

Human Ethics - Last updated Dec. 12, 2007

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/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>)

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>

Faculty and Graduate students can find **Course based project forms** at: http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/faculty_forms.htm

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