



Classroom evaluation and research: Do I need ethics approval?

Facilitators:

Natasha Pestonji-Dixon, Evaluation and Research Consultant

Trish Varao-Sousa, Evaluation and Research Consultant

Institute of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, UBC (ISoTL)

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Goals for this Workshop

- To help you gain clarity around whether a BREB application is required for your particular inquiry/context
- To encourage you to consider ethical practices, regardless of BREB requirements (particularly when working with students)
- To learn where to go for further assistance with BREB applications and evaluation support
- Q&A



What brought you to today's session?

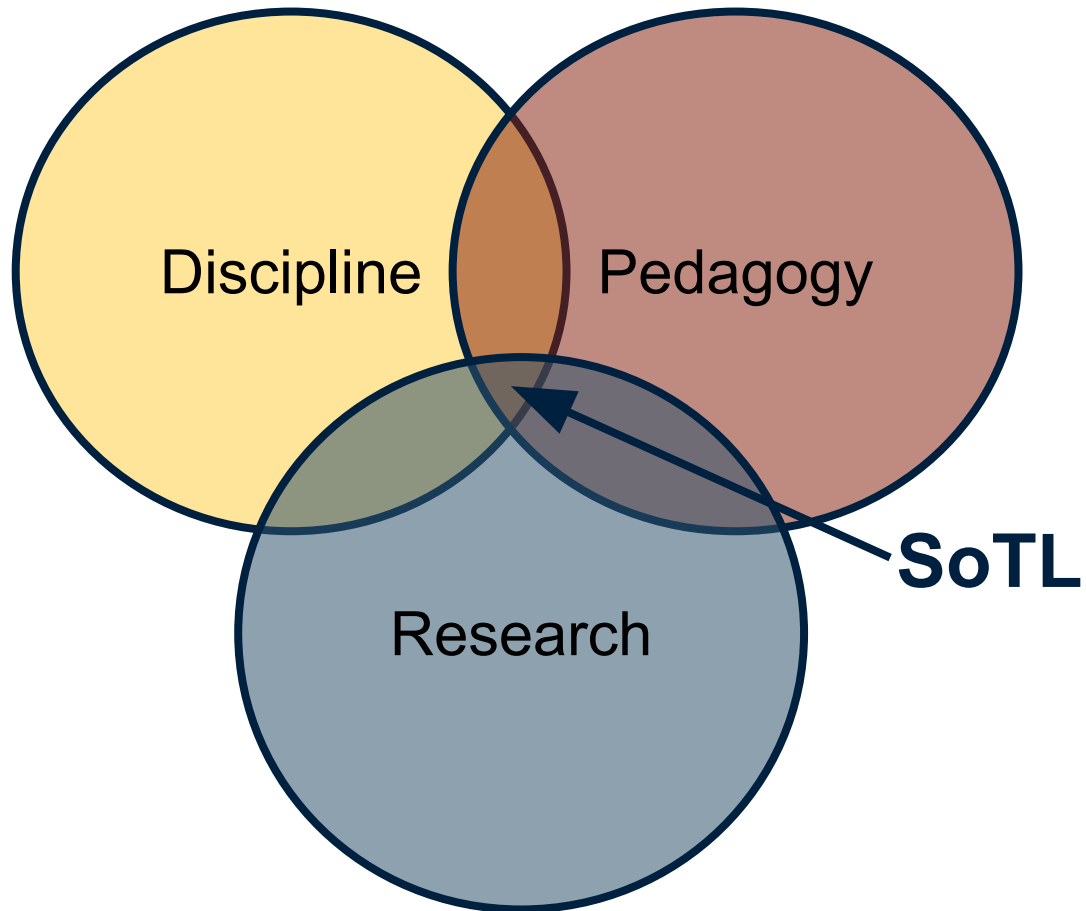
Thank you for taking time to fill out your responses in Jamboard!



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Teaching and learning contexts



Definitions

- **BREB:** Behavioural Ethics Research Board

Project types:

- **Quality Assurance (QA), Quality Improvement (QI):** Projects used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes.
- **Research:** “An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation” (Canada’s Tri-Council Policy Statement).

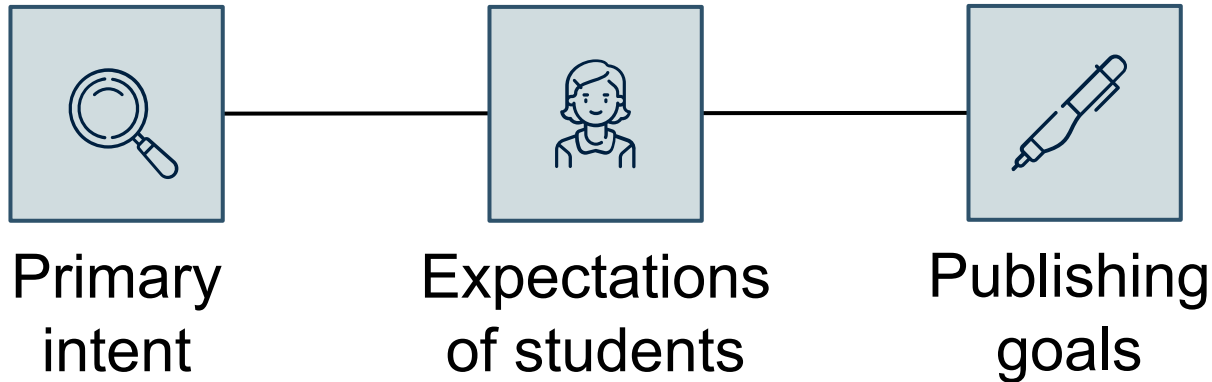
“Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, do not constitute research for the purposes of this Policy, and do not fall within the scope of REB review.”
(TCPS2, Article 2.5)



“Therefore, it is the **intent of the activity** that determines whether it meets the definition of research requiring review **rather than its nature**. For this reason, at UBC, **linking data or the potential publication of findings are not the litmus tests** for whether institutional ethics review is required - it is the intent of the activity, not its outcomes, that is the deciding factor.”



To BREB or not to BREB?



Icons from slidesgo.com

https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/sites/ore.ubc.ca/files/documents/BREB_ChecklistForResearchRequiringEthicsReview.pdf

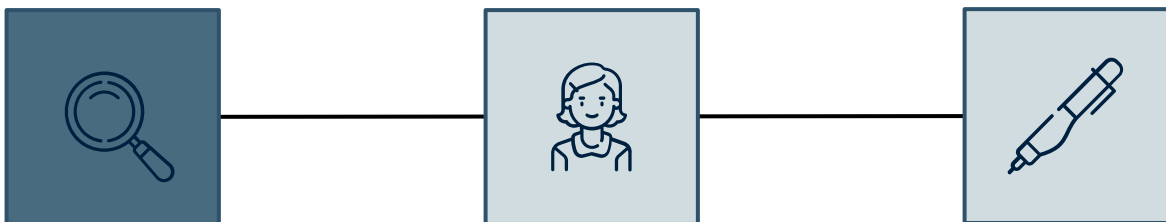
<https://isotl.ctlt.ubc.ca/breb-application/> (Specifically Section 1b)

<https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/sites/ore.ubc.ca/files/documents/PERL%20ethics%20review%20vetting%20guide.Apr09-2021.pdf>

What is the primary intent of your project?

Projects with **QA/QI intent**:

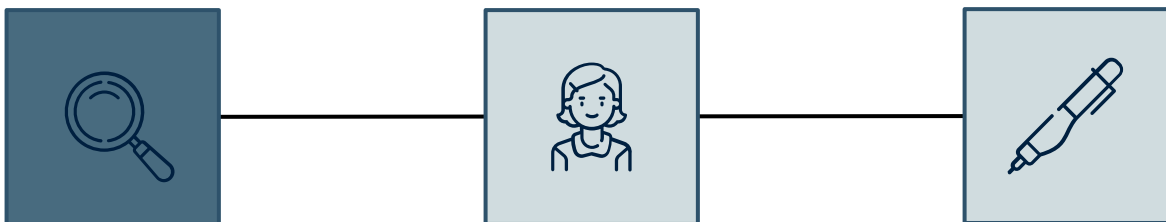
- May build on prior theory, but not as the guiding focus.
- Prioritize improving student learning and your own teaching.
- Outcomes are usually within one specific course.
- Do not require BREB review.



What is the primary intent of your project?

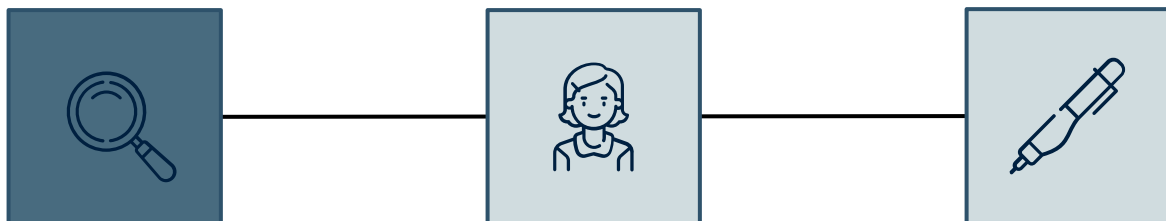
Projects with **research intent**:

- Heavily integrate theory into design and methodologies used.
- Deepen understanding of student learning and teaching practice beyond the specific context where the inquiry takes place.
- Require BREB review.



Important considerations

If a research intent develops, you must proceed with a BREB application.



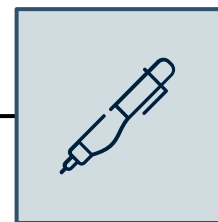
What are your expectations of students?

Does the project involve “randomization” to contrast interventions to participants or other systematic sampling techniques to divide participants into different groups?

Does the project involve a comparison of interventions or processes and “control” settings or groups either to test a new intervention or to assess the effectiveness of a process change?

Does the project involve pilot testing or evaluation of a new intervention, treatment or program, for which it would be difficult to estimate a balance of risk and benefit in advance?

https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/sites/ore.ubc.ca/files/documents/BREB_ChecklistForResearchRequiringEthicsReview.pdf

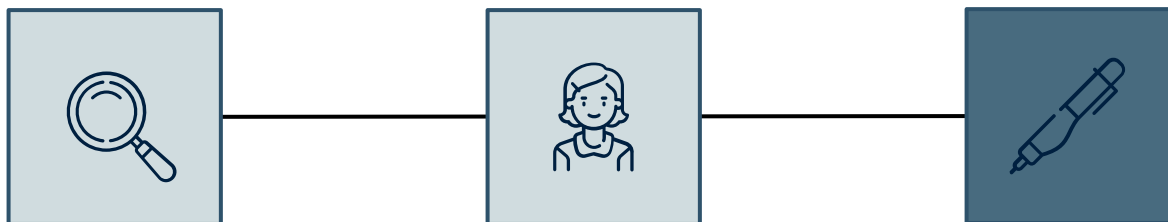


What are your publishing goals?

Intent to publish is **not** the deciding factor for requiring BREB review.

Recommended language for when institutional ethics is **not** required:

“Article 2.5 of TCPS2, the Canadian policy framework governing research ethics, indicates that quality assurance activities do not require institutional research ethics review.”



Take a moment to reflect

If you were a student, and your instructor was conducting a teaching and learning project in your class, what are some things YOU would want to know about the project?

Would you have any concerns? Requests?

Type your response into the chat box, but wait to press enter!



Having BREB approval vs. Being ethical

Ensure consent is **informed** and **voluntary**. Make sure you clearly inform students of your intentions by sharing (via a consent form):

- **Why** you are doing this project
- **What** data you'll be using/how (e.g., de-identifying aggregate data, linking their responses to course grades, etc.)
- **Where** their data will be shared
 - Recommended text: "Aggregate data and/or de-identified quotes may also be shared publicly."
- **How** their data will be kept confidential and private (e.g., who will access it, where will it be stored)



Having BREB approval vs. Being ethical

- Ensuring confidentiality and/or anonymity
 - Have an assistant (GRA, GTA) recode and anonymise or de-identify the data
 - Store student information securely: Any identifying data (numbers, IDs, emails) must be stored in a secure location
 - Use MSTeams/OneDrive for any identifiable information
 - Use the FIPPA-compliant UBC Survey Tool (Qualtrics)



Working with students

What incentives are acceptable?

- No incentive
- Bonus marks, typically 0.5-2%, added to a related assignment
- A small incentive to all (e.g., a small gift card; food and drinks at a focus group)
- A raffle (e.g., a chance to win 1 of 3 \$25 Starbucks gift cards)



Note: Record student IDs for reward incentives separately from the data (e.g., use separate, linked surveys to collect email addresses or IDs)

BREB application

Get a researcher account in "RISe"

rise.ubc.ca is your main portal for the BREB application process

- You can self-register for an account at <https://www.rise.ubc.ca/accessing-rise> with your CWL information

Complete the TCPS2 CORE tutorial

All PIs, co-PIs and anyone who will interact with participants need to [do the online TCPS 2 tutorial](#), which takes approximately two hours.

- Add your completion date to your RISe profile. *This step must be completed before your application can be submitted.*



BREB application

To begin writing your application you need a clear understanding of your research plan, including:

- Research questions/proposal
- Detailed methods
- Recruitment plan
- Documents (e.g., invitations to participate, consent forms, interview protocols, survey questions, etc.)

*Do not collect data or recruit participants until the BREB office has approved your study.



FAQ

- “I’m not sure if I will if this project requires BREB review, should I apply just in case?”
 - No. Consult with us or someone at the BREB office!
- “Can I use anonymous quotes collected from QA/QI a project?”
 - Sharing results of an inquiry does not require BREB approval, so long as the project outcomes of a QA/QI project are not being presented as research.
- What if I collect happens when something “becomes” interesting?
 - Never go blindly into your analyses - have an intent for the work you are doing
 - Consider whether you need to submit a new BREB application or whether a secondary use of data application may work
- Secondary use of data - what is it and when to apply for it?
 - Secondary use of data is when you collected data with a certain intention but then want to re-use that data for a different inquiry
 - You can submit a request through the BREB system to use data in this way, but it can be tricky, we strongly request you connect with the BREB office to discuss your scenario!



Example 1:

Lecturer X reads an interesting paper on the impact of office hour attendance on student learning. He wants to explore this topic further and knows of a clever statistical technique that would allow him to infer a causal relationship between attending office hours and performance on particular assignments in the course. He decides to survey his students on their office hour attendance and link their survey responses with course grades.

How should he proceed?



Example 2:

Instructor Y notices that students are struggling to write their introductory Biology lab reports. They decide to create a new scientific writing worksheet to guide the writing process and integrate it into each lab in the course.

They want to know whether the students are finding the lab worksheets useful to help them write their reports and whether the worksheets are improving student confidence in writing. They plan to survey the students about whether the worksheets impacted student preparedness for and confidence in writing the final lab reports.

How should they proceed?



Example 3:

Dr. Z teaches a 4th year STEM class, and for their final course assignment, she asks students to write a poem about their experience as a scientist.

As Dr. Z marks these assignments, she realizes that students are sharing interesting reflections that differ from previous years, particularly around themes of equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. Dr. Z decides that she'd like to use student work from the final assignments over the last 3 years as data for a SoTL project.

How should she proceed?



Thanks for your attendance!



Connect with us:

Natasha: natasha.pestonji-dixon@ubc.ca

Trish: trish.varao-sousa@ubc.ca

ctlit.isotl@ubc.ca

Questions?



Resources

BREB guidance notes:

<https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/behavioural-research-ethics/breb-guidance-notes/guidance-notes-behavioural-applications#6pt52>

ISoTL BREB application guidance:

<https://isotl.ctlt.ubc.ca/breb-application/>

A 10-minute video summary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU_SY5EeYSM

SoTL at UBC Pharmacy:

<https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/sites/ore.ubc.ca/files/documents/PERL%20ethics%20review%20vetting%20guide.Apr09-2021.pdf>

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2018):

<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

Ethics in SoTL:

<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/Ethics%20in%20SoTL-Taylor%20Institute%20Guide.pdf>

