

Process for Obtaining Ethical Approval for Student Research Projects

The Research Ethics Board at Douglas College is responsible for administering the College's policy on *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects* (see <http://www.douglas.bc.ca/about/policies/admin/a021005.html>). The policy contains a section on student research (Section 1.D.iii):

Local (Course) Review (Research Conducted by Students as Part of Course Requirements) (Results of these reviews will be reported back to the full REB in a timely manner)

Research which is conducted by students under the supervision of an instructor as part of an approved course outline does not need approval from the Research Ethics Board. Instead, the appropriate Faculty Education Committee will review the ethics of the generic research activities as part of its curricular review processes. The research activity must be listed in the course Curriculum Guidelines and must refer to the requirements laid out in this Policy. Faculty supervising students will ensure compliance with this Policy. Copies of appropriate generic consent forms and research ethics guidelines approved by the REB should be provided by the instructor to the students. In situations where student research activities will depart from using these forms, the faculty member should refer the matter to the REB for approval.

The policy divides responsibility for upholding ethical standards three ways: First, it vests Faculty Education Committees with the responsibility of reviewing the ethics of generic research activities within courses (“course review”). Second, the Research Ethics Board is charged with supplying generic consent forms and research ethics guidelines. Finally, faculty are required to supervise students to ensure they comply with the policy.

The Research Ethics Board would like to provide support for (a) faculty who teach courses that involve research projects and (b) members of Faculty Education Committees who must review submissions for ethical approval. The Board has created several documents to assist faculty, including a request form for student research projects and a consent form template for research participants (attached). To assist Faculty Education Committees, the Board is willing to review requests for generic student research projects for a period of one year. **Beginning in September 2010, responsibility for “course reviews” will shift to Faculty Education Committees.**

Faculty are encouraged to submit course reviews to the REB for courses in which their students are collecting qualitative or quantitative data involving human subjects. The deadline for course reviews by the REB is May 2010. This is a soft deadline. There is no penalty for failing to comply. However, there is a benefit to compliance: The process of submitting a request(s) to the Research Ethics Board and obtaining approval will inform the Faculty Education Committees charged with the responsibility of approving course requests starting in Fall 2010.

Deadline for ethical approval for student research: As of Fall 2010, the REB will not receive course reviews and the Board will expect student research projects to be cleared by an ethical review process in order for students’ research to be presented or published at college events.