

St. Thomas University
Research Ethics Board
Annual Report 201

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developing and participating in continuing and professional education relating to ethics and the use of human participants

The policies and practices adopted by the STU REB will be consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (current version).

Research Ethics Board Members, 2014-2015

Member	Representation	Expiration of Appointment
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General information

The University endorses the ethical principles cited in the Tri-Council Policy Statement and has mandated its Research Ethics Board (REB) to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with the Statement.

The STU REB has jurisdiction over all STU Research involving human participants. As per the REB Policy (see *Preamble*), “STU Research” is that which is conducted:

by members of the STU community (including faculty, students, and staff)

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through the use of case studies and issue-based discussion. Participation in these events provides immeasurable assistance to the REB both in its review practices and its awareness of current issues and applied solutions.

4) Educational Outreach to STU Community

One of the key responsibilities of the STU REB, as outlined in Article 1.1 of the STU REB Senate Policy, is the participation and development of continuing education opportunities for the STU community. As part of this mandate, the REB Chair attended the meetings of the Department Chairs (Social Sciences, Humanities) in November, 2014 to discuss the role of the REB and its activities. Particular focus was placed on the scope and requirements of departmental ethics review committees. These points were summarized on a handout (see Appendix B) which was distributed at the meeting and made available electronically to the Deans for further reference.

The REB also hosted an educational seminar on research ethics and social media research. Dr. Gordon DuVal, Chair of the National Research Council's REB, delivered a seminar entitled, "Researching Online: Facebook and Beyond" at St. Thomas University on March 12, 2015. It was well attended and received very positive feedback from faculty.

Plans for REB in 2015-2016

1) Review of research ethics applications and management of active files

The REB will continue the work of reviewing research files and consulting with STU researchers. To facilitate this process, a "reviewer checklist" is being designed which will guide individual REB members in their review of files as well as provide direction for REB discussions of ethics issues during file reviews at the Board level. Once finalized, this checklist will be made available on the REB website as a tool for researchers as they prepare ethics applications.

2) TCPS2 (2014) Compliance

As part of the REB's efforts to ensure compliance with the new TCPS2 (2014), a number of review and revision processes are planned for the 2015-2016 year. These include amendments to the REB Senate Policy document, the REB application form, and the REB's Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs). In addition to adhering to the new TCPS2 (2014) requirements, this review process should also increase St. Thomas University's conformity to national research ethics practices and procedures.

3) Education

departmental-level ethics review and reporting, some of the recent revisions to the TCPS2 (2014) will be discussed

Research Ethics Board Policy

Approved by Senate, June 2005

Revised and approved by Senate, June 2011

Preamble

St. Thomas University endorses the principles set out in the “**Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans**” (current version) and this document describes how STU will apply Tri-Council policy. The issues below are worded using the language employed in the TCPS (current version).

Research is an essential component of the mission of St. Thomas University and some of this research involves studying human participants. The University has a responsibility to engage in research advancing human knowledge. The use of human beings in the conduct of research confers responsibilities to the investigator(s). It is also the responsibility of the University to promote ethical research.

This policy is intended to ensure that the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants are maintained at St. Thomas University in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. These ethical standards include the principles of respect for 1) persons, 2) concern for welfare, and 3) justice.

Review is available normally only to members of the STU research community, researchers in formal collaboration with STU members, or for research conducted at STU

- developing policies regarding ethical issues relating to the use of human participants in research;
- reviewing all protocols requiring the participation of human participants for ethical approval;
- reviewing annually all policies regarding ethical issues relating to the use of human participants in research projects to ensure that policies remain current;
- dealing with matters concerned with human-based research referred to the REB by the President of STU;
- preparing an annual report for submission to the President;
- participating in continuing education organized by STU research administrators for the University community in matters relating to ethics and the use of human participants

The policies and practices adopted by the STU REB will be consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (current version).

1.2 Composition of REB

The REB shall be made up of no less than 5 members, including both men and women, and include:

- at least one community representative with no formal affiliation with the University
- a minimum of two university members with broad expertise in the methods or in areas of research covered by the REB in different disciplines.
- at least one university member with broad knowledge in ethics or experience in the evaluation of ethical implications of research involving human participants.
- at least one member should be capable of alerting the REB to legal issues and implications in relevant areas of research.
- Substitute members may be appointed at the discretion of the President. Substitute members can be called in to replace members unable to attend or to provide expertise in a specific area.
- Ad Hoc advisors will be consulted in the event that the board lacks specific expertise or knowledge to review the ethical acceptability of a research proposal competently

The balance and composition of the university members on the REB shall be the purview of the President of STU who shall seek advice from the Senate prior to making appointments to the Board.

The REB will have access to a legal expert (other than the University's legal counsel) knowledgeable in the applicable law.

The President shall appoint one member of the REB to serve as Chair for a maximum term of three years.

Board members shall serve for three-year terms, which normally may be renewed once.

Appointments can range from one to four years to allow for continuity of membership.

Members will be selected in accordance with Tri-Council Policy.

1.3 Meetings

The REB shall meet regularly to review submissions. In the event of a tie vote, the matter under consideration will be considered not passed.

The REB shall require a quorum of at least the majority of its members (not including substitute members) at all meetings concerned with the ethical approval of research proposals. In addition, it is necessary to have at least one community member present and it is necessary to have one member capable of alerting the board to the legal issues.

Meetings are not required in the case of delegated review. An annual schedule of REB meetings will be published.

1.4 Authority

The University endorses the ethical principles cited in the Tri-Council Policy Statement and has mandated its Research Ethics Board (REB) to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with the Statement.

The STU REB will have jurisdiction over all research involving human participants. All STU research involving human participants will proceed after ethical approval has been granted by the REB or in the case of undergraduate research, the appropriate departmental Research Ethics Committee.

2.0 Procedural Guidelines for the Review of a Research Proposal

2.1 Submission

The basic principle is that all "STU research" (as defined in the Preamble) comes under the jurisdiction of the REB. This refers to research involving human participants undertaken by members of the university community -- including all faculty, visiting researchers, student researchers, and staff.

Visiting researchers should contact the STU REB well in advance of the anticipated start date of research. Submissions for review should be submitted to the STU REB using the "Application for Review of Research Involving Humans" form. Researchers who are unsure if their project is considered "research" are to contact the REB Chair.

2.2 Ethics Review

The effective working of ethics review -- across the range of disciplines conducting research involving human participants -- requires a reasonable flexibility in the implementation of common principles. This policy, therefore, seeks to express the shared principles and wisdom of researchers in diverse fields.

- iii. Ad hoc independent external peer review reporting directly to the REB.
- b) The extent of the review for scholarly standards that is required for biomedical research that does not involve more than minimal risk will vary according to the research being carried out.
- c) Research in the humanities and the social sciences which poses, at most, minimal risk shall not normally be required by the REB to be peer reviewed.
- d) Certain types of research, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities, may legitimately have a negative effect on public figures in politics, business, labour, the arts or other walks of life, or on organizations. Such research should not be blocked through the use of risk/benefits analysis or because of the potentially negative nature of the findings. Such research should be carried out according to the professional standards of the relevant discipline(s) or field(s) of research.

2.4 Principle of Proportionate Review

The REB will use a proportionate approach based on the general principle that the level of scrutiny of a research project is determined by the level of risk it poses to the participants.

2.5 Normal Review Process

The REB shall normally meet face to face in order to review submitted research proposals.

In case of controversial research proposals, the REB may meet face to face with researchers in order to consider the ethical solutions proposed by researchers for problems arising in their studies. The REB shall accommodate reasonable requests from researchers to participate in discussions about their proposals, but the researchers must not be present when the REB is making its decision. Minutes will be kept for these meetings by the Office of the Assistant Vice-President (Research) and inserted into the appropriate case files.

The REB shall keep an "open file" in a secure place in the Office of the Assistant Vice-President (Research) for researchers applying for ethical approval. The file shall be opened by the Chair when sufficient information has been submitted by the researcher to start the review process. The original application, descriptions of research and methodology, correspondence, relevant documents, ethical certificates, revised materials, and any comments from the public or other information relevant to the research project shall be kept in the file. It is the responsibility of the researcher to address all the recommendations made by the REB and keep the file complete and up to date at all times.

When the research project is finished, and the researcher(s) notifies the Office of the Assistant Vice-President (Research) and the STU REB, these files shall be "closed" and kept as records demonstrating compliance with the Tri-Council Policy. The files remain the property of STU and cannot be removed from the Office of the Assistant Vice-

2.8 Continuing Ethics Review

a) Ongoing research shall be subject to continuing ethics review. The Chair of the REB must be promptly notified of any substantial change to the research plan or research

Board. Non-compliance with the substance of the Tri-Council Policy Statement is a reason for refusing to grant an appeal. Appeals may be granted only on procedural grounds or when there is a significant disagreement over an interpretation of the Tri-Council Policy Statement. The decision of the Appeal REB shall be binding.

4.0 Report of the Research Ethics Board

Certificates of Ethical Approval, signed by the Chair of the STU REB will be issued to the Principal Investigator(s) the Assistant Vice-President (Research), and will be available to the President and Vice-President Academic through the office of Research.

Any decisions by the Chair to approve minor amendments without full committee review will be reported to the REB and recorded in the minutes.

An annual activity report from the REB will be made to the President through the Office of the Assistant Vice-President (Research) who will in turn bring the report to Senate for consideration.

5.0 Multi-jurisdictional Research

Given that all Universities in Canada that receive funding from SSHRC, CIHR and NSERC must abide by the tri-council policy statement (TCPS), and in accordance with the principle of proportionate review from the TCPS, the following alternative review models avoid “unnecessary duplication of review without compromising the protection of participants” (TCPS2, article 8.1, pg., 99).

Chapter 8 (Multi-jurisdictional Research), article

*To determine

The REB will report to the President through the Assistant Vice-President (Research) any cases which undermine STU's compliance with the Tri-Council Policy and the President shall decide if and/or what sanctions or penalties to impose on the researcher(s).

Appendix A

A reciprocal agreement between STU and UNBF for the recruitment of research participants in minimal risk research has been reached. UNBF researchers wishing to recruit participants at STU (e.g., via poster, email, or webpost), are to submit their UNBF REB application and certificate to the STU REB. The STU REB will then approve, if appropriate, the recruitment of participants from the STU community, subject to modifications if necessary. A STU REB number will be assigned to the approved application, and the application will be kept on file. The same procedure would apply for STU researchers wishing to recruit participants at UNBF.

Appendix B – Chairs meeting hand-out

by a STU staff or faculty member
in formal collaboration with a STU staff or faculty member
at STU (or with members of the STU staff, faculty, and student communities) others
by STU students as part of class assignments, teaching exercises, or honours projects

Research in the fourth category (i.e. conducted by students as part of a course or project) that falls below minimal risk should be handled at the departmental level. This is provided for in Section 2.7 of the REB Policy.

Departmental Research Ethics Committees (RECs):
composed of at least two members

Exemptions from Ethical Review:

Not all research activities undertaken by STU community members will trigger an ethical review.

REB Members:

Brian Carty, (Social Work)

Danielle Connell, Administrative Assistant

Matthew Hayes, (Sociology)

Dave Korotkov, (Psychology)

Sue McKenzie, (Social Work)

Sharon Murray, (Education)

Chair (Criminology)

Alanna Palmer, Community Member

Nicholas Sehl, Community Member (alternate)

Ray Williams, (Education)