



VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS
For
Ethical Review of Student Research Projects Involving Human Participants
English Department

I. Introduction and Statement of Purpose

As part of their education at Vancouver Island University, subject to certain conditions, students are encouraged to participate in the conduct of original research. A primary consideration is that all research involving human participants which is conducted by Vancouver Island University (VIU) faculty or students must be reviewed for approval by the VIU Research Ethics Board (REB) or by an REB-sanctioned body, as in the case of Departmental Review Process (DRP). However, as per [Tri-Council Guidelines](#) and VIU policy, DRPs are in place solely for minimal risk *undergraduate* research.¹

Accordingly, this DRP may be used only when research:

1. is being conducted by *undergraduate* student(s) as part of their own course work and not as part of a faculty member's research program;
2. involves non-vulnerable populations – e.g., competent adults (not children) who live freely in the community (not in hospitals, prisons, other institutions, etc.);
3. presents little or no risk to the participants – e.g., uses non-invasive methods such as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc.;
4. does not involve any deception.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the principles outlined in the [Tri-Council Policy Statement \(TCPS2\) "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans"](#) and ethical standards are upheld in student research within the English Department. The English Department recognizes and welcomes undergraduate student research that is within the parameters of VIU's Research Ethics Board [Policy 31.03](#) and follows VIU's Research Ethics Board [Procedure 31.03.001](#).

Students who engage in research with vulnerable populations or research involving more than minimal risk must abide by VIU's regulations for conducting research involving human participants and submit

¹ See <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/tcpssearch.cfm#1C1>: "The standard of minimal risk is commonly defined as follows: if potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk. Above the threshold of minimal risk, the research warrants a higher degree of scrutiny and greater provision for the protection of the interests of prospective subjects. There is a similar threshold regarding undue or excessive offers of benefit. As an offer of payment in relation to research participation exceeds the normal range of benefits open to the research subject, it is increasingly likely to amount to an undue incentive for participation (see Section 2B). "

such projects to the VIU Research Ethics Board for its review and approval. If the research is to take place within other jurisdictions (e.g., School Districts, VIHA, First Nations Communities, etc.), ethical approval and permission must ALSO be obtained from those jurisdictions.

English studies and related disciplines often examine the relation of texts and theories to real-life situations and decision-making. Relevant research may include the use of questionnaires and surveys, field notes and observations, and interviews. Department members have the responsibility to be aware of and sensitive to ethical concerns and to ensure that their students are equally sensitive and aware. No student research activities involving human participants shall be carried out without the approval of the Research Ethics Board or the English Department Research Ethics Review Committee on behalf of the REB.

Note: This review process applies to student research projects only. Faculty-initiated research projects involving human participants require ethical review by VIU's Research Ethics Board, including projects undertaken jointly with other research entities or researchers at other research entities, following the formal application process ([Application for Ethical Review](#)).

II. What type of project?

- **Individual** - (to be completed and submitted by Students **ONLY**)
- **Class Activity²** - (to be completed by Faculty Instructor **ONLY**): Please provide details of Course (number and description) and other relevant information (e.g., is this an 'in-class' research exercise involving fellow students? Are students from other courses/sections involved? Etc.)

III. Departmental Review Application for Student Research Projects

The English Department Application Process for Ethical Review must include:

- a. A copy of the student's [TCPS2 \(CORE\) Tutorial Certification](#). When, under IVb, an instructor undertakes the application for ethical review on behalf of students, the tutorial certification is encouraged
- b. A completed VIU REB [Application for Ethical Review](#) (submitted to the Faculty Supervisor, **not** the REB)

IV. Instructor's Responsibilities

- a. For individual student applications, the supervisor/instructor should review, make suggestions or edits, and sign off on the proposal prior to submission to the English Department Research Ethics Review Committee
- b. When an instructor requires a class or group to undertake research involving human participants, in the form of one research project for which individual students undertake different aspects of

² Instructors should be aware that some class activities may be considered as student "training" and, accordingly, not subject to VIU Research Ethics Board review and approval. For a discussion of what constitutes "research vs. training," please see <http://www.viu.ca/REB/ResearchvsTrainingGuidelines.asp>.

the research, or of one project undertaken severally and individually by students, the instructor shall make the application on behalf of the students

- c. All information pertaining to the ethical review of the student projects must be kept in a secure location identified by the Department for this purpose
- d. Any data held by the instructor, for the purpose of evaluation, must be kept confidential and secure in a location only accessible to those so designated
- e. Hardcopy and electronic data will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of three years
- f. Data will be securely destroyed (e.g., paper will be shredded; electronic data will be deleted)

V. Submission Instructions and Review Process

- a. One electronic copy and one paper copy of the Application for Ethical Review, signed by the applicant, will be submitted to Student's Faculty Supervisor
- b. Applications may be made during the August 15-June 01 period; applicants must anticipate at least two weeks processing time
- c. The instructor supervising original research by students will undertake an initial assessment of student research proposals and forward the review documentation to the English Department Research Ethics Review Committee
- d. The English Department Research Ethics Review Committee includes two Faculty members of the English Department each with at least three years teaching experience
- e. The English Department Research Ethics Review Committee will hold meetings as required
- f. Proposals will be assessed by the English Department Research Ethics Review Committee
- g. Should the student's supervisor express concerns about the adjudication of the application by the English Department Research Ethics Review Committee, the application will be referred to the REB