July 2, 2013

RE: CHANGES TO PROCESSES RELATED TO SUB-RESEARCH ETHICS BOARDS  
(Non-Medical Research Ethics Boards)

This memorandum is to advise you of upcoming changes to research ethics processes  
necessitated by the need to enter into compliance with Tri-Council Policy Statement II (TCPS  
II) guidelines for review of low-risk protocols currently undertaken by some departments at  
a sub-REB level.

To become compliant with TCPS II, sub-REBs will only be able to review course-based  
pedagogical projects as of August 6, 2013.

Course-based pedagogical projects are those intended solely for purposes of students  
meeting course requirements (e.g., courses on research methodology). Any data  
(quantitative or qualitative) collected during the course of such pedagogical projects cannot  
be used for purposes of publication, conference presentations or any other form of public  
dissemination where it is represented as increasing knowledge or understanding.

If there is an intention to use data from such course-based projects as research data, the  
study would be considered research under TCPS II definitions, and would have to be  
submitted for review by the Full Board or Delegated Board of the Non-Medical Research  
Ethics Board.

According to the TCPS II, research ethics review by the Full Board should be the default  
requirement for research involving humans for studies that would not be considered minimal  
risk (defined in Chapter 2 of the TCPS II). As is the case now, they must be submitted  
according to posted deadlines on the Research Ethics web site, and will be reviewed at  
scheduled board meetings. Projects requiring full-board review that have been submitted  
after the deadline will be held until the next board meeting.

The Delegated Board reviews projects that are determined to be of minimal risk. There will  
be no set deadline for submission of low-risk protocols, and turnaround for review and  
recommendations is expected to be one week.

Submission of studies for Full Board or Delegated Board review is done through Romeo, the  
Research Ethics online knowledge management system for ethics protocols.

Please note: If you are unsure about the level of review appropriate for a protocol,  
please contact the office prior to the Non-Medical REB Full Board deadline for that  
month.

Research protocols that have not received final approval from a current sub-REB by August 6  
must be submitted to Research Ethics using Romeo. Sub-REBs may not issue approval for  
any research protocols after August 6.

To assist with transition to these new procedures for ethical review of low-risk protocols,  
Research Ethics will host education and training sessions on July 25 and 31 that focus on
making submissions using Romeo. These sessions are open to everyone who might be involved in the writing and submission of research protocols, including faculty, staff and students. Registration details will soon be posted on the Research Ethics web site, as will dates for additional training sessions in the fall.

Research Ethics is also available to speak to individual departments, or to provide one-on-one training, about Romeo and the new submission process. Training can be arranged by contacting the office directly.

We have taken extra measures to ensure this transition goes smoothly, and we thank faculty and staff for their patience and understanding at this time.

If you have any questions about the change of process, please do not hesitate to contact the office directly.

Sincerely,

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