

## **Research exemption guidelines for museum studies and curatorial practice**

In the typical frame of their coursework, graduate students pursuing Museum Studies and Curatorial Practice are exempt from the ethics review process. The work of these students is considered to be in the category of professional practice, which is distinct from research and exempt from research ethics review. \* For further information on exemptions, refer to the University of Toronto's Principles to Determine Exemptions from Research Ethics Review at <http://tinyurl.com/5u8cmu>.

Professional practice entails developing knowledge and experience, which are standard within a field or profession, and involves information-gathering procedures that are a part of the typical relationship between practitioners in that field and/or the people with whom they interact within that context. These activities may include such activities as: exhibition interpretation, studio visits, relational aesthetics exhibitions, audience surveys,\*\* and artist interviews. While museums and galleries engage in research-like activities involving human subjects that lead to publication, the exhibitions, catalogue essays, explanatory panels and audience surveys that they perform as part of their standard professional practice are not the equivalent of peer-reviewed academic publications. Students should follow the ethical guidelines and principles that have been established for museum professionals, i.e., students can find ethics guidelines on the Canadian Museum Association (CMA) website at [www.museums.ca/media/Pdf/ethicsguidelines.pdf](http://www.museums.ca/media/Pdf/ethicsguidelines.pdf). In addition, guidelines for Audience Research and Evaluation can be found at: <http://www.care-aam.org/Resources/Professional+Standards+/default.aspx>. Museological and Curatorial instructors should teach students relevant professional ethics when appropriate paying particular attention to issues of consent, and should ensure assignments and student proposals meet ethical standards.

\*If teaching how to conduct research is part of a course's curriculum in a professional practice program (e.g. a research methods class), and students are expected to conduct a research project that involves human participants, an ethics review is required as per the usual process. In this case, the instructor teaching the course will be responsible for initiating the ethics review process, either by submitting a course template ethics protocol application or by advising the student(s) to submit an ethics protocol application for review. Instructors who have questions about whether or not a course or a particular assignment requires ethical review should consult the Program Director and the Office of Research Ethics.

\*\*If an audience survey or visitor response study is conducted in conjunction with an institution that has examining its performance as part of its mandate then no ethical review is required. If the survey does not fall under the mandate of such an institution, then the instructor teaching the course will be responsible for initiating the ethics review process, either by submitting a course template ethics protocol application or by advising the student(s) to submit an ethics protocol application for review. Instructors who have questions about whether or not a course or a particular assignment requires ethical review should consult the Program Director and the Office of Research Ethics.