

Guidance Document	REB Requirements for Student Research and Pedagogical Activities
Effective Review	NMREB and HSREB; Delegated & Full Board
Version Date	November 16, 2018

Introduction:

Many university courses include class projects and activities designed to develop research skills. These projects may be carried out by individual students, small groups or as a single class project. This guidance document provides an overview of these student activities and the associated procedures for ethical review when these activities involve human participants (incl. data and/or biological materials). If, after reviewing the below information, it is not clear if a project requires Western’s Research Ethics Board (REB) oversight, contact the Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) before any implementation of the project(s).

Important Note: If a project will serve a dual purpose and falls into two categories, then it must be held to the higher standard. For example, data collected for course-based pedagogical projects cannot subsequently be used as secondary data for research purposes.

Category 1: Research requiring REB review

The following points can be used to determine if the proposed project is subject to standard REB oversight. If the below criteria apply, please adhere to the guidance that follows.

Criteria:

- Research is defined as “an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation” (TCPS2, Article 2.1).
- Measures to disseminate results typically include publication, thesis/dissertation, and/or other knowledge translation/mobilization strategies relevant to the specific discipline.
- Includes:
 - o Class projects and activities which are intended to reflect the definition of “research” per TCPS2, Article 2.1; and
 - o Theses or equivalent research projects (e.g., independent study projects).

Review Requirements: Subject to all existing guidelines/procedures for standard REB oversight.

Category 2: Course-based pedagogical projects

The following criteria can be used to determine if the proposed project should follow the guidelines for a Category 2 project. If the below criteria apply, please adhere to the guidance that follows.

Criteria:

- Data collection/analysis activities embedded within the context of a course assignment. Data may be collected anew from participants or data may come from already existing data sets. In the latter case, considerations of secondary use of data are relevant.
- The course assignment is designed to address a research question using a research framework within the field of study.

- Primary intention is to provide students with an opportunity to develop research skills.
- Results of the project will form the basis of a report that is a graded class component.
- The form of the report is determined by requirements set out, typically in the course outline, to meet course component. These requirements are set by the course instructor.
- Process of data collection and analysis is systematic, rigorous and intended to generate analyzable data according to disciplinary standards.
- The data, data analysis, and report will not be used or presented as “research” as defined by TCPS2, Article 2.1. The data, data analysis, and report are intended solely for the purpose of meeting a course requirement.
- Only the students engaging in these activities are expected to benefit in terms of gaining experience in how research is conducted in the discipline.

REB Review Requirements:

- TCPS2 Article 6.12 indicates that these projects can be delegated to non-REB members with “experience, expertise and knowledge comparable to what is expected of an REB member” (80), and that these projects must be reported to the REB.
- The REB delegates review of individual student projects to the course instructor, who is expected to be PI-eligible and have completed the TCPS2 CORE Tutorial. If the course instructor is not PI-eligible (according to Research Western’s PI eligibility criteria), the OHRE will accept department chair confirmation that instructor can assume PI role and they have completed the TCPS2 CORE Tutorial.
- The course instructor submits a Pedagogical Research application via WREM for REB acknowledgment. **NOTE:** Course instructor must ensure to review and approval all individual student projects.

REB Application Requirements:

- a. Course code and title;
- b. Description of the course assignment that will include research-like activities (e.g., as described in the course outline/syllabus);
- c. Overview of parameters to ensure individual student projects are conducted in an ethical way (e.g., protocol/research plan, voluntary and informed recruitment/consent, privacy/confidentiality protections, guidelines regarding topic sensitivity and participant vulnerability, etc.); and
- d. Process for instructor to ensure appropriate conduct of project (e.g., instructor ‘sign-off’ on topic/documents prior to project initiation, periodical supervision/interim report, etc.).

To continue the pedagogical activity in the next year:

- If this course will be offered multiple terms/years, the instructor submits a Continuing Pedagogical Review application via WREM for REB acknowledgment, indicating:
 - o The number of students who took part in this project in the previous term/year;
 - o Any problems that arose during the students’ projects that term/year; and
 - o Any modifications to the previously acknowledged information (e.g., assignment details, ethical parameters, oversight procedures).

To report the end of a pedagogical course/activity to the REB:

- If the course (or the specific assignment) will no longer be offered (including those courses that are only intended to be offered for 1 year), the instructor \ ubmits a Pedagogical Review Closure application via WREM, indicating:
 - o Number of students who took part in this project in the previous term/year; and
 - o Any problems that arose during the students' projects that term/year.

Category 3: Professional Skill Development

The following criteria can be used to determine if the proposed project should follow the guidelines for a Category 3 project. If the below criteria apply, please adhere to the guidance that follows.

Criteria:

- Vocational skill development or job-related training within standard educational interactions and activities (e.g., student-to-student, nurse-to-patient, etc.).
- May include techniques commonly used in research (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations, etc.), but any data/information generated will not be used for analysis.
Example: Students may administer an assessment test to gain experience in how the test should be given, but any data/information generated in that training exercise will not be used or analyzed.
- Only the students engaging in these activities are expected to benefit in terms of gaining experience in how professional activities are conducted in the discipline.
- Assignments would not reflect disciplinary standards for research.

Review Requirements: No REB oversight required.

Additional Consideration: Community-Engaged Learning

Western University offers many Community-Engaged Learning opportunities, whereby students are matched with community partners (e.g., organizations) within the context of a course. Student projects may be designed by the community partner, and activities may fall within any of the above 3 categories. The course instructor is responsible for confirming to what extent REB oversight is required on these projects. For example:

- Practicum-level projects, where students are collaborating with agencies and intending to contribute to academic research, would be considered Category 1. An initial REB application can be submitted once the partnership/project details have been determined. The instructor should contact the REB directly to make arrangements if there is a time sensitivity.
- Practicum-level projects, where students are collaborating with agencies and collecting data for agency purposes that will also contribute to course-based reports, would be considered Category 2. A Pedagogical Research application can be submitted once the partnership/project has been determined.
- Practicums or job training projects where students are fully integrated into the organization's operational practices and are not conducting research would be considered Category 3.

- Practicum-level projects, where students engage in Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement/Program Evaluation (QA/QI/PE) activities used for internal organizational purposes only, would be considered Category 3.