



Queen's REB Guidelines

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Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to:

Provide clear guidance on what qualifies as a Quality Assurance (QA), Quality Improvement (QI) and Program Evaluation (PE) studies.

Provide clear guidance on what QA/QI/PE studies require REB approval.

Publication of a QA/QI/PE study

Dissemination of QA/QI findings through external channels is permitted, but it must be specified that the study was conducted for QA/QI purposes and that results must not be generalized (i.e. applied outside of the organization for which the QA/QI study was conducted). Please note that if you intend to publish the results of a QA/QI project, a note explaining that the project was determined to be QA/QI should be added to the methodology section of the published paper. It is recommended that if you intend to publish that you seek formal exemption OR request approval by the REB.

Use of data collected for a QA/QI/PE study for future research

Per TCPS 2022: If data are collected for the purposes of such activities but later proposed for research purposes, it would be considered secondary use of information not originally intended for research, and at that time may require REB review in accordance with this Policy. Refer to Section D of Chapter 5 of the TCPS 2 for guidance concerning secondary use of identifiable information for research purposes. If you do intend to use data collected for QA/QI study for research then please apply submit an GREB or HSREB application form for REB review.

Access Personal Health Information for QA/QI/PE studies

As long as anyone who accesses Personal Health Information (PHI) for QA/QI purposes is authorized as a legal custodian or agent of health data, and as long as all relevant institutional data protection, privacy, and confidentiality policies/guidelines are followed, access to PHI is permitted. Please note, accessing a patient's chart for the purposes other than for clinical purposes requires consent from the patient (even for QA/QI/PE studies).

Important information

QA/QI projects, although not considered research as defined by the TCPS 2 2022, are still expected to be conducted professionally and ethically, in accordance with the core principles of the TCPS 2 2022.

These core principles include:

- Protecting the interests of the participants.
- Respecting free and informed consent and voluntary participation.
- Respecting privacy and confidentiality.

If you are unsure whether or not your project qualifies as a QA/QI project or if you have any questions please contact HSREB or GREB at HSREB@queensu.ca and chair.greb@queensu.ca.