Undergraduate Student Research Projects/Researchers Outside of Grenfell

The GC-REB does not review underT undergraduate research projects. These projects are reviewed at a program level. Program chairs or an assigned program level ethics representative must complete the form and submit it to the GC-REB chair through the Research Office.

Researchers who are looking to complete research at Grenfell Campus, but have ethics approval from their own institution, are asked to complete the form. This includes individuals (students, staff, and faculty) who are located on the St. John's Campus or have obtained approval from ICEHR or the HREB. Approval must be granted by the GC-REB chair prior to commencing your research.

What will the GC-REB do?

1) The ethics committee will read over your application to ensure that it is consistent with two policy statements – the Tri-council Policy guidelines, and Memorial University of Newfoundland's Research Policies. In particular, the committee pays attention to the core ethical principles of Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice. These policies should be reviewed by researchers prior to applying for ethics approval.

2) The ethics committee will not tell you how to conduct your research, though occasionally will make suggestions (particularly for student projects). If methodological suggestions are made, it is up to individual researchers to decide if they would like to implement them.

How do I complete an ethics application?

1) All ethics submissions now require a copy of the completed TCPS2 Certificate.

2) All materials for your study must be attached to your application. This includes information about recruitment, consent, your survey instruments (including any specific questions participants will be asked), debriefing, data storage and security.

3) Applications must be submitted through Memorial University's Researcher Portal. To submit an application you will need to have a research portal account. This process can take up to two days. If necessary, you can also sign up for a researcher portal training session through the portal website.

4) Graduate students must also complete a supervisor signature form.

5) If you would like to make changes to your project or your project extends beyond the initial approval date, you will need to submit the appropriate materials to the GC-REB. Both amendments and requests for extensions must be made through the Research Portal.

When will I receive ethics clearance?

1) When you hit submit, your application is sent to the Research Office before being forwarded to the GC-REB. The committee reviews applications and replies with a two-week turnaround. This two-week turnaround starts when the committee receives the application and not when you hit submit. It can take two to three days for the research office to process your application and forward it to the GC-REB.

2) You will receive one of the following decisions from the GC-REB:

Approval – The GC-REB may approve a research project to proceed as submitted. Ethics approval is granted for a maximum of one year. Ethical approval must be renewed annually until the project is completed.

Approval with Revisions – If a project is ethically sound but requires certain revisions, the GC-REB may provide a conditional approval for a research project to proceed. The conditions will be summarized in a letter from the GC-REB Chair to the PI. It is the responsibility of the investigator to promptly respond to the GC-REB concerns.

Deferral of Approval – The REB may indicate to the PI the need for additional information or for revisions to the application that was submitted. The GC-REB Chair will provide a letter to the PI in which a summary of the reviewers' comments are provided. The additional information or the required revisions must be re-submitted for review.

3) If the committee has indicated that changes or further information is needed, the same two-week process occurs. Again, the two weeks begin when the committee receives your re-submission from the Research Office.

4) It is strongly recommended that ethics applications be submitted well in advance of one month prior to the expected start date of the project—ideally two months in advance. Keep in mind, if you are applying for external funding there are benefits to receiving ethics approval in advance.

Common Problems Seen by the GC-REB

This is not an exhaustive list. However, these are the most frequent problems that delay the approval process. Consider these as you complete your own application.

- Insufficient information – The GC-REB needs to know enough about your method to be able to decide whether participants are being treated in an ethical manner. This is an interdisciplinary committee that changes on a regular basis and there may not be someone who is familiar with your specific methodology.

- Missing Forms – You need to include all study materials. This includes your informed consent form, recruitment materials, questionnaires, and debriefing forms (if applicable).

- Complexity of language – The application itself should be written in non-technical language. Even more importantly, all information that participants will see (e.g., recruitment messages, informed consent forms) should be written using an easy-to-understand language. Policy statements generally suggest information being presented to participants be written at an elementary school level.

Where to go for help:

If you are not sure if you need to complete ethics, or have a question about the process, contact the GC-REB chair.