



New Procedures for Informed Consent

Investigators performing research that is subject to ethical review under the provisions of SFU Policy R20.01 will ordinarily be required to inform their subjects in writing about the limits of confidentiality involved in research participation. Exceptions to this requirement (which may be made in the case of some kinds of observational research) must be approved by the Research Ethics Board. Investigators have the choice of using:

1. The “Law of the Land” approach in which case they will use option A of the electronic application, in which the consent statement refers to limited confidentiality with respect to requirements of the law to disclose information (an example is child abuse), or a similar paragraph more appropriate to their research.

(or)

2. The “Professional Ethics” approach, in which case they will use the paragraph marked B of the electronic application, or a similar paragraph (option C) that may be more appropriate to their research. If option B is chosen, the specifics of the professional ethics to be used must be included in the Project Information Document (Form 5), e.g., Canadian Psychological Association.

For certain kinds of research under particular circumstances, approach 1 or 2 may not be sufficient to appropriately inform subjects about the kinds of information that could trigger a violation of confidentiality during the course of the research. When the risk of some particular kind of discovery is foreseeable, the investigator may be required to provide additional, more specific information to the subject about what kinds of discovered information would and would not trigger disclosure to some responsible agency.

Electronic Submissions Of Applications

www.sfu.ca/~dore/

Office of Research Ethics
www.sfu.ca/vp-research/ethics

SFU Policy R20.01: Ethics Review of Research
Involving Human Subjects
www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm

Thesis Submissions

The SFU Library is now moving toward the inclusion of a “Ethics Approval Letter” as an appendix to all Thesis and research projects that are submitted to the Library. Each student whose application has been approved by the Research Ethics Board will receive by mail a letter to be appended to the Thesis.

Amendments To Projects

All Principal Investigators must inform the Office of Research Ethics of any amendments to their protocol, or risk to the subjects, or title of the research, which they wish to implement. All amendments must be approved by the Office of Research Ethics and ratified by the Research Ethics Board. Amendments can be requested by an email to dore@sfu.ca. Amendments for extension of approval durations do not require REB ratification. When requesting an amendment please insure that you include the original title of the project, the Principal Investigator and precise specification of the amendments requested.

Internet Surveys

A risk-weighted approach will be used to consider all methods for employing the Internet to conduct research. Four basic requirements are:

1. The method of giving informed consent
2. The method of communicating data between respondent and researcher.
3. The method of storing data.
4. Who will be able to legitimately access it and why?
5. How will the names and email addresses of the potential respondents be collected and protected.

Educational Seminars

If you would like the Office of Research Ethics to give a talk to students about policy or process, or to discuss specific issues, please email the request to dore@sfu.ca.

Ethics Presentations

Powerpoint presentations are available on disk for instructors or students who wish copies. Currently the presentations available on a single disk are:

1. Instructions for Application
2. Tri-Council Policy
3. SFU Ethics Policy
4. Application Tips

Directed Studies Courses

The Research Ethics Board passed the following motion at its March 2003 meeting:

“That all Directed Studies Courses involving human subjects must be submitted for individual review each time the course is to be offered”

Post Doctoral Fellows

Post Doctoral Fellows whose fellowship payments are scheduled to begin prior to seeking Ethics approval, for work with human subjects, are asked to declare their understanding of the requirement for Ethics approval using the Declaration of Intent form that can be accessed at www.sfu.ca/~dore/.

Naturalistic Observations

Article 2.3 of the Tri-Council Policy statement: REB review is normally required for research involving naturalistic observation. However, research involving observation of participants in, for example, political rallies, demonstrations or public meetings should not require REB review since it can be expected that the participants are seeking public visibility.

Exclusions for Ethics Reviews

Research on: public policy issues, public institutions, and other matters that in a free and democratic society can be properly considered as part of the public domain is not required to undergo ethics review, even when interviews with individuals occupying positions connected to such matters are involved. The following approach was approved by the Research Ethics Board.

Research programs that require contact with human subjects whose regular occupational duties involve communicating with the public on behalf of their organisations (such as public relations officers, official spokespeople, diplomatic officials, freedom of information officers, archivists, etc. or the Chief Executive of an organisation) does not require review if the questions posed are within the ordinary occupational duties of the subject.

A good test for determining whether the answering of questions posed by the public are within the ordinary occupational duties of the subject, is whether or not it is reasonable to assume that the subject has prior authorization from their organisation to speak, or to correspond with respect to a given matter on an attributable basis, and agrees to do so.

Researchers whose inquiries are referred to other members of an organisation by a public relations officer, official spokesperson, etc. for the organisation ought not to be required to have their research project subjected to review, to the degree that their questions to such follow-on subjects are in keeping with their initial inquiry and the substance of the interview are attributable.

Human Genome Research



The human genome project has resulted in ethical issues with which scientists, policy-makers and the public alike have struggled.

Should employment organisations be prohibited from using genetic information to affect the hiring of an individual or to affect the terms, conditions, privileges, benefits or termination of employment unless the employment organisations can prove the information is job related and consistent with business activity?

Should employment organisations be prohibited from requesting or requiring the collection or disclosure of genetic information and if so should written and informed consent be required for each request, collection or disclosure.

Should insurance companies be prohibited from requesting, or requiring the disclosure of, genetic information in the determination of the type and extent of insurance coverage?

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) has announced the completion of the first phase of the Environmental Genome Project to characterize genes that confer susceptibility to leading causes of death and illness, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. According to NIEHS Director Kenneth Olden, Ph.D., researchers have re-sequenced and cataloged 200 environmentally-responsive genes, identifying links to vascular disease, leukemia, and other conditions that affect the quality and length of life of many Americans.

Exclusions from SFU Ethics Approvals

Certain classes of research involving human subjects are excluded from the requirement of ethics review by the Research Ethics Board:

Research conducted by a member of the academic staff as an ***Outside Professional Activity*** (see also SFU policy A30.04) or by other employees or students, as long as the research data are not collected by asserting connection or affiliation with Simon Fraser University, and the results are not disseminated in the public domain indicating association with Simon Fraser University, and the research is not conducted at Simon Fraser University or uses Simon Fraser University resources.

Research undertaken by students outside the auspices of Simon Fraser University and/or its academic programs (e.g., students on co-op or work terms outside the University) that does not require Simon Fraser University resources, and is not directly supervised by Simon Fraser University faculty.

Research on ancient unidentifiable human remains.

Application Procedure

Note: Electronic applications are required and paper copy will not be accepted.

1. Applicants send an email to the Office of Research Ethics (dore@sfu.ca) requesting a code for the purpose of accessing on-line forms. Include a title, your name, department or school within SFU, and if applicable, your supervisor name and short form e-mail address (jdoe@sfu.ca, not jane_doe@sfu.ca).
2. The Office of Research Ethics answers your email with a code and the web site address of the forms.
3. After completion of each form it is submitted as shown on each form.
4. When you have completed all forms that are to be submitted you send an email to dore@sfu.ca with the title and THE PASSWORD ASSIGNED TO YOU indicating that the electronic application is complete.
5. After the application has been reviewed the disposition of the application will be sent to your sfu email address in pdf format.
6. If students are applying for ethics approval the student's supervisor will be sent Form 1 and disposition of the application by email and asked to confirm that he or she has approved the application.
7. The Office of Research Ethics will close web access to your form.
8. An approval letter will be sent by Campus Mail.

Research Ethics Board

Faculty Members:

Dr. Bruce Whittlesea (Chair), *Psychology*
Dr. Charles Krieger, M.D., *Kinesiology*
Dr. Daniel Cohn, *Political Science*
Dr. David Kaufman, *Education*
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Members from Outside the University:

Ms. Lynne Kennedy
Mr. William (Bill) Melville

Office of Research Ethics

Hal Weinberg, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Research Ethics
603 268 6593
hweinber@sfu.ca

Barb Ralph

Ethics Officer
604 291 3447
bralph@sfu.ca

Janet Yule

Ethics Assistant
604 291 5719
jyule@sfu.ca
Fax: 604 268 6785

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