

UPEI FACULTY OF SCIENCE

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE-BASED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Policy:

In accordance with the UPEI Research Ethics Policy, it is important to assess whether course based research in the Faculty of Science requires ethical approval. All course based research activities in the Faculty of Science involving human participants must be reviewed by the Faculty of Science Ethics Committee (FSEC). Research is defined as involving systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge.

- Course-based research activities are limited to topics and methods that pose no more than **minimal risk** to human participants. The accepted definition of minimal risk is: *'if potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harm implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research'*. Minimal risk is likely when:
 - participants are competent adults, freely living in the community
 - participants are fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research
 - the topic is non-controversial and carries little or no risk of causing discomfort or emotional upset
 - the methods are non-invasive, such as questionnaires or short interviews

Activities judged to involve more than minimal risk will be forwarded to the UPEI Research Ethics Board for review.

- Informed consent must be sought and freely given in writing by each prospective participant. The consent form must contain the items listed in the *Consent Form Checklist* and be written in language intelligible to a lay person. Copies of the checklist can be used as a template by faculty and students in the construction of individual consent forms.

Inducements for participation must be reviewed by the FSEC. Payments may be made to participants when limited to compensation for expenses incurred (e.g. travel, parking, meals, etc.)

Where prospective participants are children, every attempt should be made to ensure that the child understands what is involved and to seek the child's consent. In addition, where the child is not legally competent to give consent, consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian.

- The selection of research participants should be equitable. Where practicable, the research should strive to achieve a demographically representative sampling, subject to the specific constraints of the research hypothesis.
- In general, research involving deception is not acceptable. Participants should be fully aware of the nature and purpose of the research before giving consent.

Procedures:

1. All Department Chairs are required to survey their faculty and identify any courses which feature course based activities involving the use of human participants. The Chair person then completes the “*Department Checklist for Course-Based Activities Involving Human Participants*” and submits it to the FSEC each year by **August 01**. The Chair will then request faculty members to complete the *Faculty Checklist for Course-based Activities Involving Human Participants*” if appropriate.

2. All faculty members who have course based research activities involving human subjects are then required to complete a “***Faculty Checklist for Course-based Activities Involving Human Participants***” annually. These will be submitted by the faculty member to the FSEC by **Aug 15** each year. Professors who indicate that their courses include one or more of the specified course activities will be contacted by a member of the FSEC for more information. If it is deemed appropriate, the faculty member will submit two copies of the Request for Approval for Course Based Research form for each research activity and course material to summarize the nature of the activity and the instructions given to the class.

Ethical approval for course based research activities will be granted for one year. Provided that no changes are made to the course or the Faculty of Science Ethics Policy and Procedures, subsequent renewals will be expedited by the FSEC. If changes are made to the course following approval by the FSEC, a memo outlining the revisions must be sent to the Chair of the FSEC. If necessary, as determined by the FSEC, a new course application will be submitted. All forms related to the ethical approval of each course must be kept by the faculty member for the purpose of any audits that may be required.

It is the professor’s responsibility to ensure that ethical approval is obtained before the activity begins. The professor’s signature on the approval form attests to his/her commitment to ensuring that the research activities described will be undertaken in conformity with the ethical principles outlined in the UPEI Research Ethics Policy.