

**Ethics Review Procedures  
for  
Undergraduate Research Projects  
Involving Human Subjects**

Concordia's policy regarding research involving human subjects can be found in Concordia's *Faculty Handbook*, section 4.17.8. This policy is largely based on the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, to which Concordia fully subscribes.<sup>1</sup>

*Guiding Principles:*

All research involving human subjects is based on a fundamental commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge and understanding. As important as the question of *why* we ought to engage in research is the question of *how* we ought to. Concordia's faculty and students are responsible, then, to ensure that any research project involving human subjects includes two essential components: (1) the selection and achievement of morally acceptable ends, and (2) the use of morally acceptable means to those ends. The guiding ethical principles for research involving human subjects at Concordia therefore include: respect for human dignity; respect for free and informed consent; respect for vulnerable persons; respect for privacy and confidentiality; respect for justice and inclusiveness; balancing foreseeable harms and anticipated benefits; and minimizing harm and maximizing benefit.

In accordance with Concordia's policy regarding research involving humans subject, whenever undergraduate research projects involving human subjects are "carried out within formal course requirements," they must undergo a "**Departmental-level review.**" (*Faculty Handbook*, 4.17.8.5.1)

To fulfill this requirement for departmental-level review:

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<sup>1</sup> English: [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/pdf/TCPS%20October%202005\\_E.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/pdf/TCPS%20October%202005_E.pdf) .  
French version: [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/francais/pdf/TCPS%20octobre%202005\\_F.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/francais/pdf/TCPS%20octobre%202005_F.pdf).

1. **Instructors** supervising or teaching a course involving such student research shall:
  - a. Ensure that the projects are being conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines contained in Concordia's Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects (*Faculty Handbook* 4.17.8).
    - For a concise outline of these guidelines see the REB document: “Faculty Responsibility for Student Research Involving Human Subjects.”
  - b. Report the general nature of the research being conducted in the course to the Department Coordinator. (*FH* 4.17.8.5.2, “Delegated Review.”)
    - The instructor need not report the specifics of individual student research projects. (S)he must only report the general nature of the assigned projects, and what is being done to ensure that the research will be conducted in accordance with Concordia's Ethics policies.
  
2. **Department Coordinators** shall:
  - a. Receive instructors' reports regarding undergraduate research projects involving human subjects.
  - b. See that a Departmental Ethics Review Committee is formed, consisting of “the Coordinator and one additional appropriate Faculty member.”
  
3. **Departmental Ethics Review Committees** shall:
  - a. “assess the proposed research and determine if it meets [the] ethics requirements” specified in Concordia's Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects (*Faculty Handbook* 4.17.8) and outlined in the REB document, “Faculty Responsibilities for Student Research Involving Human Subjects.”
  - b. “report its conclusions to the Chair of the REB before the undergraduate research project is scheduled to begin.”
  
4. The **Chair of the REB** will:
  - a. “decide to accept the recommendation of the Departmental Ethics Review Committee or to forward the matter to the REB for REB assessment.”

*No undergraduate research projects involving human subjects may proceed without the approval of the Departmental Ethics Review Committee and the Chair of the REB.*