

Guidance Document	Multi-Jurisdictional Research
Effective Review	NMREB and HSREB; Delegated & Full Board
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INTRODUCTION

Many researchers engage in multi-jurisdictional (MJ) research; that is, research being conducted outside of their home institution. For example, researchers collaborate with colleagues at other institutions. Researchers also conduct research at institutions other than their home institution. Tri-Council Policy Statement (2nd Ed.; 2014) Chapter 8 indicates each institution is responsible for reviewing research conducted under their auspices unless an appropriate Board of Record agreement has otherwise been established. At Western University, this includes research conducted by Western's own faculty, staff and students, and research conducted by external researchers using Western's resources.

Western University's Research Ethics Boards (Western's REBs) have established the following guidelines to assist Western researchers and external researchers determine when Western's REB oversight is needed. Western's REB oversight includes a formal application submitted for full board or delegated review that follows Western's REB submission procedures (i.e., WREM initial application, continuing ethics reviews, study closures, etc.). If, after reviewing the below information, it is not clear whether a project requires Western's REB oversight, the Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) should be contacted for discussion.

Please note that Western affiliated researchers are responsible for upholding Western's ethical standards in all projects, even those in which they are involved only peripherally. Researchers are reminded to consider the TCPS2 core principles in all collaborations: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice. If it is determined that Western affiliated researchers are acting contrary to ethical standards, the University may prevent future collaborations.

WESTERN AFFILIATED RESEARCHERS

Direct Roles

Western's formal REB oversight **IS** required when the Western affiliated researcher:

- Has direct involvement in the project (i.e., recruitment with consent, data collection*, analysis/storage of identifiable information, etc.), regardless of study location unless an appropriate Board of Record or interinstitutional agreement has otherwise been established;
- Has a conflict of interest in the project (e.g., financial gain, commercialization);
- Is conducting the project as part of their academic degree (e.g., Honour's thesis, Master's thesis, PhD dissertation, or equivalent), regardless of study location unless an appropriate Board of Record or interinstitutional agreement has otherwise been established.

*When a project is conducted under the oversight of another REB and all study and data management activities are supported by the external institution's resources, participation by a Western-affiliated individual in research activities does not, by itself, constitute direct involvement by Western. Examples

may include co-facilitating focus groups, assisting with interviews, or providing content expertise to the research team.

Peripheral Roles

Western's formal **REB oversight is generally not required** when the Western affiliated researcher has only a peripheral role on an external project (e.g. conceptual development, recruitment without consent**, receives de-identified data for primary analysis, manuscript review, knowledge user not directly involved in the project, etc.) and the project has ethical oversight at the collaborators' institution(s).

If a Western affiliated researcher is unsure if Western's REB oversight is required on a particular project, they are asked to submit a Multi-Jurisdictional Initial Application, via WREM, for administrative review. The OHRE, in determining whether Western's REB oversight is required, will consider all relevant factors, including whether:

- (a) There is REB oversight and approval for the project at the collaborating institution;
- (b) The OHRE is satisfied that the researcher's role for the project is peripheral;
- (c) There is an agreement that clearly defines the role of the researcher;
- (d) The OHRE is satisfied that the project meets Western's ethical standards; and
- (e) The OHRE is satisfied that the project meets the requirements of the Tri-Council Policy Statement, Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

**This refers to instances where a Western affiliated researcher will distribute recruitment material or seek participants who will ultimately be consented and enrolled by another institution with appropriate REB oversight. There would be no local research procedures or data collection. This may be the Western researcher's only role or this may be in addition to other peripheral roles.

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING MULTIPLE REB REVIEWS

General considerations:

- Contact all participating REBs early in the planning process to determine their institutional requirements.
- Researchers should submit to subsequent REB(s) after approval has been obtained from the lead site, unless otherwise required by the participating institution.
- A Data Sharing Agreement or Material Transfer Agreement between participating institutions may be required if data/materials are being shared or transferred between institutions. Contact Western Research Contracts and Partnership Agreements team for additional information and support: researchcontracts@uwo.ca.
- Multi-jurisdictional studies may require additional institutional approvals, agreements, or documentation beyond what is noted above.

Scenario #1: Western-affiliated researcher collaborating with researchers at other institutions.

- a. Western researchers must determine whether their involvement in the research is direct or peripheral.
- b. Collaborators must determine and meet the requirements of their home institution(s).

- c. Where Western's involvement is considered direct, the Western REB is responsible for reviewing and approving the Western research activities. All study documents used by the Western study team must reflect Western REB requirements.

Scenario #2: REB approval obtained at another institution and Western REB review is required:

- a. A Western affiliated PI must submit an REB application to Western's NMREB or HSREB for review.
- b. The REB application must clearly describe the activities being conducted under Western's oversight.
- c. Any materials used by the Western study team must meet Western REB requirements. Approval documents and supporting materials from the lead institution may be included as supplementary materials.

Scenario #3: Western-affiliated researcher collecting data at another institution:

- a. Western REB approval must be obtained before commencing research activities.
- b. The Western PI is responsible for determining and meeting ethical review requirements of the host institution.
- c. Site-specific requirements identified by host institution should be described in the REB application submitted to Western. Any changes required after REB approval may require submission of an amendment.

RESEARCHERS NOT AFFILIATED WITH WESTERN

If a researcher, external to Western has obtained REB approval from their home institution and would like to conduct research using Western resources (e.g., faculty, staff, students, posters, email lists, office space, laboratory, clinic, etc.):

- The external researcher must submit their institutional REB approval letter(s) and approved study materials (study protocol, informed consent documents, email templates, survey template, etc.) to the OHRE via email for administrative review.
- If there no major concerns are identified, an OHRE delegate will acknowledge the research on behalf of Western's REBs. The OHRE reserves the right to request modifications, additional information, or require review and oversight through Western's REB processes (i.e., submission through our REB management system, WREM with a Western-affiliated PI).

Note: Administrative review is NOT required if external researchers are recruiting Western affiliated individuals solely through publicly available contact information and are not otherwise using Western resources.

VERSION UPDATE LOG

Key Changes	Effective Date
Clarified definitions, tips, and visual presentation.	mm/dd/yyyy 08/12/2026