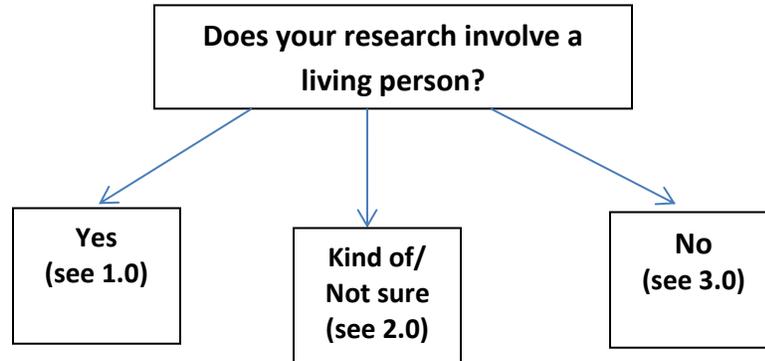


Brief Guidance for Student Applications to the Research Ethics Board (REB)*

Step 1: Do you need to submit an application to the REB?



1.0 If you answered **YES**, you need to complete and submit an application to the REB. The application form can be found on the StMU ethics page:

<https://stmu.ca/academics/resources/research/research-ethics/>

2.0 If you answered **Kind of/Not sure**, consider the following:

- Review is not required for research that relies on secondary use of anonymous information, provided the data or results do not generate identifiable data.
 - However, review is required if you are using secondary data that is **identifiable**.
- If you are unobtrusively observing individuals' natural behaviour in a public place where they have no reasonable expectation of privacy, and the dissemination of the research does not identify individuals you likely do not need REB approval.
 - However, if you are observing behaviour in a public place but the research involves a staged environment, an interaction with and/or any intervention by the researcher, an REB review is needed.
- If you are basing your project exclusively on information that is publicly accessible and where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy, this does not require REB approval.
 - However, if your research involves gathering data from publicly accessible digital sites where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as sites with restricted membership, REB review is likely needed. Talk to your supervisor. If in doubt, consult with the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.
- If you are using publicly available data AND will approach this person(s) to ask more questions you might need to complete and submit an application to the REB. Talk to

your supervisor. If in doubt, consult with the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.

- If you are approaching a person in order to ask for permission to use privately available data AND/OR will ask this person(s) more questions you will likely need to complete and submit an application to the REB. Talk to your supervisor. If in doubt, consult with the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.

3.0 If you answered **No**, an application to the REB is likely not required, however, you should talk to your supervisor to make sure. If in doubt, consult with the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.

Step 2: Is my project minimal risk or more than minimal risk?

During review process the REB will analyze the risks and benefits of your proposed research to ensure that it does not cause undue harm to participants.

Harm is defined as anything that has a negative effect on participant's welfare. Broadly construed, harm may be social, behavioural, psychological, physical, or economic.

In your application you will be asked to describe the potential risks associated with participation in your research and to identify whether these risks are "minimal risk" or "more than minimal risk. This determination should be made based on the **probability** and **magnitude** of possible harm to participants

- The REB will also make its own independent determination of the level of risk, based on the information provided in your application.

Minimal risk: the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

- In other words, there is potential for participation to cause some negative effects, but these are expected to be relatively minor, infrequent, and are similar to what individuals might experience in daily life.

More than minimal risk: the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

- In other words, participation is likely to cause negative effects, and these are expected to exceed the severity of what individuals would experience in their daily life.

When trying to determine the level of risk involved in your study, consider whether your project includes...

- Vulnerable or dependent populations (e.g. children, individuals with cognitive impairments or individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions).
- A situation where participants may feel coerced/obligated to take part, and/or participation may not be voluntary (e.g. students in a class, employees in their workplace, prisoners)
- Deception
- Access to records that include personal information
- Risk of creating psychological stress
- Risk of identifying distressed or disturbed individuals
- Risk to a participant's reputation or status within a society/group/organization
- Risk that individuals or groups might suffer any economic loss by participating the study
- Risk that individuals or groups might be stigmatized by participating in the study
- Political or physical risk to a subject/researcher in an international setting (e.g. unauthorized contact with a foreigner)
- Risk to the participant arising from confidentiality (e.g. might the information gathered be of concern to a law enforcement agency?) or lack thereof
- Risk to the participant from lack of anonymity
- Perceived or real conflict of interest

If any of the above apply, your project may involve **more than minimal risk**. In all REB applications, risks must be justified, mitigated, and outweighed by the benefits of the research. However, in studies that involve more than minimal risk, additional care must be taken to explain why such risks are necessary and ensure that the risks are mitigated as much as possible.

Application Guidance

- All applications must be submitted electronically via email to the Chair of the REB at reb@stmu.ca.
- Attach your application form as a Word document (electronic signatures accepted) to your email.
- In support of your application, you must also submit all relevant materials including but not limited to recruitment materials and scripts, consent forms, copies of questionnaires/manipulations/interview guides/etc. to be used, and a debriefing statement (if being used)
 - You must also include a description of the purpose and aims of your research. In this description you should also provide an overview of the rationale for your

study and a description of how you will conduct the research. See section 2.8 of the ethics application for more details.

- Supporting materials should be organized, clearly labeled, and referenced throughout the application form (e.g., see Appendix A for the consent form).
 - You can submit a **maximum of two** supporting documents with your application.
- In addition to your application form and supporting documents you must also attach the TCPS 2 CORE certificate of yourself or your faculty supervisor (student projects only) to the application
- Only complete, coherent, grammatically correct applications that adhere to specifications and ethics policy will be accepted for review. Applications lacking in any of these areas will be returned to the applicant.

Informed Consent Form Guidance

Consent forms must clearly address the nature and purpose of the study, how data will be used, disseminated, stored and destroyed (if relevant). You also need to make clear the rights of the participant (e.g. withdrawal, anonymity, data security), provide a clear request for participation, and provide the participant with the name and contact details of the REB chair (Dr. Erin Shanahan, email: REB@stmu.ca). A template for a consent form has been provided to you on the website (<https://stmu.ca/academics/resources/research/research-ethics/>) – this is a best practice guide and is subject to changes. However, all headers and wording listed in italics must be included in your form.

Use PLAIN language throughout the consent form at ALL times. (Forms that contain poor grammar and jargon will be returned)

IF you are collecting your data by means of an online survey provider, know that that online survey tools that are hosted by American companies are subject to U.S. laws; in particular, the US Patriot Act. Some survey providers, such as Qualtrics and PsyToolKit, have multiple servers, so make sure you know where your data is being stored.

If you are using a survey tool that stores data on a US server, the following statement should be included in your Informed Consent form under ‘Confidentiality’:

It is important for you to know that “[name of survey tool]” is a web-survey company that is located in the U.S.; this company is subject to U.S. laws and in particular, the Patriot Act, which allows the U.S. government to access the records of internet service providers. No personal identifiers will be collected in this survey but it is possible that the views and opinions you

expressed may be accessed and linked to you without your knowledge or consent. In an effort to maintain anonymity, during the design of this survey, the option to collect your computer IP address has been disabled. The security and privacy policy for the [name of survey tool] can be found at the following link: [insert appropriate link].

*This document is informal and incomplete and does not guarantee application acceptance or approval. Students should review the full ethics policy (available on the website) prior to submitting an application.