

Queen's REB Guideline on Recruitment Posters and Emails

Queen's REB Guidelines on Recruitment Posters and Emails

Version 2.0

26-Sep-2024

© 2024, Queen's University

This publication is protected by copyright and can be used in accordance with the Creative Commons [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license. This license permits distributing, remixing, adapting, and building upon the material in any medium in any format for non-commercial purposes only as long as attribution is given to Queen's University. If the material is remixed, adapted, or built upon, the resulting material must be licensed in accordance with the Creative Commons CC By-NC-SA license or under identical terms.

Inquiries and permission requests for commercial use may be directed to:

Queen's University
Vice-Principal Research
Research, Compliance, Training, and Ethics
355 King Street West
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 2X3
chair.greb@queensu.ca, hsreb@queensu.ca
[Research Compliance, Training and Ethics](#)

Queen's University is situated on [traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory](#).

Contents

Purpose	1
Background	1
Required information on recruitment posters	1
General language requirements on recruitment materials (posters and emails)	2
Language requirements on recruitment emails	2
Subject line	2
Body of the email	2
Initial and follow-up communications	3
Things to avoid on recruitment materials	3

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to:

- Provide clear guidance on the use of participant recruitment materials for research purposes.
- Promote and facilitate best practices for the use of recruitment posters and emails.

Background

Recruitment materials are tools used to increase enrollment into research studies. Study recruitment materials must be respectful of participants and comply with ethical standards and university policies. All text, illustrations, photos, music, or video must be sensitive and appropriate to the target audience and not be disrespectful to any individuals or groups.

Required information on recruitment posters

- Queen's University/Institutional/Departmental Logo and a version date
- Ethics approval statement:
 - "This study has received ethical approval by the Queen's University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board."
 - or
 - "This study has received ethical approval by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board."
- Study title – simplified as appropriate (e.g., abbreviated, or lay-person language)
- Purpose of the research study.
- Target population.
- Basic explanation of tasks and time commitment expected and location of research (e.g., lab, online, KHSC).
- State if compensation is provided (but not necessarily how much). Do not overemphasize incentives (i.e., do not use bold, or large print).
- Study contact information/Principal Investigator's name and/or QR code.

Important note: If recruitment posters do not include the information on this list, a justification for the exclusion must be provided in the REB application.

General language requirements on recruitment materials (posters and emails)

- Use “participant” instead of “patient”, “subject”, or “volunteer” (as per TCPS2).
- Use simple/lay language instead of discipline-specific jargon.
- Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, or mnemonics unless they are well known to the public or to the group you are targeting AND are not enticing or sensationalistic.
- Avoid terms such as “new treatment”, “new medication” or “new drug” without explaining that it is under investigation (i.e., not yet proven to be safe or effective).

Language requirements on recruitment emails

An email to recruit research participants can be broken down into different components. Together these components aid in potential participants looking and possibly engaging in a research study.

Subject line

The first place you’ll catch your potential research participants’ attention is in your subject line, so you should make them:

- Eye-catching enough to stand out in a crowded inbox
- Clear enough to be easily understood
- Specific enough to give some context about the research study for participants
- Examples: “Participants needed for research in [specific topic title]”; “

Body of the email

The body of the email is what will provide your research participant with enough information that they are informed about the research study:

- Ethics approval statement:
 - “This study has received ethical approval by the Queen’s University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board.”
 - or
 - “This study has received ethical approval by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board.”
- Study title – simplified as appropriate (e.g., abbreviated, or lay-person language)
- Purpose of the research study.
- Target population.
- Basic explanation of tasks and time commitment expected and location of research (e.g., lab, online, KHSC).
- State if compensation is provided (but not necessarily how much). Do not overemphasize incentives (i.e., do not use bold, or large print).
- Study contact information/Principal Investigator’s name and/or QR code.

Important note: If recruitment materials do not include the information on this list, a justification for the exclusion must be provided in the REB application.

It's important to make it as easy as possible for participants to take the next step after reading your email. Whether that's getting more information, clicking on a link or contacting research team, there should be a single, clear call to action that tells them what to do next.

Initial and follow-up communications

- Include when/who/how potential participants will be contacted again.
- Please wait 15 days before following up with participant, **with a maximum of 2 follow up attempts**. If no contact is made by the participant after 3 attempts, the participant can be considered as refusing to consent.

No further contact

- A participant should be given the option to opt out of a study/further contact. Therefore, included in an introductory letter/email should be contact information for the individual that can be contacted to opt-out.
- Multiple methods are preferred to be offered to the participant (i.e., a self-addressed, stamped envelope that can be mailed back to the study team, an opt-out card, email address or phone number). No Personal Health Information (PHI) should be included in this material.

Next steps

- If a participant chooses to continue in the study, then information regarding when/who/how contact will proceed. This should include details about the follow-up meetings for the study team, next visit, next steps etc.

Things to avoid on recruitment materials

- Personal phone numbers (i.e., use a Department/Office/Lab number or limit contact to email).

Important note: If non-institutional numbers are used, this must be justified in the REB application.

- Statements that may be considered coercive (e.g., Get Big Bucks for this Study! All the Cool People are Doing it!).
- Sensationalistic or suggestive wording (e.g., Feeling Aroused?).
- Use of stereotypes in words or use of stereotypes in pictures such as cartoons or photos that reinforce negative or uninformed stereotypes.

- Stating or implying a favourable outcome or benefit beyond what is outlined in the informed consent form and the protocol (e.g., This Study will make you Smarter!).
- Featuring compensation before describing the study purpose (e.g., Win an iPhone!).