

Research Ethics

Lunch & Learn

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Land Acknowledgement:

Dalhousie University acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'Kmaq People.

As a place of learning, we pay respect to the Indigenous knowledge held by the Mi'kmaq People and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present.



Topics covered:

- 1) The role of the REB
- 2) When REB review is needed
- 3) Jurisdiction / Board of Record
- 4) Unit-level review (undergraduate)
- 5) Application and review process
- 6) After REB approval
- 7) Resources



1. The role of the REB

- Dalhousie researchers are eligible to receive Tri-Agency funding (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC).
- As a condition, the institution must ensure ***all*** research involving humans complies with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)*.
- This is done through the REB review process.



1. The role of the REB

Two REBs at Dal:

- Social Sciences & Humanities REB
- Health Sciences REB

The Boards consist of people who are:

- Faculty members
- Experienced human researchers
- Community members
- Members with legal expertise
- Well-informed about the TCPS and its application

The REBs provide a service to researchers:

help researchers meet their ethical obligations and comply with the TCPS:

a principles-based, long, detailed, intricate, and sometimes complex policy.



2. When is REB review needed?

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) explains:

Article 2.1:

The following requires ethics review and approval by an REB before the research commences. Research involving:

- *Living human participants*;*
- *Human biological materials, as well as human embryos, fetuses, fetal tissue, reproductive materials, and stem cells. This applies to materials derived from living and deceased individuals*



2. When is REB review needed?

Article 2.1 (application):

**human participants:*

“human participants” (referred to as “participants”) are those individuals whose data, biological materials, or responses to interventions, stimuli or questions by the researcher, are relevant to answering the research question(s).



2. When is REB review needed?

Research & activities exempt from REB review:

- Uses publicly available information (TCPS Article 2.2);
- Involves observations in public places where there is no expectation of privacy (TCPS Article 2.3);
- Based exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information (TCPS Article 2.4);
- Quality improvement or program evaluation studies (TCPS Article 2.5);
- Creative practice (TCPS Article 2.6).

NOTE: When in doubt, contact the ethics office to confirm exemption from REB review.



3. Jurisdiction / Board of Record

In other words, who needs REB approval and from what institution?

REB review is needed for research that is conducted:

- by **members of the University**, or those employed by members of the University, acting in their university capacity:
 - faculty (full-time, part-time or emeritus),
 - staff,
 - students,
 - medical residents,
 - fellows,
 - research associates,
 - visiting or adjunct scholars,
 - or any others associated with research at the University;
- using **University resources that are not generally available to the public**, including but not limited to facilities, human data, and human biological materials (including data or biologicals that are in the custody of the University or members of the University).



3. Jurisdiction / Board of Record

Where to get REB approval:

- Usually from the Dalhousie REB
- IWK, NSH, or HHN REBs (if it falls into their jurisdiction)
- Another Canadian REB supplemented by Dalhousie **Board of Record acknowledgement ...**



3. Jurisdiction / Board of Record

Board of Record acknowledgement

- Is for research falling into multiple jurisdictions
- Is recognition by Dal REB that REB approval has been received elsewhere.
- **The Dal REBs do not need to review this type of application.**
- Dalhousie researchers are eligible if they:
 - are not the principal investigator, co-principal investigator or nominated principal investigator on the project;
 - Funding for the project is not primarily held at Dalhousie.



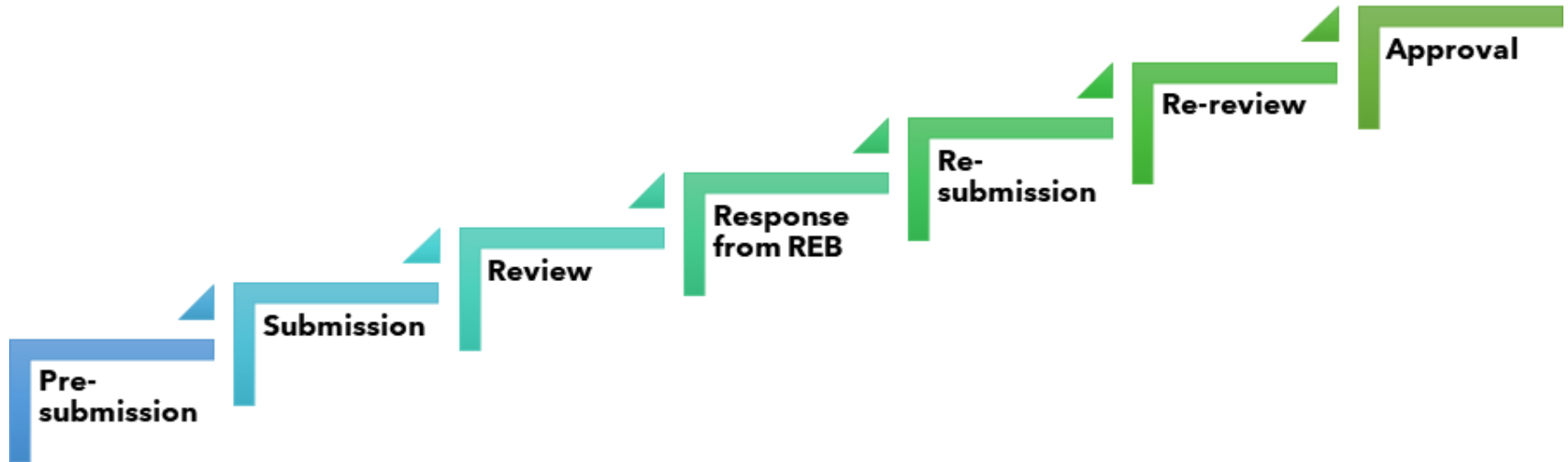
4. Unit-level review

For undergraduate minimal risk thesis research:

- Academic units do an initial review of ethics applications for undergraduate, minimal risk thesis research.
- When it reaches our office, these projects are eligible for a streamlined review, and generally are reviewed more quickly.
- **#1 TIP:** Have students apply in the semester **before** the semester in which the project is due.



5. Application and review process





Clear

- lay language
- active voice
- headings, bullets, bolding text
- use consistent terminology

Concise

- provide only the information requested in each subsection
- avoid repetition
- do not ramble

Cohesive

- logistics are sensible and simple
- application matches appendices
- ensure information does not conflict between sections

Complete

- permissions are secured and appended
- all recruitment materials are developed and appended
- all consent materials are appended
- all study instruments are appended
- all sections are answered fully
- proof read! have someone proof read!



5. Application and review process

Timelines and planning considerations:

- Monthly submission deadlines (website) – more than minimal risk
- Administrative screening
- Review – 4 week turn around (average)
- Submission to approval – 8 weeks (average)
- Amendments – 4 weeks (average)



6. After REB approval

Annual Reporting:

- REB approval active for up to 12 months
- Annual renewal required
- 2 reminders
- Final report

Amendments:

- When changes are needed to complete the original work.
- Submit revised application with changes highlighted, cover letter and amendment request form.
- New study populations, new research questions, or taking the research in a new direction is a new application.



7. Resources

Research ethics website:

<https://www.dal.ca/dept/research-services/responsible-conduct-/research-ethics-.html>



Questions?

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