



Research Ethics in Experiential Learning Huron Research Ethics Board Guidance Document

(March 2021)

Experiential Learning (EL) opportunities, both curricular and extra-curricular, take many forms at Huron. Many of these forms involve student research projects, including bringing together faculty teaching and student research in novel ways, and connecting students to community partners.

These scenarios raise a number of questions and ethical considerations. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to guide students in appropriately navigating these scenarios. The following notes are intended to support faculty by providing an introductory overview of key ethical issues in EL.

1. What research-related policies cover EL opportunities?

All research projects fall under the [Huron Academic Integrity in Research Policy](#). Faculty members training students as researchers must be aware of, and draw student attention to, the responsible conduct of research as outlined in this policy. The Huron [Statement on Indigenous Research](#) and [Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research](#) also apply.

Research projects involving human participants require REB approval. Faculty should consult the [Huron Research Ethics Board Policy and Procedures](#). In the case of an EL project, faculty should consider research ethics and how they will be incorporated into course design already during the course planning stage.

2. What determines whether an EL project is considered research?

In the context of EL opportunities and project it can at times be less than clear whether a project meets the definition of research: “an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation” ([TCPS2, Article 2.1](#)).

Some EL projects fall more under quality assurance/improvement projects. These studies are “program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes” ([TCPS 2, Article 2.5](#)). Western’s [Distinguishing Between Quality Assurance/Improvement, Program Evaluation & Research](#) guidance document provides a checklist to support

understanding the difference. While quality assurance/improvement projects do not require REB review they do require ethical considerations on the part of the faculty member.

Some EL projects fall more under pedagogical activities. Western's [REB Requirements for Student Research and Pedagogical Activities](#) guidance document differentiates between research and research-like activities designed with a primarily pedagogical intention of providing students with opportunities to develop research skills inside of a course context. At Huron, the latter falls under the [Huron REB Course-Based Research Ethics process](#). If there is any intention or opportunity to use data for research purposes in the future the project should be considered research, and receive regular REB approval, from the outset.

3. What issues may arise in EL research projects involving a community partner?

Research-related institutional policies cover Huron faculty, students, and staff. They are primarily aligned with Tri-Agency guidelines. In the case of EL opportunities involving a community partner, the partner organization may have their own ethical oversight body or practices regarding research ethics, data collection, privacy, data management, etc. In the EL and community-based context, clear distinctions between researcher and research participant may also at times be less clear.

It is the responsibility of the course instructor to:

- Ensure that in all cases student and faculty researchers are held to the Tri-Agency standards upheld by Huron and Western.
- Enquire about additional requirements or practices with the community partner, and ensure these are also upheld within the project, including ensuring student awareness.
- Brief community partners on ethical considerations relating to the project. This conversation will depend on the particular nature of the project, but should include both a broad understanding of ethical issues arising in research, and the specifics of the REB process and requirements if applicable. This should be an ongoing conversation throughout the duration of the project.

4. Who is responsible for managing project data and outcomes in EL contexts?

EL projects raise a number of questions around responsibility for research data management, and ownership of project outcomes, especially in the case of a community partner. Faculty are responsible for considering who will have access to and control of project data, how to ensure privacy and information security, and responsibility for storage and disposal of data after the project is finished. Faculty should also facilitate student understanding of Intellectual Property (see [Intellectual Property and Undergraduate Students: A Guide for Faculty Supervisors](#)).

In the case of the involvement of a community partner, each of these elements will also need to be negotiated with the partner to ensure mutual understanding of project outcomes and responsibilities before the project begins. These elements should be arranged before data is collected.

Resources

The following documents are available on the Huron Internal Funding OWL page:

<https://owl.uwo.ca/x/hbBIXG>

- HUC Academic Integrity in Research: Policy and Procedures
- Huron Framework for Experiential Learning
- Huron Research Ethics Board Policy and Procedures
- Huron Faculty Guide on Intellectual Property
- Huron REB Guidance Document: Ethical Principles in Survey Design
- Intellectual Property and Undergraduate Students: A Guide for Faculty Supervisors

[TCPS 2 \(2018\)](#)

Western Research Guidance Document, [Distinguishing Between Quality Assurance/Improvement, Program Evaluation & Research](#)

Western Research Guidance Document, [REB Requirements for Student Research and Pedagogical Activities](#)

Ross, L. F. et. al., (2010). The challenges of collaboration for academic and community partners in a research partnership: points to consider. *Journal of empirical research on human research ethics: JERHRE*, 5(1), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2010.5.1.19>