

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Women's Studies Research Ethics Committee For Review of Undergraduate Research

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The principles and procedures described here have been developed on the basis of existing guidelines in the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology and Psychology. The Women's Studies Research Ethics Committee (WS REC) gratefully acknowledges that foundation. These guidelines conform with the ethical principles incorporated into the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (1998), or TCPS.

These procedures were approved at a meeting of the Women's Studies Advisory Committee on April 16, 2004. They were approved by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board on May 5, 2004. They will apply to all research conducted by undergraduate students in Women's Studies courses.

Any subsequent changes to these procedures must be approved by the Women's Studies Advisory Committee, and by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (University REB).

All quotations and references are from the TCPS. The TCPS is available online at: http://www.nserc.gc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnave&lbi=p9

You may want to review the TCPS introductory tutorial on the University of Windsor's Research Services website: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb>

Women's Studies REC Mandate

The mandate of the Women's Studies Research Ethics Committee is to protect human subjects while *facilitating* and *furthering* ethical research. As defined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement, research is "a systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge" (TCPS, Article 1.1.a). As undergraduates learn to do research, we must ensure they learn and follow ethical research practices.

Ethical practices in social research involving human subjects are:

Respectful of the dignity and privacy of human subjects;

Voluntary, informed, and consensual;

Non-exploitative and free of unwarranted deception;

Responsive to the needs of research subjects, especially needs that arise in or that relate to the research; and

Responsible and reflexive – acknowledging, taking into account, and taking measures to minimize any foreseeable risks.

Terms of Reference

Scope of Ethics Review: All research involving humans as research participants must be reviewed by either the University REB or the WS REC. What requires review is research by Women's Studies undergraduates that involves experimental or ethnographic methods, questionnaires, interviews, or secondary use of data that are not in the public domain. (TCPS, [Article 1.1b](#), [1.1c](#), [2.3](#), [3.3](#))

The Women's Studies REC is comprised of three faculty members from the Women's Studies Advisory Committee, including at least one person from a social science discipline.

Selection of Members: Members (and any necessary replacements) shall be nominated by the Women's Studies Advisory Committee and shall serve for staggered 2-year terms. Terms are renewable. Membership shall be reported to the University REB.

Other responsibilities: The WS REC will ensure that sessional instructors are aware of these policies.

Undergraduate Research: The Departmental REC shall review research conducted by undergraduate students when:

- (1) it is conducted as part of an undergraduate course offered by Women's Studies, and
- (2) it is not part of a faculty member's research program already subject to review by any other Ethics Board (TCPS, [Article 1.4](#)).

Parameters for Women's Studies Undergraduate Research Projects Involving Human Subjects:

- (1) Consent will always be obtained in writing and all requirements of the University REB will be fulfilled.
- (2) No human subjects will be involved who are unable to give informed consent or who are in a controlled institutional environment (e.g., mental health facility, prison, etc.).
- (3) Only low-risk projects will be permitted.
- (4) No subjects will receive compensation.

Application and Decision-Making Procedures:

1. Applications

- A. For independent student projects and seminar courses we encourage the undergraduate researcher to make the application, but the supervisor or course instructor must sign the final application.

Individual student applications will be cleared for the specific time period that is necessary to conduct the research as outlined in the application.

- B. For large generic class projects (for several students or a whole class) the instructor will prepare the application and instruct students about ethical principles and procedures early in the term. The research may not begin until the WS REC or the University REB (if the application has been referred there) has cleared the protocol.

Applications for large course projects (e.g. methods courses) will normally be approved for three years barring any change in the course instructor(s) or significant changes to the original protocol. A new course instructor or changes that would require submitting an addendum must take the form of a new application. After three years, course applications must be resubmitted for evaluation.

2. Submission

Students will submit three hard copies of the application form, with attachments. In all cases the application must be signed by the course instructor. Applications should be sent to the Chair of the WS REC as soon as possible at the start of each term and at least two weeks before the research is to be started.

The Application for Ethical Review Must Describe:

- The purpose and duration of the study.
- How research participants will be recruited.
- The methodology, including a copy of any written instruments to be used (e.g., survey questionnaires, interview schedules or guides).
- The process for obtaining consent, including a copy of any proposed information letter and consent form (see the University REB website for sample consent forms).
- How data and participants' identities will be kept confidential.
- Possible benefits of the study for research participants or the community.
- Possible risks and how they will be minimized.
- How the results will be disseminated (e.g., honours thesis, class presentation, class essay or report).
- Whether or how participants will be informed of research results.
- How students have learned about ethical issues in the research (e.g., having the student read and discuss the TCPS or other material relevant to ethical concerns in social research).

3. REC Decisions

Whenever possible, the committee shall make decisions in face-to-face meetings (TCPS, Articles 1.7, 1.9). Approval requires at least two approving votes. However, it is anticipated that the REC will normally reach a consensus and, if necessary, will work with the applicant to improve the initial proposal.

If the REC is reviewing an application in which a Committee member has a personal interest, that member shall not be involved in the decision, as mandated in the TCPS (Article 1.12). The WS Director or her Delegate will in these instances serve as a Proxy Member.

4. Appeals

Every attempt shall be made to work with the applicant to reach agreement through discussion, revision, and reconsideration. When agreement cannot be reached, decisions of the Departmental REC may be appealed to the University REB, whose decision shall be final.

Reconsideration of these procedures: These procedures shall be reviewed no later than April 2007.