Approving University Official(s): Academic Council
Responsible Unit: Director of Academic Research
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Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for review, approval, and monitoring of research involving humans at Yorkville University ("Yorkville"). It provides guidance to ensure alignment with the institution's operational, academic, and regulatory obligations, and supports Yorkville's commitment to ensure that ethical standards in the conduct of research involving humans are maintained at Yorkville, protect the rights and wellbeing of humans participating in research conducted by researchers at Yorkville, Commit Yorkville to implementation of and compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022).

Scope

This policy applies to every faculty member, student, staff member, and **external researcher** conducting or proposing to conduct research involving humans at Yorkville.

Definitions: A complete list of terms related to TCPS 2 (2022) requirements can be found here: Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022) – Glossary

Academic staff member – An employee in a department supporting the academic mission of Yorkville but not a faculty member.

Consent – An indication of agreement by an individual, or their authorized third party, to become a participant in a research project. Throughout this Policy, the term "consent" means "free (or voluntary), informed and ongoing consent." (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary)

Course-based Research – Course-based Research includes all human research activities that are assigned within an undergraduate or graduate course to teach students research skills. They are not intended to produce generalizable knowledge or to extend the literature in the relevant field or discipline. Course-based research does not include graduate theses or similar graduate capstone projects.[1]

[1] University of Toronto, Division of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, Ethics Review of Course-based Research, Ethics Review of Course-based Research | Ethics in Human Research (utoronto.ca).

Course lead – A faculty member responsible for continuous quality assurance and/or coordination of delivery of multiple sections of a course.

Course instructor – A faculty member responsible for delivering a course section and overseeing related instructional activities, including course-based research.

Faculty member – An employee – continuing, sessional, full-time, or part-time - whose primary duties include teaching and advising students, participating in curriculum development, review and renewal, contributing to the governance of the academic program, campus, and university, and maintaining an active program of scholarly endeavours.

Human Participant – See Participant.

Indigenous Research – Research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in, or meaningfully engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous Peoples and Nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present.[2]

Members of the Yorkville Community – Students, faculty members, academic staff members, academic administrators, and other employees, agents, and board members of Yorkville, Toronto Film School, and/or Yorkville Education LP.

Participant – An individual whose data, biological materials, or responses to interventions, stimuli, or questions by a researcher are relevant to answering the research question(s). Also referred to as a "human participant," and in other policies/guidance as a "subject" or "research subject." (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary)

Research – An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation. (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary).

Research Ethics Board (REB) – An interdisciplinary body established to review research involving humans according to mandated ethical standards to protect the welfare of research participants.

Research Project – A systematic academic, scientific, or professional activity intended to answer one or more research questions using one or more methodologies. Each research project is led by one or more principal investigators who are responsible for the ethical conduct, management, and administration of the project.

Researcher – Any faculty member, student, or staff member conducting research and engaging in scholarly activities at Yorkville.

Student – Any person who is: registered in one or more courses (whether in-person or remotely) as full time, part-time, or special student status in a Yorkville program of study; and/or engaged in any academic work that leads to the assigning of a mark, grade, or statement of performance

[2] Adapted from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Indigenous Research, NSERC - Indigenous research.

by the appropriate authority within Yorkville; and/or is between sessions or on an approved leave of absence from study.

External Researcher – An individual conducting research or intending to conduct research at Yorkville who is not a faculty member, student, or staff member at Yorkville.

Policy Statement

1. **Compliance with Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022).** Yorkville University endorses the principles set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (TCPS 2 (2022))
    a. All research involving humans conducted by Yorkville faculty members, students, staff members, and external researchers shall comply with the standards described in TCPS 2 (2022).
    b. Research involving humans is to be conducted with respect for: human dignity, vulnerable persons, free and informed consent of participants, privacy and confidentiality, and justice and inclusiveness.
    c. Indigenous research must undergo ethics review by the Yorkville REB and, where applicable, by the community's designated research ethics body or other responsible body at the research site. Approval by a community REB or governing body does not exempt researchers affiliated with Yorkville from institutional REB review.
    d. Every faculty member, student, staff member, or external researcher conducting research involving humans is required to demonstrate familiarity with TCPS 2 (2022) requirements by completing the TCPS 2: CORE-2022 course on research ethics. The certificate of completion must be submitted to the REB as part of the research ethics application. The primary or lead researcher is also responsible for collecting valid certificates from all other members of the research team for audit purposes.

2. **Requirement for review of research involving humans:** Except as noted below, no research involving humans may begin until the proposed research has been reviewed and approved to ensure compliance with TCPS 2 (2022) requirements. For greater clarity:
    a. No faculty member, student, or staff member may begin a research project involving humans without first having the project reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board.Applications for review:
        i. The following types of research, as defined in Chapter 2: Scope and Approach, TCPS 2 (2022) do not require review and approval:
            1. Research relying on information in the public domain or that is publicly available and protected by law (TCPS 2 Article 2.2).
            2. Research involving observation of people in public places (TCPS 2 Article 2.3).
            3. Research relying exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information (TCPS 2 Article 2.4).
            4. Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, program evaluation activities, performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements (TCPS 2 Article 2.5). **Note:** This

exemption does not automatically apply to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research involving the use of course evaluations, performance review data, or student grades as research data. Such projects may still require REB review depending on their intent and design. Refer also to the Institutional Approval to Conduct Research at Yorkville Policy.

5. Creative practice activities (TCPS 2 Article 2.6)

b. No faculty member or other person designing or delivering a course at Yorkville shall require or allow students in the course to conduct research involving humans (course-based research) without prior review and approval of the syllabus and assignment or activity requirements by the REB. Approval of a syllabus or course-based research assignment by the REB shall be understood to apply to all sections of the course, and further, to indicate that students have received appropriate instruction and oversight in ethical research methods from the course instructor (see section 7 below).
    i. The following types of activities do not require review and approval:
        1. Assignments and learning activities that rely on publicly available data, observation of people in a public place, or the secondary use of anonymized data.
        2. Assignments and learning activities that are essentially components of professional training.
        3. Assignments and learning activities that do not require participants to provide data about themselves, such as mock interviews with classmates.
c. No researcher who is not a faculty member, student, or staff member at Yorkville may undertake research involving or recruit research participants from among Yorkville faculty members, students, or staff members without prior review and approval of the research project by the Yorkville REB.
d. If a researcher, course designer, course lead, or faculty member (including course instructors) is unclear about whether a research project or course-based research requires review and approval, they shall ask the Yorkville REB to rule whether review and approval are required.
e. Failure to have research involving humans reviewed and approved is a breach of academic integrity and responsible conduct of research.

3. Yorkville Research Ethics Board: To ensure compliance with TCPS 2 (2022) and to review and approve proposed research involving humans, this policy establishes the Yorkville Research Ethics Board (YU REB). The YU REB is empowered to:

a. Develop and publish procedures, assessment criteria, and guidelines for the review, approval, and monitoring of research involving humans. Such procedures and guidelines will include at least the following:
    i. Research involving humans conducted by Yorkville faculty members, students, or staff members.
    ii. Research conducted by researchers external to Yorkville when the research participants are Yorkville faculty members, students, or staff members and/or when Yorkville facilities or resources are used to conduct the research. Such research also requires institutional approval as per the Institutional Approval to Conduct Research at Yorkville Policy.

iii. Assignments and projects within courses offered by Yorkville when those assignments or projects require students to conduct research involving humans (course-based research).

b. Conduct reviews of research involving humans to ensure it complies with requirements related to ethical recruitment of participants, informed consent of participants, mitigation of risk to participants, and protection of the privacy of participants and confidentiality of personally identifiable information. Reviews shall consider the ethical implications of all aspects of the research project, including design, methodology, and administration of the research.
c. Co-develop, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous Knowledges Policy and Guidelines to guide respectful engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems, intellectual property, and wisdom, in alignment with Indigenous governance and protocols.
d. Require modifications to any aspect of the design, methodology, or administration of a research project or course-based research as required to ensure compliance with TCPS 2 (2022) standards.
e. Deny approval to conduct research or to allow course-based research when the research fails to meet ethical standards and requirements articulated in TCPS 2 (2022).
f. Issue a Certificate of Study Approval when the research satisfies the standards and requirements articulated in TCPS 2 (2022).
    i. Upon receipt of a Certificate of Study Approval, a researcher may begin the project or include the description of course-based research in a syllabus.
    ii. Certificates of Study Approval shall be issued for a fixed period; that is, they shall have a termination date. If the research has not been completed or continues to be conducted at the time the Certificate of Study Approval expires, the research must end, or the researcher must apply for renewed ethics review and approval prior to expiry of the Certificate.
g. Monitor research that has received a Certificate of Study Approval to allow for continuous review of research involving humans. Specifically, the REB is empowered to review and approve modifications to design, methods, or administration of research projects and course-based research.
h. Develop and make available information and materials to facilitate and encourage ethical conduct of research involving humans at Yorkville.
i. Identify, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with TCPS 2 (2022) and Yorkville's Conflict of Interest Policy. The REB members and researchers are required to disclose any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to proposed research. The REB may impose conditions, recuse members, or take other steps to ensure the integrity of the ethics review process.

4. **Composition and Operation of the Research Ethics Board (REB):** The Director of Academic Research shall propose terms of reference for the REB. The terms of reference shall be consistent with these principles:
    a. Members of the REB will be drawn from Yorkville faculty members with regard to representation from the various academic disciplines and programs at Yorkville and each faculty member's research experience.

b. Members of the REB might also be drawn from the research-active academic staff members at Yorkville.
c. For research involving Indigenous Peoples, the YU REB will endeavor to engage appropriate Indigenous expertise by including Indigenous members on the REB where possible; appointing ad hoc qualified Indigenous advisors; or, when appropriate and in consultation with the relevant Indigenous community members or governance body, referring proposals to a specialized Indigenous or multi-institutional REB.
d. The Director of Academic Research shall serve as Chair of the REB.
e. The Chair shall invite a member of the REB to serve as Vice-Chair.

5. **Responsibilities of researchers:** All researchers whose research projects are approved by the REB will:
    a. Conduct the research in accordance with the design, methods, protocols, and administrative processes approved by the REB and will comply with any conditions or requirements specified by the REB.
    b. Obtain appropriate informed consent and/or assent from all research participants using consent and/or assent documents approved by the REB.
    c. Maintain confidentiality and privacy of participant data according to data management protocols approved by the REB.
    d. Report any adverse events, protocol deviations, or safety concerns to the REB immediately.
    e. Submit for REB review and approval requests for modifications to the design, methods, protocols, or administrative processes approved by the REB.
    f. Ensure that all research team members are appropriately trained and qualified and have completed the current TCPS 2 CORE research ethics course.
    g. Submit final reports upon completion of research projects.
    h. Retain research records for the minimum period specified in their approved REB application and destroy research records as specified in their approved REB application, ensuring confidentiality of personally identifiable information.
    i. Researchers conducting or collaborating in projects involving Indigenous Peoples are expected to engage in meaningful consultation with community members or governance bodies and to seek community-level approval or agreements, as appropriate. Researchers should follow mutually agreed-upon terms that reflect the principles of respect, reciprocity, and Indigenous rights to ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®), where applicable. They are also expected to adhere to TCPS 2 (Chapter 9) and any additional protocols established by the Indigenous community involved in the project.

6. **Students conducting research** involving human participants as part of their academic program must work under the supervision of a qualified faculty member, in addition to meeting the requirements set out above.

7. **Responsibilities related to course-based research:**
    a. For any course incorporating course-based research approved by the REB, a faculty member must be identified as the course lead responsible for the ethical conduct of the course-based research. The course lead will:
        i. Ensure compliance with conditions and requirements specified by the REB.

ii. Ensure that students in every section of the course are required to complete the current TCPS 2 CORE certificate course before starting the course-based research activity.
iii. Ensure that students are required to submit their project to their course instructor for review and approval before beginning the course-based research activity.
iv. Ensure that faculty members teaching sections of the course have completed the current TCPS 2 CORE certificate course and know how to review student projects for compliance with TCPS 2 (2022) requirements.
v. Maintain records of approval of student projects as required by the REB.
vi. Submit reports on course-based research approvals as required by procedures and guidelines published by the REB.

b. Faculty members teaching sections of a course incorporating REB-approved course-based research will:
   i. Complete the current TCPS 2 CORE certificate course.
   ii. Ensure that students in their section have completed the current TCPS 2 CORE certificate course.
   iii. Review each student's proposed research to ensure compliance with TCPS 2 (2022) requirements. The instructor may refuse to allow the project to proceed, require modifications to the project, or approve the project.
   iv. Keep records of ethics reviews and approvals as required by the Research Ethics Board.
   v. Report to the course lead and the YU REB any adverse events associated with the course-based research activity.

8. **Failure to comply** with this policy may result in suspension or termination of research approval, disciplinary action according to applicable Yorkville policies, reporting to relevant regulatory bodies, and restriction of future research privileges.

9. **Dispute Resolution:** If a researcher disagrees with a decision made by the REB, the researcher may:
   a. Request a reconsideration of the decision. The REB shall consider arguments and evidence presented in writing by the researcher and may invite the researcher to meet with the REB.
   b. Appeal the decision or requirement. If a researcher continues to believe the REB decision should be changed following reconsideration, the REB may request the Provost to strike an REB Appeal Panel to review the decision. The decision of the REB Appeal Panel is final.

10. **Reporting and communication:**
   a. The Director of Academic Research will report annually to the Provost (or more frequently if requested by the Provost) on the management of research ethics and the activities of the REB. The Provost will determine what information should be reported to the Academic Council, Provincial Senates, the university community, and the public.
   b. The Director of Academic Research will provide information about research REB governance to the Regulatory, Governance, and Government Affairs office as required to meet regulatory requirements.

Responsibilities

The Director of Academic Research is responsible for the overall administration of this policy.

Related information

- Research Policy.
- Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Conflict of Interest Procedures.
- Business Conduct Policy.
- Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities Policy. (In development.)
- Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities Procedures. (In development.)
- Conducting Research at Yorkville - Institutional Approval Policy.
- Conducting Research at Yorkville - Institutional Approval Procedures.
- Indigenous Knowledges Policy and Guidelines. (In development.)
- Support for Scholarly Activity Policy.
- Support for Scholarly Activity Procedures.
- Support for Scholarly Activities Committee Terms of Reference.
- Faculty Professional Development Policy.
- Faculty Professional Development Procedures.
- Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Procedures.
- Yorkville Research Ethics Board Terms of Reference.

Contacts

For questions regarding this policy, please contact:

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Note: Names and structures of Yorkville offices or governing bodies may change over time. Such changes do not affect the validity of this policy. To confirm the current responsible office or body, contact the Office of Regulatory and Government Affairs at academicgovernance@yorkvilleu.ca.

Revision History

Version Code	Date	Summary of Changes	Authorized by (Title)
1.0	April 3, 2013	New policy	Academic Council
1.1	August 28, 2025	-	Academic Council

1.2	September 25, 2025	Updated to new template	-