1. Section 4.1.5a: Specify how you have access to or will obtain potential participants' email addresses:

Has the study team asked SGPS if they might be able to mail this to all graduate students? This might improve inclusivity across graduate programs/students insofar as it would not rely on the preferences of individual graduate coordinators. The study team is certainly free to pursue the originally proposed approach; however, if it does turn out that SGPS is open to sending the recruitment the study team can either revise this section for resubmission or after approval through an Amendment Form

I tried looking into how to send mass emails and couldn't find anything prior to initial submission. Using your response I have found the form https://www.extranet.uwo.ca/extranet/massemail/OfficeoftheRegistrar_MassEmailPolicy.pdf and will use their Mass Email Recrutiments instead of contacting departments directly. Thank you for the suggestion.

2. Section 4.1.5f: Upload email script:

Please add the study title somewhere in the recruitment email.

"You are being invited to participate in a study that we, … " change to "You are being invited to participate in a study titled "*Survey for the DRA EDIA Champion Project "Community Driven Accessible Mini-Courses and Workshops to Further the Uptake of DRA DRI Resources*" that we, … "

3. Section 5.4: Describe the informed consent/assent procedures:

The Letter of Information and Consent (LOIC) was not included in the Qualtrics surveys provided in Section 2.5. The NMREB must see the version of the LOIC that will be presented to participants through Qualtrics. Please provide a link to the Qualtrics Consent Form if it is being delivered separately, or please build it into the start of the existing Qualtrics survey. The application cannot be approved until the NMREB can review it in Qualtrics.

The survey LOIC is now included in section 2.5

4. Section 5.5: Which of the following types of consent/assent will be collected?

Section 2.5 stated that this is supposed to be an anonymous survey. If so, it seems "implied consent" is more appropriate instead of "written consent" (which collects identifiable information in the form of name). Please revise.

In the document linked later in this recommendation (10.2) one of the recommendation is

"Implementing specific and robust screening questions and procedures to ensure all participants meet eligibility requirements prior to consenting to participate;"

For this reason we are doing identity verification and screening through ZOOM and a separate collection of written consent through a separate non-anonymous Qualtrics survey. After which the participants get an anonymous link to the main survey. Using informed consent provides us with no protection against anyone who knows how to click three buttons and clear their cookies: i.e. cookies are the method Qualtrics uses to prevent abuse when a survey has no other tracking data and cookies can be deleted quite easily in modern web browsers. With the proposed method, we know for certain which individuals requesting compensation actually provided consent, while maintaining the anonymity of responses to the survey.

This direction seems to conflict with the recommendations in 10.2, and we would prefer to maintain the screening process and written consent followed by an anonymous survey, unless you have specific guidance on how to prevent this type of abuse.

5. Section 5.5: Letter of Information and Consent (LOIC)

For more details about the feedback provided below, including sample text, please see the NMREB Consent Form Guidance Document at https://uwo.ca/research/_docs/ethics/nmreb_guidelines/NMREB_Letter_of_Information_and_Consent_v6Mar2024.pdf

5.1. LOIC Formatting

The paper/pdf version of the LOIC should include Western's official logo/letterhead. It should also include a version data and page numbers using the format "Page x of n". Even if Qualtrics is used to primarily deliver the LOIC to participants, having an official pdf version is important should someone request a copy of it offline. Also, if the pdf is available, you could include a hyperlink to it in the Qualtrics consent pages so participants can download an official version for themselves. A full description of formatting requirements is available in the NMREB Consent Form Guidance Document on pp. 1-2.

Thank you. I overlooked this when completing the LOIC. I have added the official letterhead and the page numbers and version numbers to the LOIC and included a link to a pdf of the consent document in the Qualtrics survey.

5.2. LOIC Section: Conflict of Interest

This section ends with "You may request any details about this payment." Who does the participant request it from? Presumably, the PI since the PI is not receiving funding from DRA? Please clarify for the participant.

“”You may request any details about this payment”

Changed to

“You may request any details about this payment by contacting Dr. Robert Mercer at mercer@csd.uwo.ca.”

5.3. LOIC Section: What are the study procedures?

Reviewers expressed concern that describing the compensation form as a 'survey' may cause confusion for participants. The study team is kindly asked to revise the phrasing in this section to ensure participants know that the first activity is a "survey" and the second is a "form" they fill out if they want compensation.

Changing references to a “compensation survey” to “compensation form” and doing appropriate edits to be consistent with this new wording.

5.4. LOIC Section: Can participants choose to leave the study?

Will the study team be using incomplete surveys? (E.g., some studies discard incomplete surveys and so participants withdraw their data by leaving before the end.) The current withdrawal procedures seem to imply incomplete surveys will be used, but if this is the case this needs to be explicitly disclosed to participants as part of the withdrawal disclosures. Please clarify/revise.

The following changes have been make:

Due to the anonymous nature of your data, once your DRA Survey responses have been submitted, the researchers will be unable to withdraw your data. [Added] Incomplete survey data will be used by the researchers.

5.5. LOIC Section: Confidentiality

Regarding the fourth paragraph in this section and the statements starting with "A list linking your study number...". Since the survey is anonymous, it is not clear why/how names on the consent form should be connected to study data. The previous sections of the LOIC indicated there is no way to request the withdrawal of survey data because it is anonymous, but if it is linked to names by study number, then it seems it can be removed on request? If implied consent is used, and identifiable information is only ever collected on a separate Qualtrics form, then it is not clear how/why a study number is needed. Please clarify and revise this part of the LOIC and relevant sections of the WREM form (e.g. Section 7.3 and 7.4).

Could you provide your definition of a study number? My working definition is “a unique number assigned to each participant”. As this number (as stated in this section) is only connected to consent information and the compensation form, It is not connected to survey responses, in fact this would be impossible. We explicitly clarify that it will not be connected to survey responses in the last sentence of this paragraph. If my understanding of study number is incorrect, could you suggest wording changes to make this paragraph more clear?

5.6. LOIC Section: Compensation

5.6.1. Disclosed Costs

We don't typically see the following statement: "As the survey takes place online, you may be subject to fees related to your internet connection." While the study team is certainly free to leave it in, it is not required insofar as it is common knowledge that use of the internet must be paid for. Admittedly, it as a bit confusing to see this at the start of the compensation section. It seemed to imply that the study team was compensating for such

costs, but then this is never said. If the study team decides to keep this statement, perhaps it can be included in another section such as risks.

This was added as guidance for LOIC from the government suggests covering all bases and I have seen it used in other LOIC forms researchers. As you state it is not required I am removing it.

5.6.2. How will compensation be delivered?

Is the study team providing electronic gift cards delivered by email or mailing physical gift cards. (Note electronic cards can be ethically preferable insofar as a participant does not have to disclose where they live (highly sensitive information) to the study team in order to receive compensation.) Please ensure the type of gift card and the mode of delivery is clarified for the participant.

Added clarification that the gift cards are electronic and delivered by email.

5.6.3. Compensation for Incomplete Surveys

Please note that under TCPS2-2022, Article 3.1b, once a participant starts a study activity they are entitled to the full compensation for that activity, even if they choose to leave early. TCPS2 requires this in order to ensure free and ongoing consent is preserved at all times, i.e., they should be free to leave at any time without penalty. Article 3.1b states: "The participant should not suffer any disadvantage or reprisal for withdrawing, nor should any payment due prior to the point of

withdrawal be withheld." Please revise so that the sections states that participants will receive full compensation for participating, even if they choose to leave.

Changed the middle paragraph to read “You will receive full compensation for participating, even if you choose to leave the study.”

Updated the WREM documentation to reflect this

5.7. LOIC Section: Whom do participants contact for questions?

The PI's contact information must also be provided. Participants have a right to contact the named PI directly for any study should they desire to do so, and so the PI must also be listed as a contact. Please revise.

Added the contact information of the PI

5.8. Consent Form

It was not clear why the study team needs to collect written consent which includes collecting and storing identifiable and sensitive information such as names and signatures. Anonymous online surveys typically use implied consent and there does not appear to be any reason preventing the use of implied consent for this survey. For examples of how to set up and phrase implied consent, please see the NMREB Consent Form Guidance Document at p. 14.

As per later in the recommendation document (10.2) and stated earlier in this document.

“ anonymous online surveys that offer compensation are at higher risk of being attached [sic] by bots/trolls, resulting in unusable data” as well as the risk of people trying to get compensation multiple times using different contact information.

Again, as per the link provided in 10.2 “Implementing specific and robust screening questions and procedures to ensure all participants meet eligibility requirements prior to consenting to participate” is one of the mitigation strategies used to help mitigate this.

As the main survey is anonymous, the only method Qualtrics has to prevent abuse is cookies, which are easily deleted. Thus there is essentially no protection for anonymous surveys if using implied consent, especially from the later case of multiple submissions to receive compensation multiple times: i.e. no IP tracking, easy to do by hand so captchas and arithmetic do not work, asking for “good faith” in the LOCI will not stop a malicious actor, anonymous survey links are not unique, and “budgeting more” is asking the researchers to give scammers more money.

If the board thinks it is ethical to only -pay- people that do a screening process (this can be added to the LOIC), then I will agree that implied consent is preferable: i.e. if the anonymous survey has implied consent -anyone- with the link can skip to the end and fill out the compensation form, regardless if they went through screening or not. Otherwise, as per the direction in the link you provide in 10.2 it seems that a screening process and written consent is the preferable solution.

6. Section 7.2: Identify all directly and indirectly identifiable information that will be collected for this study

6.1. Email

You will also be collecting email addresses, correct? Because that is how you connect with participants regarding compensation? Please clarify/revise.

Correct, I have updated the form.

6.2. Justify IP Address:

If IP address is being collected, this must be disclosed in the Letter of Information and Consent. Qualtrics offers a number of tools/functions to prevent survey abuse that do not collect IP addresses. Has the study team explored such options in Qualtrics? The study team is certainly welcome to collect IP addresses; however, since IP addresses can be linked to individuals this may compromise the anonymity of the study.

As stated in the WREM form, IP addresses are only collected in the compensation form, which has no connection to the anonymous survey responses. If we are using an anonymous survey with implied consent as you suggest then the compensation survey link must also be anonymous (as this is how qualtrics redirects them to the compensation survey and we otherwise have no knowledge they consented: e.g. written consent).

In this case of the options Qualtrics offers: we can't use invitation links, passwords do not work (it is the same for all users), a referral website requirement does not work as participants all come the anonymous survey, "preventing multiple submissions" again uses cookies and is trivial to circumvent, one time unique links store users email/name with their responses so is not suitable for an anonymous survey, RelevantID seems to use IP addresses and GEO location. Of these options only RelevenatID seems applicable, but it is a 3rd party that is not Qualtrics. If you want

me to use RelevantID instead of collecting IP addresses in the compensation form I can make that change.

However, as compensation must be paid, if we are doing written consent I can just link each person that has given consent to a unique compensation form and do not need to collect IP addresses.

Please advise in either case: implied consent switching from collecting IP to using RelevantID, or let me know if written consent is fine and I can not collect IP addresses and send unique links, or provide further guidance.

7. Section 7.3: Will there be a master list of participants, linking their directly identifiable information (e.g., name, contact information) to their unique participant codes (e.g., study number, pseudonym)?

Please clarify why a master list is being used for an anonymous survey. If a master list is being used, then please note that the survey can no longer be considered anonymous from a research ethics point of view since the master list can link survey responses to individual participants. The study design also seemed to separate the identifiable information needed for compensation from the surveys by using separate Qualtrics links. This seems to indicate a master list is not needed or intended, but "yes" is indicated here. Please clarify and/or revise.

The master list is needed to link participants' study number (the number associated with the participant) with their consent document as we are collecting written consent with Qualtrics. The master list does not link to the survey in any way and this is made clear in the LOIC. The guidance on

LOCI seems to imply this qualifies as a master list as you must inform participants that it exists. “It is important to note that a record of your participation must remain with the study, and as such, the researchers may not be able to destroy your signed letter of information and consent, or your name on the master list.”

If we eventually switch to informed consent then only the information recorded in the compensation form is collected. Please advise if this qualifies as a Master list.

8. Section 7.4b: Describe the circumstances under which an investigator would initiate the withdrawal of a participant from the study and/or remove their data from analyses:

These criteria for removing responses must be disclosed to participants in the LOIC. Please revise.

The criteria has been added to the LOCI to the study procedures, if it is supposed to be in another section of the LOCI please advise.

9. Section 8.1: Will any study-related records (identifiable or de-identified) be collected, physically transported or electronically transmitted outside of Western and/or its affiliate institutions (incl. working remotely/from home, travelling between data collection sites, sharing with external collaborators/researchers, etc.)?

Please note that this questions includes "working remotely/from home". Is it the case that the researcher and PI will only ever access the study data using Western devices on campus? If this is not the case, and if it is possible that at least some of the work with data will be done remotely (i.e., off campus and/or virtually),

then please revise Section 8.1 to "Yes" and complete the remaining prompts.

This section has been revised as there will be work from home.

10. Section 10.1: Describe any compensation the participants will receive:

10.1. Entitlement to Full Compensation

Please see previous recommendation (Recommendation 5.6) regarding participants being entitled to full compensation, even if they leave the study activity early. Please revise.

This section has been revised and now participants always get 10$. Perhaps wording in the section could be changed to make it more clear there is only one correct answer to prevent mistakes like this in the future.

10.2. Risks to Online Research Offering Compensation

As you may already know, anonymous online surveys that offer compensation are at higher risk of being attached by bots/trolls, resulting in unusable data. As noted at the end of Section 2.5, study teams are encouraged to "Consider how you will protect your online research from illegitimate, fraudulent, or otherwise unusable data (e.g., bots, careless responders, etc.)." Section 7 indicated that IP addresses will be used to help prevent abuse, however there may be other study design considerations in addition to this. The study team is encouraged to visit (or re-visit)

the "Ethical Challenges in Online Research" guidance document for additional information and options:
https://uwo.ca/research/_docs/ethics/nmreb_guidelines/Ethical%20Challenges%20in%20Online%20Research%20-%20Bots,%20suspicious%20data,%20and%20other%20issues

As stated above, we are using a screening process and written consent to protect our online research as we find other Qualtrics options for protecting anonymous surveys (cookies) to be insufficient.

11. Section 10.2: Please describe the circumstances under which a participant would not be compensated:

Please see previous comments (Recommendation 5.6) about participants being entitled to full compensation even if they leave an activity early. Please revise accordingly.

Similar to previous, this has been revised to say yes.