Memo

To: Associate Dean Research Council

From: AVP Jennifer Hyndman & Alison Collins-Mrakas

Date: October 1, 2021

Subject: Course-Related Research Guidance

This memo aims to clarify ethics approval requirements, given that some courses require students to conduct research with human participants. A question to the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) received from a Delegated Ethics Review committee asked: should the delegated committee be reviewing proposals for course based face-to-face research given additional compliance requirements associated with COVID and attendant longer timelines for review?

The Research Continuity Group (RCG), established last year when COVID-19 struck, recently considered this question and has put forward the following guidance:

Currently, all face-to-face (F2F), in-person research (including that in undergraduate and graduate course-related research) requires additional compliance and a Health and Safety Plan. These additional requirements add, on average, one to two weeks to the usual ethics review time (normally 2-3 weeks).

Given the short timelines for most courses, it is recommended that remote research options (i.e. online, web-based, or phone options) be utilized as much as possible. In-person research is still possible but requires a longer approval process.

Please note that all course related research – remote or F2F – always needs to be reviewed and approved by the relevant ethics review committee in compliance with Senate Ethics Policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS).

Consistent with past practice, undergraduate theses, graduate Major Research Papers (MRPs, ABCs or equivalent) that involve face-to-face research also require the additional compliance measures (Addendum Checklist; Informed Consent form – Covid template; Health & Safety Plan).

We ask that you circulate this guidance to your respective faculty members, Course Directors and Delegated Ethics Review Committees. If you have any questions, please reach out to Alison Collins-Mrakas, Director, Office of Research Ethics (acollins@yorku.ca).