KWANTLEN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
CONSENT FORM GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

The following information, based on the TCPS 2—2nd edition of Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, is intended to assist researchers in constructing consent forms for participants in their research projects. Researchers shall provide prospective participants full disclosure of all information necessary for making an informed decision to participate in their research project, in language that is clear and appropriate. Signed copies of your consent form must be 1) retained on file by the principal investigator, 2) given to the subject

a. Identification. Provide the name of your research project and identify the principle and co-investigators. Provide the names of any funders or sponsors of your research project. Provide your project identification number once the Kwantlen Research Ethics Board has assigned one to you.

b. Purpose of Research Project. Include a brief but complete description of the purpose of the project in simple language. Include an overview of the reason for doing the research, and explain who is being recruited and how they are being recruited. Explain how the data being collected will contribute to your research project.

c. Voluntary Participation. Your consent form must inform participants that participation in your research project is voluntary. Participants must be made aware that deciding not to participate, or deciding to withdraw from your research project will not have negative consequences for them. Students, for example, should be informed that declining to participate or deciding to withdrawing from your research project will not negatively

impact their grades or quality of instruction. Employees, for example, should be informed that declining to participate or deciding to withdraw from your research project will not negatively impact their continued employment, or their employment benefits or opportunities. Inform participants that they are free to ask questions of the principal investigator or co-investigators at any time. When relevant, inform participants that they will be made aware of any findings uncovered during the research project that may impact their continued willingness to participate. Participants must also be informed that, by consenting to participate in your research project, they have not waived their rights to legal recourse in the event of research related harm.

d. Procedures. Provide a detailed description of what participating in your research project will require, so that participants fully understand what they will be asked to do and the location of the project activities (home, office, outside campus, etc.). You should also state the expected time commitment involved in participating in your research project, and whether or not it will be possible for participants to take a break should they request one. If applicable, participants should also be informed if they are going to be audio and/or video-recorded.

e. Alternatives to Participation for Similar Benefits. If applicable, include information regarding alternative ways in which people who choose not to participate in your research project, or those who are ineligible to participate in your research project, can obtain similar benefits to participation. This may include, for example, an explanation or demonstration of the study procedures without data collection.

f. Confidentiality and Anonymity. Include a statement of how confidentiality and anonymity (if applicable) will be achieved and/or maintained. Information provided by participants is *confidential* when it will be safeguarded from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft. Information provided by participants is *anonymous* when it contains no markers (e.g, names or specific demographic information) that would allow it to be identified as originating from any particular individual. If there are limits to the degree to which confidentiality and anonymity can be maintained (e.g., where the research procedures include a focus group), this must be clearly explained. If the nature of your research project is such

that participants may disclose information that cannot, by law, be maintained in confidence (e.g., information about child or elder adult abuse, or information about a serious threat of imminent harm to an identifiable person or group of persons), you must inform participants of this exception to confidentiality. Include information about who will have access to the research data and where it will be kept (e.g., a locked cabinet in a locked room on a Kwantlen campus, or on a password protected computer, with the file encrypted). Indicate if participants will or will not be identified in any future presentations or publications, and the methods you will use to guarantee anonymity (e.g., code or letter assignment). This section should also indicate how long the research data will be kept before it is destroyed.

g. Risks of Harm/Discomfort. Include foreseeable risks or discomforts that may result from participating in your research project. Indicate whether there is a risk of physical harm, psychological harm, injury to reputation or privacy, or any potential breach of the law by participating. Explain how you will manage, reduce or eliminate risks and discomforts in the event they arise. For example, if your research project requires participants to recall a traumatic event that may cause them distress, this must be disclosed to participants and you must also explain what resources will be made available should participants experience distress from participating in your project.

h. Benefits. Explain the benefits to the participant resulting from participating in your research project. This may include, for example, an opportunity for the participant to increase her or his knowledge about a particular topic. Also explain any greater social benefits the participant contributes to by participating in your research project.

i. Compensation. If monetary compensation or gifts will be offered to participants, the amount and timing of payments or gifts must be explained.

j. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest. Include any potential conflict of interest you are aware of for anyone involved in the research project. A conflict of interest occurs when there is an incompatibility of two or more duties, responsibilities, or interests (personal or professional) of an

individual or institution as they relate to the ethical conduct of research, such that one cannot be fulfilled without compromising another. For example, if you are acting both as a researcher and educator, or researcher and healthcare provider, this may create conflicts or the appearance of conflicts, undue influences, power imbalances or coercion that could affect relationships with others or affect decision-making procedures. If you or a party funding your research stands to benefit financially from a particular research outcome, you are also in a potential conflict of interest as financial incentives have the potential to distort researchers' judgment in ensuring the design and conduct of research is ethical. If applicable, include how you will manage, reduce or eliminate conflicts of interest in the event they arise.

k. Method of Dissemination of Research Results. If applicable, include a statement of how the results of your research will be disseminated (e.g., thesis/dissertation, presented at academic conferences and/or published in academic journals).

l. Voluntary Withdrawal. Include a statement regarding whether or not it is possible for participants to request that their data be withdrawn, and how the withdrawal of data will be handled (i.e., what can be done and until what point in your research project withdrawal of data can occur). For example, if data collection is anonymous, and it is not possible for data to be withdrawn at any point, or only at or before a specific time, this should be communicated. Explain what will happen to a participant's data should the participant withdraw from the research project after data collection has begun.

m. Non-voluntary Withdrawal. When relevant, include a statement informing participants that they may be excluded from continued participation if it is found that they do not fit the criteria for participating in your research project (e.g., if participants have withheld information that is relevant to their eligibility).

n. Contact Information. Provide information regarding persons to contact in the event that a participant thinks that she or he has not been treated fairly or thinks that she or he has been hurt by joining the research project, or has any other related questions. You should provide contact information

for the principal investigator including a phone number and email address. Research done in an international setting should provide a local name and telephone number. Where this is not useful to participants, some other appropriate means of getting help and information must be provided in detail. You must also provide contact information for the Kwantlen Research Ethics Board, including a telephone number (604-599-2373) and email address (reb@kwantlen.ca).

o. Indication of Consent. Provide a clearly marked space at the end of your consent form for participants or their representatives to indicate their consent. You should inform participants that once they or their representatives have read your consent form, or the consent form has been read and explained to them, and they have been given the chance to ask any questions, they can sign or make their mark in the indicated area if they agree to participate in your research project. Provide an indicated area for the person obtaining consent (e.g., an investigator or research assistant) to sign. Also provide an indicated area for a witness to consent to sign if the participant is unable to read or write (please note that the witness must be different than the person obtaining consent). The date on which each signature or mark was obtained must also be provided.

See samples of consent forms involving:
Student participants Faculty participants Community participants

Please contact the REB at 604-599-2373 or reb@kwantlen.ca if you would like to offer comments or suggestions for improving our CONSENT FORM GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS document.