Research conducted on behalf of the external agency for use by only the external agency shall require DREB clearance. Research shall still be conducted in accordance with the TCPS and University policies and procedures.
 - 5.7.5.2. Research conducted for the purpose of reporting only to the supervisor as part of the training, practicum, internship, or co-op requirements shall not require DREB or REB clearance; however, supervisors are to ensure that Item 1.4 above is adhered to and that research is conducted in accordance with the TCPS and University Policies and Procedures.
 - 5.7.5.3. Research conducted for all other purposes during training, practicum, internship, or co-op are to be vetted at the DREB level and reported accordingly at year-end to the REB. Article 6.1 of the *TCPS* (2018) specifically indicates the following:

Similarly, the requirement for REB review applies to research dimensions of student co-op work or field placements that are part of, and credited to, educational programs to provide exposure to the field and allow application of the knowledge and skills acquired from those programs. Where co-op placements involve components of research, institutions and organizations hosting co-op student researchers may consider specifying in advance, in policies, agreements or contracts for co-op student placements, the roles and responsibilities pertaining to ethics review of research involving humans of the host organization versus those of the institution.
 - 5.7.5.4. Departmental-level review must not be used for research in which an undergraduate student is carrying out research that is part of a faculty member's own research program. Such research must be reviewed by the REB.
 - 5.7.5.5. All other items must be submitted to the REB for appropriate review and ultimate clearance.

- 5.8. Departments will decide on memberships for their individual ethics committees. In some cases, a whole department may decide to act as the committee; in others, individuals within departments form the committee. Smaller departments may combine with one or more departments to form a research ethics review committee. Members of a DREB are expected to be familiar with the TCPS and the MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethical Review of Research.
- 5.9. Departmental ethics committees will have regular meetings, as necessary. The timing of departmental reviews will be at the discretion of the individual department.
- 5.10. Departmental ethics committees will ensure that annual reports (per REB.SOP.116) are submitted to the Research Ethics Coordinator no later than June 30th each year.
- 5.11. Individual departmental ethics committees will submit to REB an electronic copy of their departmental policy and description of the mechanisms for review of research involving humans as participants, as well as committee membership for that year. The current policy in effect must be on record in the Research Office no later than September 1st each year. The REB will review departmental policies on an on-going basis to confirm cohesion with the REB policies and procedures, as well as those of the TCPS.
 - 5.11.1. Although specific procedures may vary across departments, the departmental policy must be explicit with respect to the following:
 - 5.11.1.1. The information that is required of students (or on behalf of students) that enables an adequate review of the description and methods of the project under consideration;
 - 5.11.1.2. Methods to ensure free and informed consent;
 - 5.11.1.3. Methods to ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality;
 - 5.11.1.4. Protocols for document retention, the storage and destruction of data;
 - 5.11.1.5. The review process, including expected review timelines;
 - 5.11.1.6. The appeals process;
 - 5.11.1.7. The arms-length contact for complaints or concerns about the conduct of a research project. This contact should be the Chair of the REB. The following statement is recommended: "If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board (REB) c/o MSVU Research Office, at 457-6350 or via e-mail at ethics@msvu.ca."
- 5.12. The following statement must appear on all relevant course syllabi: Students who conduct research involving human participants must have their research reviewed in accordance with MSVU policies procedures and guidelines for ethical review of research before starting the research. Check with your course professor or Chair of the Department about proper procedure.
- 5.13. If, for any reason, members of the DREB feel that an approved research project fails to meet ethical requirements, the DREB will stop the research and immediately inform the REB of the situation.
- 5.14. The Chair of the REB, or her designate, may at any time request access to DREB files, applications, or documents for alternate review.

6. References

See References listed (if applicable)

7. Acknowledgements

The development of this document has benefited directly from similar documents made public by the Tri-Council, as well as several Canadian universities. In some instances, specific formulations drawn from these sources have been incorporated into this document.

8. SOP History

SOP Number	Key Changes	Effective Date
REB.SOP.110	Updated to new Template and reorganized to conform with current SOPs Minor changes to reflect current practice and policies	July 1, 2021
REB.SOP.110	New SOP # REB.SOP.110, formerly REB.SOP.109	June 15, 2021
REB.SOP.109	Reviewed, no changes	March 2017
REB.SOP.109	Updated to new template and minor housekeeping	March 4, 2014
REB.SOP.109	New	October 1, 2012

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