



Designing Teaching and Learning Research at uWaterloo: Tips and Templates for Navigating the Ethics Process

Research Ethics



UNIVERSITY OF
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Overview of Today's Presentation

- Things to remember when conducting research with humans
- Core ethical principles from the TCPS2 (Canada's human research protection system)
- Definition of quality assurance/improvement vs. research
- Conducting research in your class and with students as participants
- Tips and best practices when applying for ethics review



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Ethical Principles

1

Protection of research participants within a culture of research ethics

2

Research involving humans is a privilege not a right and those who conduct research involving humans must meet norms for ethical research

3

The onus is on those who conduct, house, or sponsor research to show these norms are met

TCPS2: Core Principles

- Respect for human dignity underlies in the TCPS2 since its inception
- Expressed in 3 core principles:
 - Respect for persons
 - Concern for welfare
 - Justice



Teaching and learning ...is it QA/QI or research?

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement

- Tend to be surveys conducted by uWaterloo admin, faculty, staff, or student groups looking to assess how a department, group, or program is doing on an issue for admin or operational reasons
- Testing within normal educational requirements when used for assessment, management, or improvement purposes

Research (TCPS2, Article 2.1)

- “an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation”.
- Goal of research is to produce knowledge that is generalizable outside of uWaterloo

For a QA/QI activity to not require ethics review, all of the following must apply:

- Be within the mandate of uWaterloo or according to the terms and conditions of employment or training,
- Be a systematic review of practice(s) and procedure(s) designed to identify possible improvements to an existing policy, program or process,
- Only involve participation of uWaterloo employees, students and/or alumni and relate only to the specific site or area such as the department, program, school, faculty, employee group, or key informants such as co-op employers, and
- Report results locally such that dissemination and publication of results or findings are not generally available for public release outside the uWaterloo



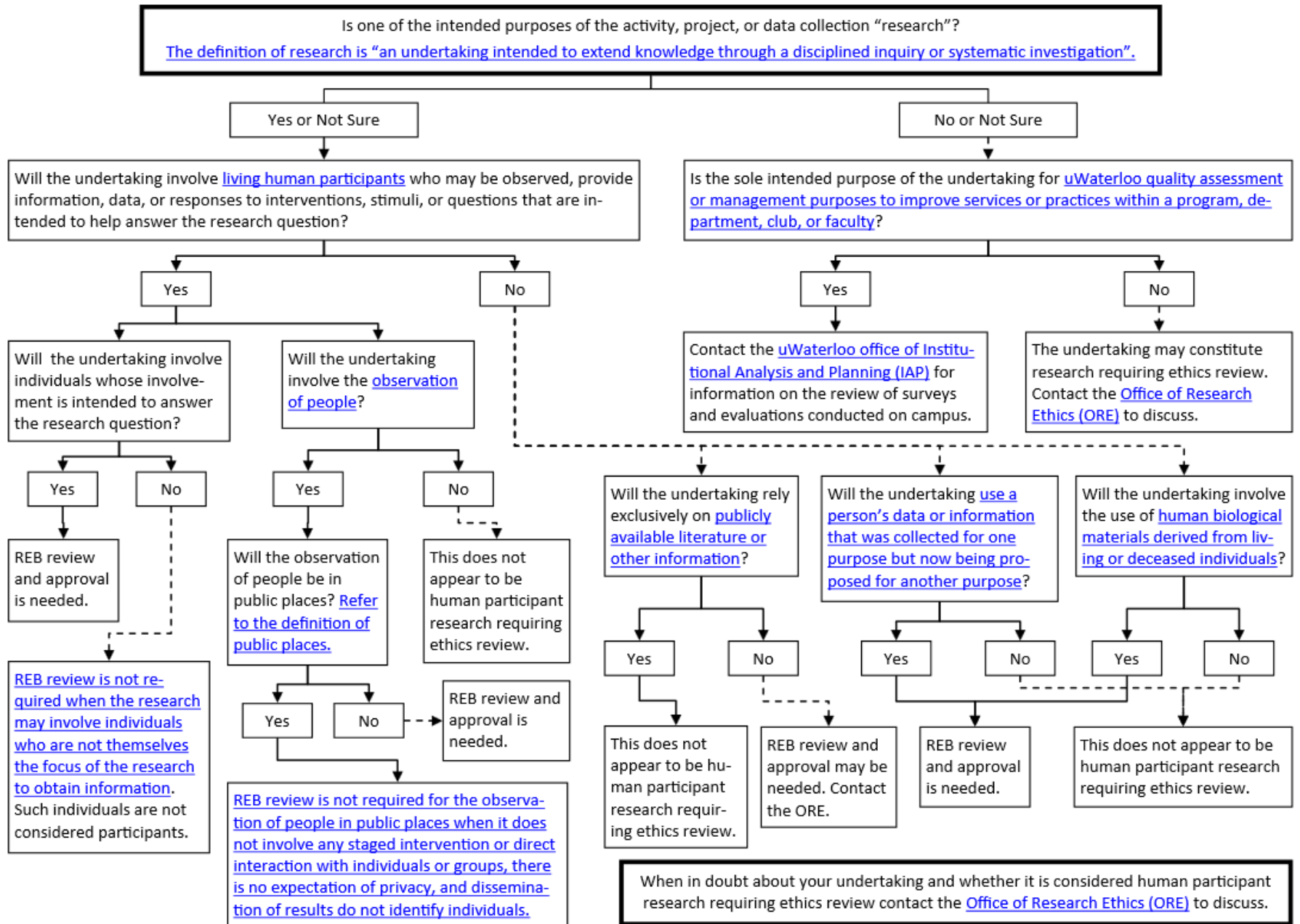
Other Considerations

- In some instances dissemination or publication may mean the results are shared at a conference or other public means or with a governmental Ministry/department or accrediting body
 - Ethics review is not required to simply share results through these avenues
- Dissemination and publication of QA/QI activities need to be stated as such
 - When reporting results, such as in a poster or publication, do so within the context of the QA/QI activity and not refer to the activity or project as research
- Activities that involve both QA/QI and research (or combine them) requires ethics review
- Intent to publish does not necessarily determine whether clearance is necessary

How Can I Determine if Ethics Review is Needed?

- Refer to uWaterloo ethics guidelines on:
 - Does my data collection activity require ethics review?
 - Decision tree for determining if research ethics review is required
 - Quality assurance or quality improvement projects

Research or Quality Assurance Decision Tree



Research On Teaching and Learning is a Balance

Risks:

- **Lack of anonymity or breach of confidentiality**
- **Lack of voluntariness/perceived pressure to participate**
- **Undue influence/authority to participate**

Benefits:

- **Educational value**
- **Experiential learning**
- **No known or anticipated benefit to the student as a participant but there are likely societal/scientific benefits**



Teaching and Learning Research: Students as Participants

uWaterloo ethics guidelines on Conducting research in classes or with students as participants

- Can I go to another professor's class to recruit students as potential participants?
- Is it appropriate to ask the students I teach to participate in my research? Can I invite some students but not others?
- What do I need to know before planning an in-class experiment or involving students whom I teach as participants? What needs to be included in the information-consent letter? Can I conduct a study using deception with my students as participants?
- Do I need to declare a conflict of interest to conduct research with my own students? Do I need my student's permission to conduct a study of reflective practice?
- Are class settings considered a public space? What do I need to do to get permission to observe a class? Can I video or audio-record a class?
- What do I need to do if I want to use student's course work or access their grades for my research?
- Can I use teaching time to conduct my research?
- Can I give students course credit for participating in research?

Participant Incentives

- Additional credit towards a course grade can be given if the research is related to course objectives (i.e., genuine learning opportunity)
- Additional credit must not be too high
 - credit cannot be perceived as influencing a student's decision (undue inducement)
 - alternate activity is needed to obtain same bonus credit
- Incentives are usually not provided for obtaining permission to access activities/course materials for research



Sorting Students into Various Conditions?

Consider whether there is equipoise.

Students should be given equal access to course materials or teaching opportunities.

It may be acceptable to offer different types of delivery, but not to withhold access of content to a student or group of students.

Things to Remember when Students are Participants

- Consent to be given voluntarily without:
 - Manipulation,
 - Undue influence,
 - Coercion, or
 - Exercise of control or authority
- Students have same rights as other participants and are to be provided with the same information
- Research design must avoid undue influence and authority ***and the appearance*** of influence or authority



Safeguards

- 3RD party not associated with course is needed to:
 - Conduct the consent process
 - Hold completed consent forms until marks are submitted (until authority is no longer present/until marks have been submitted)
- Instructors should leave the room during the consent process whether it be their own or someone else's research
- Students are to be informed their decision to participate or not will not affect their grades or standing in the course

Course Syllabus

» Part of the recruitment process

» Consistent with information consent letter

» Submitted as part of ethics application

What to Put on the Course Syllabus

- Describe the research (i.e., purpose, objectives, aims)
- Explain how the research relates to the course objectives
 - along with the specific learning objectives for the students
- Describe the activities/tasks/questionnaires that students will complete for the research
- State that participation is voluntary
- Estimate the time commitment outside of regular classroom hours
- If relevant, outline the course credits that can be obtained by participating in the research and the alternative task to obtain the same credits
- If students are being asked to give permission for course assignments or grades to be used, a specific statement as to how they will be asked to provide permission to use these in the research
- Include the ethics statement: “This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee.”

First Time Applying for Ethics Clearance?

- Application process, step by step
- Samples
 - Recruitment materials, information letters, consent forms, and feedback letters are available on our website
- Top 10 list
 - Problems that can delay the review ... and solutions
 - For example, missing documentation, vague descriptions, generic or formulaic consent letter, inconsistent information, etc.

Application Process

Steps for submitting an application

1. Review:

- Video: how to apply for research ethics clearance
- Top 10 problems that can delay your ethics application
- Training requirements and guidelines and policies
- Who needs to complete an application form
- Conducting multi-jurisdictional research?
 - with Conestoga College
 - with Grand River, St. Mary's, or Cambridge Memorial Hospital
 - with Western University
 - with Wilfrid Laurier University

2. Sign-in to complete the online application form

SIGN IN Access to the sign-in page from off-campus is only available through the Virtual Private Network (VPN) is also available for non-UWaterloo applicants.

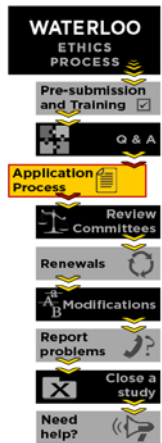
Create a lab or research team user profile

3. Use the samples and other supporting materials to create your own:

- Recruitment materials
- Information-consent letters
- Assent or permission forms
- Appreciation and feedback letters
- Other documents (e.g., health status form)

4. Include the necessary appendices if the study:

- Is a clinical trial or involves the administration or use of a drug, medical device, or natural health product (Appendix A)
- Uses equipment therefore a standard operating procedure (SOP) is needed
- Has industry funding or a clinical trial (Appendix B)
- Requires declaration of a conflict of interest (Appendix B)



Review Time

- » Plan for the ethics review to take at least 4 weeks, but may be less

- » Deadlines for projects with students are typically due the first of the month the month before the term begins

- **Course projects and teaching and learning projects:**
 - **Deadlines for submitting an application for review**
 - **April 5** for a project to begin in the **Spring term**
 - **August 5** for a project to begin in the **Fall term**
 - **December 5** for a project to begin in the **Winter term**

Have a Question?

- Visit the Office of Research Ethics website

uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics

- Call or email and ask questions
- Schedule a meeting to discuss your project/study
- Winter 2019: Drop in sessions each Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the Dana Porter library



Researcher responsibilities

- Apply the TCPS ethical principles when planning research/projects
- Submit a clear and detailed description of the research for ethics review and clearance
- Conduct, analyze, and report research in adherence to the TCPS (i.e., procedures that received ethics clearance)



Karen Pieters, MPH

kpieters@uwaterloo.ca

519-888-4567, ext. 30495



Taken by: Matthew Manjos



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- Quality assurance or quality improvement projects
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/pre-submission-and-training-requirements/human-research-guidelines-and-policies/quality-assurance-or-quality-improvement-projects>
- Does my data collection activity require ethics review?
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/pre-submission-and-training/human-research-guidelines-and-policies-alphabetical-list/does-my-data-collection-activity-require-ethics-review>
- Decision tree for determining if research ethics review is required
 - https://uwaterloo.ca/research/sites/ca.research/files/uploads/files/research_or_quality_assurance_decision_tree.pdf
- Conducting research in classes or with students as participants
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/pre-submission-and-training/human-research-guidelines-and-policies-alphabetical-list/conducting-research-classes-or-students-participants>
- YouTube Video: How to apply for ethics clearance
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IE1cNIYay0&feature=youtu.be>
- Application process, step by step
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/application-process>
- Top 10 problems that can delay the review of an ethics application ... and solutions
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/application-process/top-10-problems-can-delay-review-ethics-application-and>
- Samples and templates: Recruitment, Information and consent, feedback and other supporting materials
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/application-process/samples-and-other-supporting-materials>