

RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING TO FACILITATE COLLABORATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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Keywords

Research ethics; Ethics training; International partnership; Academic integrity.

Abstract

In Canada, research ethics are normally discussed in the case of studies involving humans as participants. Researchers must adhere to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2018) developed by three federal research agencies mandated to promote research that is conducted according to the highest ethical standards. This policy draws from the core principles: (1) Respect; (2) Well-being; and (3) Justice, first published by American scholars in the Belmont Report of 1979, after a series of clinical trials treated human subjects unethically.

At the present time, it is up to each university to educate graduate students and professors in research ethics for the design, review, and conduct of studies. However, these training efforts are not globally standardized in higher education institutions, partly due to cultural, linguistic, and social differences in the interpretation and application of ethical principles (Serrano & Linares, 1990). According to Page (2004), these differences can be rooted in history, politics, and power dynamics between cultures leading to unintentional

conflicts between collaborators. When research projects involve the partnership of universities dispersed across the world, Sidle et al. (2006) suggest Memoranda of Understanding as a strategy to overcome issues of “cooperation between ethics review boards at collaborating institutions” (p. 23).

Our research project, called *Partnership on University Plagiarism Prevention* (PUPP), involves 31 universities and five agencies located in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Turkey. This international study aims at identifying digital scrapbooking strategies (DSS) used by students and professors, to determine how teaching and learning these strategies can prevent plagiarism. Since the project is funded by the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council* (SSHRC) of Canada, over a period of seven years, it is expected that all partners and collaborators will adhere to the aforementioned ethical standards.

This presentation will discuss how our project lead institution provided research ethics training to 27 professors and research assistants responsible for the development and submission of ethics applications for their respective institutions. In keeping with the conference topic pertaining to *institutional requirements and processes*, we will be presenting how three training sessions were designed based on a tutorial on research ethics developed by SSHRC and composed of eight modules applicable to all studies regardless of discipline and methodology. The intended

learning objective was to develop baseline knowledge on research ethics, but the actual effects also included enhanced cohesion between researchers and collaborators through their participation in active learning activities. This teaching and learning experience is expected to increase successful outcomes from the evaluation of ethics applications by partner institution ethics review boards. Therefore, our designed training can become a framework that can be adopted by other international research projects in the future.

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