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Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Procedures

Associated Policy: *Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Policy* (Academic Council, August 28, 2025)

Purpose

These procedures establish a clear and consistent framework for Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Policy (the "Policy') 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 a framework for implementation of the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Policy.

Scope

These procedures apply to every faculty member, student, and staff member at Yorkville conducting or proposing to conduct research.

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.*

Certificate of Study Approval – A formal document signed by the Chair of the REB verifying ethics review and approval for a research project or course-based research, identifying the expiry date of the ethics approval, and specifying conditions to be met by the researcher (if any).

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]

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

Delegated Review – Assessment of a research project delegated to two or more REB members. Delegated review is normally allowed when the research project presents no more than minimal risk to participants.

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.

Full Board Review – Assessment of a research project or course-based research at a meeting of the REB. Full board review is normally required for course-based research and for research projects that involve more than minimal risk to participants, deception of or partial disclosure of information to participants, or vulnerable participants.

Human Participant – See Participant.

Minimal Risk – Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research are no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research. (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary)

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)

Principal investigator – The researcher who is responsible for the ethical conduct of the research, and for the actions of any member of the research team at a local site. (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary)

Proportionate review – The assessment of foreseeable risk to determine the level of scrutiny a research proposal will receive (i.e., delegated review for minimal risk research or full research ethics board [REB] review for research above minimal risk), as well as the consideration of the foreseeable risks, the potential benefits, and the ethical implications of the research in the context of initial and continuing review. (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 by the appropriate authority within Yorkville; and/or is between sessions or on an approved leave of absence from study.

Vulnerability (Vulnerable Participant) – A diminished ability to fully safeguard one's own interests in the context of a specific research project. This may be caused by limited decision-making capacity or limited access to social goods, such as rights, opportunities, and power. Individuals or groups may experience vulnerability to different degrees and at different times, depending on their circumstances. (TCPS 2 (2022) Glossary)

Yorkville – Means Yorkville, the Toronto Film School, and any other institutions affiliated with Yorkville Education LP.

Procedures

1. **Procedures for the review, approval, and monitoring of research projects:**
    a. *Applying for REB review*:
        i. Faculty members, staff members, students, and external researchers must request REB review by submitting the REB Application Form, current TCPS CORE Tutorial completion certificates for all researchers associated with the project, and supporting documentation. Supporting documentation might include consent forms, assent forms, information letters, advertisements to be used in recruitment of participants, research proposal, data collection instruments.
        ii. The Chair of the REB, or an REB member delegated by the Chair, will review each application and may ask for additional documentation or information to ensure reviewers have the information needed for full consideration of the project.
    b. *Criteria for assessing proposed research projects*:
        i. Each application is assessed against criteria related to conflict of interest, ethical aspects of research methodology, ethical recruitment and selection of participants, risks and benefits to participants and researchers and mitigation of risks, informed consent of participants, confidentiality and protection of personally identifiable information, and possible secondary uses of data and information collected. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed by all researchers at the time of application. The REB will evaluate and manage such conflicts in accordance with TCPS 2 (2022) and Yorkville's Conflict of Interest Policy.

ii. Applicants will be informed of specifics aspects of the project that do not meet assessment criteria.

c. *Proportionate review*: The REB Chair reviews each application to assess the level of risk of harm involved in the research and assigns the application to the appropriate level/depth of review.
    i. Delegated review:
        1. When a project involves minimal risk to participants, the Chair of the REB will normally approve delegated review of the project. Delegated review entails review by two or three members of the REB. The outcomes of delegated reviews are reported to the full board for information.
        2. The Chair, at their discretion, might require full board review of research involving minimal risk to participants when the research involves deception or partial disclosure of information, vulnerable participants or participants who are unable to provide informed consent, or Indigenous individuals or communities.
    ii. Full board review:
        1. Except when delegated review is appropriate, each application is reviewed at a meeting of the full REB.
        2. Review of applications is by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, a two-thirds majority of REB members is required to approve or reject proposed research.
        3. REB members normally base their assessment on documentation provided. However, an applicant may be invited by the REB to attend the meeting at which their application is discussed.
        4. The Chair of the REB will report the outcome of the full board review to the applicant, including reasons for the decision and where a decision was reached by vote of REB members, and reasons for the dissenting votes.

d. *Additional requirements when the researcher is a student*:
    i. When the researcher is a graduate or undergraduate student, the student's faculty supervisor must be a co-applicant for ethics review and must submit a current TCPS2 CORE Tutorial certificate.
    ii. When the student's program of study has established program-level requirements for review of ethics applications, the student's application to the REB must include evidence or program-level review and approval.

e. *Outcomes of review of research projects*:
    i. Delegated reviews:
        1. If the reviewers agree that the proposed research is consistent with the requirements of TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair of the REB will issue a Certificate of Study Approval authorizing the researcher to begin the project.
        2. If reviewers decide that, while the project is generally consistent with TCPS 2 (2022), revisions are needed to the design, methodology, or administration of the research to meet ethical requirements, the Chair will report this to the researcher and request either a) resubmission of the application package if required modifications are significant or b) submission of revised or additional documentation where the modifications requested

are minor. Upon receipt of the resubmitted, modified, and/or new material, the Chair may: a) decide that the reviewers' concerns have been appropriately addressed and issue a Certificate of Study Approval; b) request additional revision and clarification from the researcher; c) ask the reviewers to complete a new assessment of the application; d) refer the file to a full meeting of the REB for consideration.

3. If reviewers disagree about whether the research is consistent with the requirements of TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair of the REB will refer the application for review by the full REB.
4. If reviewers conclude that REB approval should be denied, the Chair will refer the application and the reviewers' recommendation for consideration by the full REB.

ii. Reviews by the full REB:

1. If the REB decides (by consensus or 2/3 majority vote) that the proposed research is consistent with the requirements of TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair of the REB will issue a Certificate of Study Approval.
2. If the REB decides that while the project is generally consistent with TCPS 2 (2022), revisions are needed to the design, methodology, or administration of the research, the Chair will communicate that decision to the researcher and request either a) resubmission of the application package if required modifications are significant or b) submission of revised or additional documentation where the modifications requested are minor. Resubmitted, modified, and new material will be reviewed by the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the REB, who may request additional clarifications and revisions when necessary. Where requested modifications and revisions are minor, and the Chair and the Vice-Chair agree that the REB's concerns have been addressed, the Chair will issue a Certificate of Study Approval. Where requested modifications and revisions were major or where the Chair and Vice-Chair continue to have concerns, the Chair will refer the file to the full REB for further consideration.
3. If the REB decides that a research project is not consistent with the requirements of TCPS 2 (2022) and that modifications to the design, methodology, or administration of the research are unlikely to result in compliance with TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair of the REB will inform the research that ethics approval has been denied and that they have the right to request reconsideration.

f. *Approval of research projects*:

i. General procedures related to REB approval:

1. When a delegated or full-board review concludes that research complies with TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair of the REB will issue a Certificate of Study Compliance.
2. The Certificate may specify conditions to be met to remain compliant with TCPS 2 (2022).
3. Certificates of Study Approval are valid for one year. Researchers must apply for extension or renewal of REB approval at least one

month prior to the expiry date on the Certificate of Study Approval.
4. Unless conditions attached to the Certificate of Study Approval state otherwise, research may begin when the Certificate is received.

ii. Circumstances requiring Provost's approval in addition to REB approval: When research that has been approved by the REB involves Yorkville faculty members, staff members, and/or students as participants, and/or requires access to Yorkville data or records, and/or requires use of Yorkville facilities research may not begin until the researcher has received approval from the Provost to conduct the research.

g. *Monitoring approved research projects*:
   i. Any modifications to the design, methodology, and/or administration of approved research must be reported to and approved by the REB before the modification is implemented. Where the amendments or modifications are minor and the Chair and Vice-Chair are satisfied that the modifications do not affect compliance with TCPS 2 (2022), the Chair will issue an amended Certificate of Study Approval noting the date of approval of the modifications but retaining the original expiry date of the Certificate.
   ii. REB approvals expire after one year. Researchers must apply for renewed approval or extended approval at least one month before expiry of the Certificate of Study Approval. When the project presents minimal risk to participants, the Chair and Vice Chair may agree to extend the original REB approval, in which case, the Chair will issue a modified Certificate of Study Approval noting the new expiry date. When the research involves more than minimal risk to participants or if the Chair and the Vice Chair agree that other considerations warrant, the Chair may require a new review of the research.
   iii. Researchers must complete and submit to the Chair of the REB a study completion form within one month of the closing of the research.

2. Procedures for the review, approval, and monitoring of research projects led by researchers external to Yorkville

a. *When Yorkville REB review and approval are necessary:* A researcher who is not an employee of Yorkville but who wants to recruit participants from among Yorkville faculty members, students, or staff members, must apply for review of the project by the Yorkville Research Ethics Board.

b. *Applications for review*:
   i. Applicants external to Yorkville must provide evidence of a favourable research ethics review by their home institution or organization.
   ii. In addition, applicants must complete the application form provided by the Yorkville Research Ethics Board and provide associated documentation, including (but not limited to) information letters to be used in recruiting participants, informed consent letters and forms, interview protocols, survey instruments.
   iii. Applications involving minimal risk to participants may be subject to delegated review. Otherwise, review will be by the full REB.
   iv. Applications will be reviewed against the criteria used to review research proposed by Yorkville faculty members, students, and staff members.

c. *Outcomes of review*
    i. The REB may deny ethics approval, require modifications to the design, methodology, or administration of the research, or find that the project complies with TCPS2 (2022) requirements.
    ii. If the REB is satisfied that the project complies with TCPS 2 (2022) requirements, the Chair of the REB will issue a Certificate of Study Approval.
    iii. A favourable ethics review by the REB does not give the researcher permission to begin the project at Yorkville.
d. *Requirement for Provost's approval*: When a Certificate of Study Approval has been received, the researcher must apply to the Provost, through the Director of Academic Research, for permission to conduct research involving Yorkville faculty members, staff members, students, facilities, or resources. (See *Institutional approval to conduct research at Yorkville*, December 2024.) For clarity, REB approval in such cases is granted *in principle*, pending confirmation of Provost approval as required under the Institutional Approval to Conduct Research at Yorkville Procedures.
e. *Monitoring and reporting:*
    i. REB ethics review expires after one calendar year. If the project has not been completed, the researcher must apply for renewal of ethics approval, which, at the discretion of the Chair, may require further review by the REB.
    ii. The researcher must seek REB approval for modifications to the design, methodology, or administration of the research project. The Chair of the REB will decide whether the modifications require further review (delegated or full board) by the REB. If the modifications are approved, the Chair will issue an amended Certificate of Study Approval. Unless the application for approval of modifications includes a request to extend the life of the Certificate of Study Approval, the original expiry date will remain in effect.
    iii. The researcher must report any ethics-related events or concerns to the Chair of the REB as soon as possible after their occurrence.
    iv. The researcher will file a study completion form with the Chair of the REB within one month of the closing of the research.
    v. The Chair of the REB may ask for additional reports and information as required to ensure ongoing ethics review.
f. *Consequences of non-compliance*: Failure to comply with Yorkville requirements will result in the Chair of the REB reporting the failure to the research ethics monitoring body at the researcher's home institutions as a breach of academic integrity.

3. Procedures for the review of course-based research by students

a. *Applications for review*:
    i. Applications for review of course-based research are made by the course lead or faculty member responsible for the course, using the application form provided by the Research Ethics Board.
    ii. Applications must be accompanied by the course syllabus, a detailed description of the assignment or activity, and supporting documents such as consent forms.

iii. When an application is received, the Chair of the REB will meet with the applicant to review the request and ensure that the REB has the information and materials needed for its review.

b. *Criteria for allowing and assessing course-based research by students*:
    i. The REB will review course-based research if all the following are true:
        1. Projects are no more than minimal risk to the participants.
        2. Participants are drawn from the general adult population capable of giving informed consent (i.e., participants do not include vulnerable persons, persons incapable of giving informed consent, or persons dependent on the researcher).
        3. Projects do not involve personal, sensitive, or other topics that might trigger adverse psychological reactions in participants.
        4. Projects do not involve physically invasive data collection.
        5. Projects do not involve deception of participants.
    ii. If the course-based research does not meet the above criteria, approval may be withheld, or each student may be required to submit the project to the REB for full review.
    iii. Applications for course-based research will be assessed on two bases:
        1. Compliance of the research activity with requirements related to ethical recruitment of participants, informed consent of participants, identification and mitigation of risk to participants, and protection of the privacy of participants and confidentiality of personally identifiable information.
        2. Plans for the administration of the course-based research activity, including:
            a. Assurance that all faculty members teaching the course and all students participating in the course-based research activity have completed the current TCPS 2 CORE research ethics course, including a process for collecting and retaining copies of each person's TCPS 2 CORE Certificate.
            b. Processes for orienting faculty members to their role as ethics reviewers and approvers of student projects.
            c. Plans and processes for maintaining records of approvals of student projects and retaining them for at least one year after the completion of the course.

c. *Review of applications*: Review of applications for course-based research is done at a meeting of the full REB. The REB may invite the applicant to attend the meeting.

d. *Outcomes of reviews of course-based research*:
    i. The REB may deny approval for course-based research, approve the proposed activity as presented, or require modifications to the assignment or syllabus.
    ii. The REB will provide written reasons for its decision.

e. *Approval of course-based research*:

i. The Chair of the REB will issue a Certificate of Study Approval to the course lead responsible for the ethical conduct of the course-based research.
ii. When the REB has approved a course-based research activity, the faculty member responsible for the course will provide the REB with the names of all instructors who will be teaching sections of the course, together with evidence that each instructor has completed the TCPS2 CORE certificate course. The REB will delegate to the individual course/section instructor(s) authority to review student's ethics applications.
iii. Approval is for a fixed time, normally one calendar year from the date of the first offering of the course.

f. *Monitoring approved course-based research:*
i. The course lead or faculty member responsible for the course shall report to the Chair of the REB one month prior to every scheduled offering of the course:
1. The number of projects reviewed by course instructors during the most recent offering of the course, indicating the number of those approved, approved after modification, and rejected.
2. Whether any changes are anticipated to the course-based research project.
3. A formal request to have REB approval renewed for the next offering of the course.
4. The names of instructors who will be responsible for individual sections of the course and confirmation that each instructor has completed the TCPS2 CORE certificate course.
ii. If any substantive changes are made to the course-based research assignment, the faculty member responsible for the course must notify the REB, which will decide whether additional review is required.

4. Procedures for dispute resolution

a. *Reconsideration of an REB decision*:
i. Applicants for REB review of research projects or course-based research have a right to request that the REB reconsider a negative decision.
ii. A request for reconsideration will be made in writing, addressing the reasons given by the REB for its decision and presenting any additional information and arguments the applicant wishes to bring to the attention of the REB.
iii. Requests for reconsideration will be considered at a meeting of the whole REB. The applicant has a right to attend the meeting to discuss their application.
iv. Reconsideration may result in REB endorsement of its original decision, requests to modify the research project or course-based research activity, or approval. Whatever the outcome, the REB will provide the applicant with reasons for its decision.

b. *Appeals of REB decisions*:
i. If an REB decision remains negative after reconsideration by the REB, an applicant may appeal the decision to the Provost.
ii. The Provost will strike an REB Appeal Panel to review the decision. The Appeal Panel shall comprise faculty members and academic support staff members who are active researchers and who are familiar with the

requirements of TCPS 2 (2022), but who are not current members of the REB.

iii. The Appeal Panel shall consider all relevant documents and may request additional information and documentation from the researcher. The appeal panel may uphold, modify, or reverse the decision of the REB.

iv. The decision of the REB Appeal Panel is final.

Responsibilities

The Director of Academic Research is responsible for the overall administration of these procedures and their associated policy.

Related information

- Research 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.

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	-