

Guidelines for Supervisors and Students

PNB 2QQ3 (Research Practicum)

Contact:

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PNB 2QQ3 is an independent research practicum course for students registered in Level II of an Honours Psychology program. The purpose of the course is to provide an opportunity for students to participate in experimental psychology projects in a research laboratory.

Successful completion of the research practicum, which may extend over one term or over two terms, results in 3-units credit.

SUPERVISION

Supervisors for PNB 2QQ3 are restricted to Internal Supervisors – that is, full-time and adjunct members of the McMaster Department of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour. Students are encouraged to contact potential supervisors to find out who might be available and what sorts of projects are available. You will find a link to “Internal and External Supervisors” on the department web page, under “Undergraduate Studies.” Only ‘Internal’ supervisors should be contacted for PNB 2QQ3.

The student and supervisor should come to a clear understanding as early as possible as to the supervisor's expectations regarding the student's responsibilities, the time commitment involved for the student, whether a written document will be required, etc. Regular meetings (at least weekly) should be scheduled so that the student is able to obtain continuous guidance, feedback, and support from the supervisor. While it is primarily the responsibility of the student to meet the specified deadlines, the supervisor should provide a degree of supervision that would allow the student to meet their responsibilities on schedule.

The student should plan on spending, on average, about 10 hours per week if registered in a 1-term course or about 5 hours per week if registered in a 2-term course.

Very occasionally, there may be some disagreements between student and supervisor concerning the research practicum. For example, a student may think that he/she is not getting sufficient access to the supervisor, or the supervisor may think that the student is not fulfilling his/her obligations with respect to the research. It is important that the student and/or supervisor bring such disagreements to the attention of the Undergraduate Secretary as soon as possible. It is too late to deal with such problems when it is almost time for submission of the grade.

EVALUATION

The final grade for PNB 2QQ3 is not determined by a standard numerical formula. Rather, the supervisor will assign a letter grade based on an overall evaluation of the laboratory participation during the year and of any written documents describing the research practicum.

DEADLINE

The date for the submission of grades is determined by the registrar's office. It is usually a few days after the end of classes in December or in April. Students should aim to have completed the practicum before the last week of classes. The Undergraduate Secretary will inform supervisors of the due date as soon as she receives the grade sheets from the registrar's office.

Extensions of the deadline are rarely granted. If the supervisor thinks an extension is warranted, he/she can request the student to obtain a "Request for Incomplete" form from the Undergraduate Secretary. This form is completed and signed by the student, the supervisor, and the Chair of the Department. This form must be returned to the student's Faculty Office and a copy must be sent to the Associate Dean of Science, if the student is not registered in the Faculty of Science.

WHMIS TRAINING

All students working with ANIMALS or CHEMICALS must submit a copy of certification for WHMIS CORE training to the Undergraduate Secretary before beginning their practicum research and no later than September 30 if registered for Term 1 or 3 and January 31 if registered for Term 2. A schedule for the WHMIS training sessions is posted on the door of the Psychology Office and is available at (<http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/safetyoffice/whmis-page.html>)

ANIMAL CARE APPROVAL

All students conducting practicum research involving animal subjects must complete the appropriate animal care course before beginning their practicum research and no later than September 30 if registered for Term 1 or 3, and January 31 if registered for Term 2. **It is the responsibility of the practicum supervisor to email the Undergraduate Secretary by September 30 that the course has been completed.**

HUMAN ETHICS

Human Ethics Research involving human participants must be reviewed by an Ethics Board before it can commence. The job of the Ethics Board is to think about the proposed research from the perspective solely of the participants. The researcher cares about that, too, of course, but also is motivated by other factors such as getting a good grade, advancing knowledge, and learning about how to do research.

The University through the Office of Research Services (ORS) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/>) has a Research Ethics Board (MREB) that reviews research conducted by faculty members and graduate students. An undergraduate project that forms part of the research program of a faculty member is covered by the University-level review. The Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour Student Research Ethics Committee (PSREC) (http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/info_srec_psrec.htm) reviews all other research conducted by undergraduate students as part of a course offered by the department (including theses and independent study courses). The Departmental Committee is governed by Terms of Reference approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board on September 14, 1999 and by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS, 1998 with May 2002, September 2002, and October 2005 updates) entitled Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. (<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/index/>)

The TCPS defines research as a systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge. This includes not only experimental protocols, but also research involving naturalistic observation, questionnaires, interviews, or secondary use of data that are not in the public domain. It also covers research conducted as a class project.

Application Forms:

Undergraduates can find the application forms for the Individual Undergraduate projects at: http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/students_forms.htm

See Instructions on how to fill them out at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/undergradethicsguide.htm>

For additional information, contact the Michael Wilson (ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)