A University Senate Policy describes the responsibilities of supervisors and of academic units with respect to research ethics for research involving humans.

**Responsibilities of Supervisors**

Supervisors are responsible for:

- The **ethical conduct** of their students.
- Ensuring that a student is aware of his/her **responsibilities as a researcher** and that prior to conducting the research he/she submits it for ethics review.
- Providing **adequate training** both in the methodology of the student’s research and in the ethical principles and policies that must be observed in carrying it out. Familiarity with University policies and guidelines is considered a minimum in this respect.
- Reviewing the student’s ethics application to ensure it is of appropriate **quality and completeness** prior to permitting the student to apply for REB review. Supervisors indicate this by completing the attestation on the student’s application.
- Supervisors of undergraduate students engaged in undergraduate thesis, or independent research projects must ensure that their students conduct the research in an ethical manner and also have sufficient **training and competency** to do so. The Supervisor must also ensure that the research is reviewed at the appropriate level, initially consulting with the standing Unit-level Ethics Committee in this regard, prior to its being initiated.

(From the University *Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans* (sections 5.2.6 and 5.2.7).

**Unit-level Research Ethics Committees**

It is expected that Departments or Schools whose students undertake human participant research as part of their **education** will

- establish a **standing ethics review committee** that will function throughout the academic year
- require that members of this committee are familiar with, and **apply, the TCPS** and this policy
- ensure that students undertaking human participant research activities receive the **appropriate instruction in research ethics**
- ensure that all human participant research activity being undertaken by students receives the **appropriate review**
- ensure that no faculty member reviews his/her own students’ work
- submit a **timely report** to Research Ethics (per TCPS, p. 79) for distribution to the University REB on all student research projects reviewed by the Unit-level Ethics Committee
- **report any complaints** or difficulties raised by research participants involved in student research projects to Research Ethics immediately.

(From the University *Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans* (section 5.2.4))
Recommendations for Supervisors

Before submitting to the REB, ensure students are appropriately prepared and:

- Are knowledgeable about the proposed methodology, from a research methods class, for example
- Learned about research ethics, in a research methods class, for example
- Completed the online Course on Research Ethics (http://tcps2core.ca/welcome)
- Read the core chapters (1-5) of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Supervisors too!)
- Have had their research proposals vetted carefully by the supervisor and supervisory committee for scholarly merit and feasibility
- Consider having a member of the supervisory committee who is experienced with research involving humans, who can provide guidance in this area
- Have discussed the student researcher's safety during the course of the conduct of the research and have a safety plan in place, where appropriate.

As students are writing the research ethics submission, ensure they:

- Are familiar with, and follow, the application and submission instructions.
- Address each issue in a sub-section directly and in sufficient detail that the reviewer can assess the ethical issues.
- Append study instruments, recruitment material and consent forms (do not embed them in the application form).
- Use language in the submission that is targeted to an educated non-expert (avoid technical or discipline-specific terms; when it is necessary to use this language, ensure it is adequately explained). Reviewers can’t assess information they can’t understand. Language in the recruitment material, consent form and study instruments should be written for the target participant population (grade 8 language level is recommended).
- Explain the scholarly merit of the proposed research.
- Describe the sample size. How many participants are needed? Do they have a feasible plan to secure this same size? It is not ethical to begin research that will not yield usable results.
- Describe and justify inclusion/exclusion criteria and use these consistently (between the application form, the recruitment and consent material).
- Describe in detail each step in the research from the participant’s perspective. What will participants be asked to do, and why?
- Describe why each part of the study is necessary to answer the research question.
- Do not collect any information that is not necessary to answer the research question.
- Ensure that documents prepared for research participants are clear and correct. Students are encouraged to work with the Writing Centre, especially if English is a challenge.
- Make sure the research plan is substantially complete before submitting to the REB. Although changes can emerge in the course of the research which can be addressed through an amendment request, this process should not be used as a substitute for a well-designed project...
initially. Each time a submission is made to the Board, expect it to take approximately **4 weeks** for a response – including amendment reviews.

**During the review process:**

- Discuss the REB review with the student researcher. Be available for **consultation** and guidance.
- Facilitate consultation with a colleague with **additional expertise** for the student (if this could be beneficial).
- Vet the re-submission.

**After the student has received REB approval:**

- Continue to be aware of the status of the student’s research project. **Invite discussion** of any concerns the student may have with respect to the ethical conduct of the research and any concerns about the safety of the researcher.
- Ensure the student is aware of his or her **continuing responsibilities**, including:
  - **Reporting adverse events**
    Any significant adverse events experienced by research participants must be reported **in writing** to Research Ethics **within 24 hours** of their occurrence. Examples of what would be considered “significant” include: an emotional breakdown of a participant during an interview, a negative physical reaction by a participant (e.g. fainting, nausea, unexpected pain, allergic reaction), report by a participant of some sort of negative repercussion from their participation (e.g. reaction of spouse or employer) or complaint by a participant with respect to their participation. Note: the above list is indicative but not all-inclusive. The written report must include details of the adverse event and actions taken by the researcher in response to the adverse event.
  - **Seeking approval for protocol / consent form changes**
    Prior to implementing any changes to the research plan, whether from the protocol or consent form, researchers must submit them to the Research Ethics Board for review and approval. This is done by completing a Request for Ethics Approval of Amendment to an Approved Project form (available on the website) and submitting three copies of the form and any documents related to the change.
  - **Submitting annual reports**
    Ethics approvals are valid for up to 12 months. Prior to the end of the project’s approval deadline, the researcher must complete an Annual Report (available on the website) and return it to Research Ethics for review and approval before the approval end date in order to prevent a lapse of ethics approval for the research. Researchers should note that no research involving humans may be conducted in the absence of a valid ethical approval and that allowing REB approval to lapse is a violation of University policy.
- Submitting final reports
  When the researcher is confident that no further data collection or analysis will be required, a Final Report (available on the website) must be submitted to Research Ethics. This often happens at the time when a manuscript is submitted for publication or a thesis is submitted for defence. After review and approval of the Final Report, the Research Ethics file will be closed.

- Retaining records in a secure manner
  Researchers must ensure that both during and after the research project, data is secured in such a manner as to comply with confidentiality provisions specified in the protocol and consent forms.

  It is the Principal Investigator’s responsibility to keep a copy of the REB approval letters. This can be important to demonstrate that research was undertaken with Board approval, which can be a requirement to publish (and is required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for thesis research).

- Current contact information
  The Principal Investigator must inform the Research Ethics office of any changes to contact information for the PI (and supervisor, if appropriate), especially the electronic mail address, for the duration of the REB approval.