



Instructor's Guidelines: Student Course-Based Research

All research involving human participants conducted under the auspices of St. Lawrence College requires SLC-REB review (see SLC-REB SOP 401.002, Research Requiring SLC-REB Review).

Student course-based research (SCBR) assigned to students for training or pedagogical purposes involving human participants must be reported by the instructor of the course to the Research Services Office using the online [SCBR Form](#).

Student activities are considered research when any of the following are applicable:

- the SCBR activity involves collecting information from human participants or respondents;
- the intent is to educate students on research methods used to gain new information, explore and expand existing theories and conceptual knowledge;
- students compare new techniques, practices, programs with standard research approaches to determine which are more effective;
- the results or findings are written in a format that would be acceptable for a research journal or academic conference presentation; or
- primary data is collected and organized for analysis and distribution or dissemination/publication (N.b., peer-review journals will not accept SCBR approval letters for SCBR articles seeking publication).

After a delegated review of the SCBR Form and supporting documents, the SLC-REB Chair or designee will delegate to the instructor responsible for oversight of students' course-based research activities the authority to review their student course-based research projects for

research ethics compliance. SCBR projects are restricted to activities that do not present greater than “minimal risk”¹ to participants or respondents.

Minimal Risk Research

Minimal risk research activities are those activities that the anticipated risks for the participants are no greater than those ordinarily met in their daily life.

Examples of minimal-risk research include but are not limited to:

- Anonymous questionnaires or surveys;
- Interviews of people in a professional or public capacity who are asked to provide professional or public knowledge and not being asked to provide their personal opinion;
- Laboratory investigation using anonymous secondary data (e.g., identifiable information was never collected with the data and the risk of re-identification of participants is improbable);
- Naturalistic observational research that does not involve direct contact or any intervention with the participants and there is no expectation of privacy on the part of those being observed.

**Research involving anonymous data collection where there is no risk of identifying participants is one method to reduce risks to participants.*

Greater Than Minimal Risk

SCBR that involves greater than minimal risk (i.e., activities that place participants at higher risk than those risks ordinarily met in their daily life) require SLC-REB review and approval. Students

¹ Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in the aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

will be required to submit the regular [SLC-REB Application Form \(Researchers\)](#) for their individual research projects.

Examples of research that is considered more than minimal risk includes, but is not limited to:

- Any research involving patients at the hospitals in Kingston or inmates at the penitentiaries.
- Research studies that involve children under the age of 18, people with a diminished ability to safeguard their own self-interest, people with limited decision-making capacity or people whose situation or circumstance may put them at risk of a power imbalance (e.g., children, people suffering from mental illness, dementia, intellectual impairments, individuals undergoing a health crisis, trauma or intense medical treatment; individuals in a custodial institution; individuals with social vulnerabilities such as the homeless or stigmatized persons or groups);
- Research that involves invasive procedures such as blood withdrawal;
- Research that involves such risks as:
 - Physical
 - Psychological
 - Emotional
 - Social, or
 - Economic harm;
- Research involving considerations of participants' privacy and confidentiality;
- Survey or questionnaire questions that could potentially result in emotional stress (e.g., questions related to personal experiences such as sexual or physical abuse, depression, anxiety, or suicide).

Instructor's Responsibilities

Instructors that assign their students course-based research projects for pedagogical or training purposes are responsible for ensuring that:

- A [SCBR Form](#) is completed and supporting documents have been submitted to the Research Services Office for delegated review and approval by the SLC-REB Chair or designee;
- The instructor is in receipt of a Letter of Approval from the SLC-REB prior to the commencement of student course-based research projects involving human participants;
- All student recruitment material, Letter of Information and process for obtaining informed consent, and research tools meet the requirements for SCBR activities;
- Student course-based research projects pose no greater than minimal risk to participants;
- Students receive training in the ethical conduct of research involving humans before students are allowed to start their research projects (this may involve students taking either the TCPS2 online Course on Research Ethics (CORE) Tutorial or a class presentation on ethics from the Research Ethics Officer or from the instructor);
- Student course-based research will not involve:
 - children under the age of 18,
 - people with a diminished ability to safeguard their own self-interest,
 - people with limited decision-making capacity, or
 - people whose situation or circumstance may put them at risk of a power imbalance (e.g., children, people suffering from mental illness, dementia, intellectual impairments, individuals undergoing a health crisis, trauma or intense medical treatment; individuals in a custodial institution; individuals with social vulnerabilities such as the homeless or stigmatized persons or groups);
- Informed consent will be obtained;
- Data collection will be anonymous;
- Data will be confidential;
- The Instructor shall remind students to destroy their research data at the end of the course; and

- The Instructor will send the Research Ethics Officer all students' SCBR Forms that they collected for the assignment at the end of the class for auditing purposes.

Renewals

SCBR approvals are valid for three years as long as the instructor plans to use the same SCBR activity parameters that received delegated approval from the SLC-REB Chair. After three years, the instructor will be required to submit a new SCBR Form.

Research Services Office

- When in doubt as to whether your proposed SCBR activities requires SLC-REB review and approval, please contact the [Research Services Office](#).
- To arrange a date and time to have the Research Ethics Officer come to your class to give a presentation on research ethics, developing a Letter of Informed Consent, and recruitment materials, contact the Research Ethics Officer, Jeremy Butler, at reb@sl.on.ca.