

Application for Ethics Review: A Few Tips

Research Office | Telfer School of Management

Types of Applications

Type	Criteria	Submission Deadlines	Evaluation Time
Full REB Review	<p>Default procedure for research involving human subjects Projects with moderate to serious risk to participants: physical, emotional, psychological, legal, social or economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable populations (people with cognitive or psychological impairments) • Possibility of coercion (e.g. students, employees, prisoners) • Use of deception in research 	<p>1st business day of the month No REB in July</p>	<p>6 weeks or more</p>
Minimal Risk Review	<p>Procedure for research in which risk is no higher than that lived in every day life Considerations for participants rights and welfare, free and informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, balance of risks and benefits.</p>	<p>1st business day of the month No REB in July</p>	<p>4-6 weeks</p>
Expedited Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project not above minimal risk and already approved by another REB •Minor revisions to a previously approved project •Substantive replication of a previously approved project •Project using non-public secondary sources 	<p>Any working day</p>	<p>2-3 weeks</p>
Secondary Data	<p>Expedited review Use of data collected for purposes other than proposed research project with minimal risk Exception: data previously collected, publicly available, and anonymously collected</p>	<p>Any working day</p>	<p>2-3 weeks</p>
Administrative	<p>Expedited review If all aspects of project (recruitment, data collection analysis and storage) conducted at affiliated hospital but researcher on team is from University of Ottawa. Must obtain full approval from respective hospital REB prior to submitting application</p>		<p>1-2 weeks</p>
Course Outline	<p>Expedited review Projects involving students conducting research using human subjects in a course. Must not be above minimal risk. Professor must submit application at least one month before course start date</p>	<p>Any working day</p>	<p>2-3 weeks</p>
Modifications Request	<p>Expedited review for minor changes to original project Can be used to add a graduate student to original project if no changes are needed, but if thesis requirements add new component to project student must submit own REB request</p>	<p>Any working day</p>	<p>2-3 weeks</p>
Annual and Project closure	<p>Expedited Review 5 year renewal limit, otherwise submit application outlining current status (what is ongoing) Final reports for closing ethics file</p>	<p>Any working day</p>	<p>1-2 weeks</p>

General Tips Regarding Ethics Applications

- All research activities involving human participants require ethics approval
- As of May 1st 2018 all applications are submitted in eReviews
- For course outlines: must be submitted using paper application form
- For ongoing projects submitted (prior to eReviews): requests for modification, renewal, closure must be submitted using paper forms.
- Approvals are valid for one year, an annual report must be submitted to extend approval or close the file
- Maximum of 5 renewals permitted, should be submitted by Expedited Review

Research Project Description

- Should answer all questions raised throughout application
- Explain methodology and phases of research step-by-step
- Be specific in explaining how interviews will be done – in person, by phone, mail, etc
- If using online survey creators, check if housed outside Canada as they will be subject to different privacy laws
- If project will take place over several years, should focus on the activities and research phases occurring in current year (will have to apply for extension at end of each year)

Application content

- Refer to **REB evaluation checklist** and ethics info on Telfer website
- **Project description:** give as much detail as possible, include justifications, refer to literature for support, include ethical implications, conflicts of interest.
 - ✓ Use full sentences providing complete answers – no N/A's
 - ✓ Avoid technical jargon, define terms.
- **Recruitment process:** describe “who, how, what” participants recruited
 - ✓ Inclusion and exclusion criteria with justification
 - ✓ Include recruitment texts (email texts, posters, letters) and how will deal with coercion
- **Participation process:** include copies of all material used (questions, guide)
 - ✓ clearly explain what participation entails, duration and location
 - ✓ how and what data will be collected, compensation
 - ✓ **SurveyMonkey** is an online tool available free to all uOttawa students, researchers, staff: templates and tips useful for preparing questionnaires, surveys.
<https://it.uottawa.ca/software/surveymonkey>
 - ✓ Qualtrics surveys: quantitative data collection tool
<https://uottawatelfer.ca1.qualtrics.com/login?path=%2FControlPanel%2F&product=ControlPanel>
- **Consent process:** templates available on REB website, consent vs implied consent
<https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/guidelines/consent-process>
 - ✓ include consent forms: consent is implied for surveys...include text
 - ✓ clearly explain how will obtain consent and avoid coercion, partial disclosure or deception are clearly indicated and explained

Informed consent: what to include

Forms should be available in both official languages, even if study conducted in only one language

- ✓ Name, contact info and affiliation of researchers
- ✓ Funding information (if applicable)
- ✓ Purpose and objectives of the research project
- ✓ Participation details (duration, location, audio recording, transcript review)
- ✓ Nature of benefits, potential risks and mitigating measures (likelihood of occurrence)
- ✓ Info regarding anonymity and confidentiality
- ✓ Info regarding data conservation (duration and storage)
- ✓ Details on compensation and/or reimbursement
- ✓ Statement on voluntary participation (can refuse to participate; withdrawal of data)
- ✓ Ethics Office contact information
- ✓ Language level is appropriate for sample

See the downloadable templates on the website of the Ethics Office.

Tips for Secondary Use of Data

- Data collected for purposes other than proposed research project
- Minimal risk to participants, expedited review
- Include letters of consent
- Include letter of support from institution providing data
- Include data transfer agreement if needed
- No REB evaluation necessary if data is public or anonymous (Statistics Canada, National Library documents, public observations without interaction)

Recruitment of Participants

- Be specific when describing the recruitment process –mail, email, phone, in person
- If researcher will be working with organizations, REB will need letters of support in writing – can be email agreeing to participate or an official letter signed by the CEO
- Preference for researcher to conduct recruitment, not manager, to avoid risk of coercion
- Company should ask employees permission share contact information with researcher who will then contact them directly – role of company is to supply contact information ONLY
- If employee contact information is in public domain like online employee directory, researcher does not require permission, but always preferable to ask the company for permission.
- All inclusion and exclusion criteria regarding participants and sample sizes should be explained and justified

Assessment of Risks

- There is always an element of risk in research, even if minimal and comparable to every day life
- Examples of common risks are:
 - ✓ divulging confidential information during interview
 - ✓ participant losing job due to comments made in interview
 - ✓ exposing participant identification based on type of information collected, even though results remain anonymous
- If anonymity cannot be guaranteed this should be stated in consent form
- If participants will not be anonymous this must be clearly stated in recruitment material and consent form
- If participants will be given the opportunity to review transcripts, the methods for doing so must be clearly outlined in the application form.

Confidentiality of Data

Detailed explanation of storage of information required for complete life-cycle of project.

Type of information required:

- ✓ manner in which the data will be identified
- ✓ if codes are used to replace names, document containing the names and codes must be kept separately from data with the codes
- ✓ computers are password protected, have firewall and anti-virus
- ✓ servers are secure and firewall-protected
- ✓ gateways are secure and firewall-protected
- ✓ manner in which data will be protected during travel
- ✓ data will be secured in locked cabinets
- ✓ cabinets will be in locked offices

Information should be kept for minimum of 5 years

Where to Find Information

Main ethics website <https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/>

eReviews system to create account and apply <https://uottawa.evision.ca/uottawa/>

eReviews user guide

https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/sites/research.uottawa.ca.ethics/files/ereviews_user_guide_-_researcher.pdf

Evaluation checklist

https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/sites/research.uottawa.ca.ethics/files/reb_evaluation_checklistweb2018.pdf

Consent forms <https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/guidelines/consent-process>

Guidelines on what to include

https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/sites/research.uottawa.ca.ethics/files/ethics_office_-_internal_guidelines.pdf

TriCouncil Policy on Ethics http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html

Where to Get Help

Ethics Office Personnel

Director

Catherine Paquet: cpaquet@uottawa.ca

Coordinator

Marc Alain Bonenfant: ethics@uottawa.ca

Protocol Officers

Riana Marcotte: riana.marcotte@uottawa.ca

Germain Zongo: gzongo@uOttawa.ca

Kim Thompson: Kim.Thompson@uOttawa.ca

Telfer Research Office

Research Advisor

Rania Nasrallah-Massaad: rania.nasrallah@telfer.uottawa.ca

Prepared by Rania Nasrallah-Massaad, Last revised Dec 2020