

Course-Based Research Project Applications for Undergraduate and Graduate Projects

Contents

Purpose and Applicability	1
- <i>Exclusions</i>	1
Research Risk	1
The Application Process	2
Tips on filling out the RISE form	3
Renewing or Amending a Course-Based Research Project Application	4
Appendix	5

Purpose

This guidance is for faculty/instructors who are planning to submit an ethics application for course-based research projects conducted by students in their classes for pedagogical purposes.

Applicability

The Tri Council Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* – TCPS 2 (2018) distinguishes between course-based research conducted for pedagogical purposes and other types of research projects (see [Article 6.12](#)). The Course-Based Research Project BREB application has been created for use by instructors in recognition that projects within a class, carried out for pedagogical purposes, do not require individual review by REB members, as they are typically similar in design and carry a zero-to-low risk of harm to participants.

Projects may include:

- Undergraduate and graduate courses that cover research methods in the syllabus:
 - Courses offering fieldwork exercises
 - Courses on a particular type of method/theory where students are given practical experience applying the methods or theory in research
 - Research communication courses where students conduct research to gain experience in writing up and presenting results

The shortened application form may be used to cover all eligible projects being carried out by students in a course. Please see the section on Research Risk for additional criteria.

Exclusions

The following need to be submitted as individual RISE applications:

- Undergraduate or graduate dissertations (Honours, Masters, PhD)
- Student activities conducted as part of an instructor’s own research program
- Above minimal risk research

Research risk

The BREB does not endorse the inclusion of potentially vulnerable populations in projects being undertaken for the purpose of teaching students how to do research. In order to qualify as a Course-Based Research Project application, the projects it covers need to involve participants with low vulnerability and have low research risk. Projects that may have a medium research risk (see diagram)

may be considered in a Course-Based Research Project application, however, a strong argument will be needed for why they should be included.

Participant Vulnerability	Research Risk 		
	Low	Medium	High
Low	1 	1 	2 
Medium	1 	2 	3 
High	2 	3 	3 

Students whose projects fall outside the marked ranges will need to submit individually using the full ethics application. If your Course-Based Research Project application will not fit within the Low Research risk/Low Participant Vulnerability range, please review the Appendix for the additional detail required and before completing the application.

The application process

Course instructors need to submit Course-Based Research Project applications on behalf of all students in the class through the UBC RISE system (<https://www.rise.ubc.ca>). If you are the course instructor and do not currently have the capacity to list yourself as a Principal Investigator (PI) on ethics applications, please contact Jean Ruiz (jean.ruiz@ors.ubc.ca | 604-827-5310) to have your status updated, explaining that you are submitting an application for a course-based research project.

When you select “Course-Based Research Project” as the study review type (Box 4.8), the RISE application will truncate by removing pages 5 through 8 and replacing them with one Page D. In order to complete the application, you will need the following:

- The name of your department’s Departmental Ethics Officer (if known)
- A description of the class assignment or project that students will complete
- The research methods to be used
- How ethics training and oversight for the projects will be provided to students

Once submitted, the application is reviewed either by a Departmental Ethics Officer (see [Setting up a DEO](#)), or by a BREB member. You will need confirmation of application approval before students begin interacting with prospective participants for research purposes. Students and faculty/instructors must also have completed the TCPS2 CORE tutorial.

You will need to renew the application annually, as with other ethics applications.

Tips on filling out the RISE form

Boxes 1.1 and 1.3 (research team)	The Principal Investigator (PI) on the application must be the course instructor. If there are multiple instructors, appoint one as the PI and add the others as Co-investigators.
Boxes 1.7 and 1.8 (title)	Include “Course Project: [insert specific subtitle]” in both fields so that it will be readily apparent to the ethics administrator.
Box 4.1 (application type)	Select “Behavioural.”
Box 4.2.A	Indicate whether the site is UBC Okanagan or UBC Vancouver.
Box 4.2.D. (Roles)	Check off all that will apply in the students’ projects. It is unlikely that students will be accessing records or charts in minimal risk studies.
Page 4.4.A - C (Peer Review)	Complete all boxes. If no review has occurred, indicate that (per TCPS2 see Article 2.7), because the projects are considered to be minimal risk, a peer review is not required.
Box 4.5.A (risk level)	The risk matrix will need to represent the risk involved in the students’ projects and match the information provided in the course syllabus.
Box 4.5.B	Provide the rationale for your rating, describing separately the particulars of participant vulnerability and research risk.
Box 4.5.C	Must answer “yes.”
Box 4.6	Must answer “no.”
Box 4.7.A and B	Must answer “no.” You will not see the next question until you answer “no” to these questions.
Box 4.8 (course-based research)	Answer “yes” to this question. Include the name of your DEO if known. The application will truncate and insert the branch off Page D: Course-based Projects (RISe will remove pages 5 – 8).
Box D.1	If you selected medium research risk on the minimal risk matrix, please review Appendix X before completing this box. Otherwise, answer “n/a.”
Box D.2 (assignment purpose)	Briefly describe the purpose of the research assignment – this is to confirm that the research is for pedagogical purposes.
Box D.3.A (methodology)	Describe the methods students will be using to complete their projects, such as surveys, participant observation, or interviews. If students will have latitude to develop their specific project methodology within broad parameters, you will need to describe the range of options.
Box D.3.B (student oversight)	Explain the steps the instructors will take to confirm that students are following the allowable methods. Steps might include a requirement that students submit a research proposal; regular in-class debriefings; and one-on-one update meetings between student and instructor.
Boxes D.4 – D.8 (instructions to students)	List the “ground rules” you will require students to follow when conducting their research assignment.

Boxes D.9 – D.10 (research ethics in the course)	Explain how you will cover the subject of research ethics in the course. As students conducting research with human participants are required to complete the TCPS 2 CORE tutorial, please also explain how you will ensure completion. The tutorial is free and takes up to three hours to complete: TCPS 2 CORE tutorial
Box D.11	If students will be developing individual projects, use this space to describe how you will review and approve them.
Box D.12	Instructors are required to keep project materials (e.g., consent forms, research proposals, collected data) for at least 6 months beyond the end of the course, but you can destroy them after this period.
Box D.13	This section confirms the instructor’s responsibility for student research projects.
Box 9.1	Attach the course outline and handouts pertaining to the assignment/project, etc.
Box 9.2	Attach the consent form template that students will use. If the description of the population, method of recruitment, purpose, and procedures is different for each student’s project, provide a general template. Please also ensure that the consent form clearly indicates which course students are conducting the research for and that the purpose of the research is pedagogical. See the Informed consent form guidelines for further detail.
Box 9.5	If students will receive templates, such as surveys or interview scripts, they need to be included in the ethics review. Attach here.

Renewing or amending a Course-Based Research Project Application

You will need to renew the Course-Based Research Project application annually as long as the course is offered, up to a maximum of six years. Use the customary RISE renewal procedures and ensure that the renewal nickname includes “Course-Based Project.”

As the renewal form was designed with stand-alone research projects in mind, rather than course-based projects, we provide some guidelines below on how to fill it out. On the Post Approval Application (PAA) Coversheet:

Box 1.1 (qualification for minimal risk review)	Respond “yes.”
Box 1.2 (participant recruitment)	Respond “yes” to questions 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 and write “N/A – course project” in response to the remaining questions.
Box 1.3 (study progress)	Provide a brief description of how the projects went in the previous year.
Box 1.4 (unanticipated events)	Respond “no.”
Box 1.5 (changes in conflict of interest)	Respond “N/A.”
Box 1.6 (lapsed studies)	Respond as appropriate.

The renewal PAA should be sufficient as long as the Course-Based Research parameters remain the same. An amendment would be needed if the instructor changes or if the parameters of the course-based project change (but continue to be minimal risk). If two or more instructors rotate each year teaching a course, list one as the Principal Investigator and the others as Co-Investigators. An amendment to change the PI each year is not necessary, as long as the instructor is listed in either role. See [Post Approval Activity Guidance Notes](#).

Please remember to submit a “request for completion” PAA when the course is discontinued, or if the program is replaced.

Appendix

When is medium research risk acceptable?

Although research containing a medium research risk is technically eligible for a Course-Based Research Project application, the BREB advises instructors to direct students towards low research risk projects – especially if they are novice researchers. However, if instructors wish to broaden the parameters of the student projects by engaging in higher than low-research risk projects, they will need to make a strong case for doing so. For example, students in a particular cohort may have prior academic experience applying slightly higher risk research methods, such as focus groups. In such cases, you will need to provide information on how students will mitigate the additional risks and include the students’ qualifications to handle these projects. Use Page D to describe the details of risk (e.g. loss of confidentiality). Explain how the instructors and students will address the risks, and describe any extenuating circumstances (student experience or expertise) that would justify the additional risk.

Is medium or high participant vulnerability ever acceptable in Course-Based research?

Most applications where students intend to involve vulnerable populations while learning how to do research will be rejected by the BREB. If a student is interested in engaging vulnerable populations in their research project, they will need to reach out to the BREB before starting their application to see if their application would even be considered.

At minimum, a student would need to address the following criteria before the application will be considered for review:

- A strong, well-supported argument for how the population will benefit from the research
- A communication plan for dissemination of results
- Evidence of community or agency support and collaboration
- A strong supervision plan

The BREB is guided by the TCPS2 definition of participant vulnerability, which describes a person’s diminished ability to fully safeguard their own interests, whether because of limited decision-making capacity or limited access to human rights, opportunities, and power. Individuals or groups may experience vulnerability to a different degree and at different times, depending on their circumstances and on the type of research they are being asked to participate in. The degree of participant vulnerability should be assessed within the specific research context. Examples of potentially vulnerable populations include:

- Children and others unable to consent on their own behalf
- Abuse victims, when the research is about their abuse

- Patients, when the research is about their medical condition
- People who are members of groups or communities that are already heavily involved in research (such as residents of the Vancouver Downtown Eastside) and when their membership in that community is an inclusion criterion
- People involved in illegal activities