

Please make sure that your Ethics submission (including consent form checklist and consent form) is consistent with the information below.

The Ethics Committee wishes to clarify its interpretation of confidentiality and anonymity. In many ethics submissions, the consent form checklist and consent form promises anonymity then asks participants for their name and signature. In the opinion of members of the ethics committee, this study cannot be anonymous. It may be anonymized or confidential.

All three levels (confidential, anonymized, and anonymous) are acceptable practices. The easiest level to achieve is confidentiality. Below are the definitions from ethics.gc.ca.

Keep in mind that identifying information can include a name or signature on a consent form or a digital signature (e.g., IP Address) on an online survey.

Confidential Information - protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft.

Anonymized information – the information is irrevocably stripped of direct identifiers, a code is not kept to allow future re-linkage, and risk of re-identification of individuals from remaining indirect identifiers is low or very low.

Anonymous information – the information never had identifiers associated with it (e.g., anonymous surveys) and risk of identification of individuals is low or very low.