

Sotirios Liaskos

From: Sotirios Liaskos
Sent: February 21, 2025 7:19 PM
To: ethics@ore.research.yorku.ca
Cc: Sotirios Liaskos
Subject: RE: [ore.research.yorku.ca #4482] Evaluating an agent-oriented language for Reinforcement Learning
Attachments: Consent Form v3.pdf

Hello Nadia,
Thanks very much. See below my responses.
Sotirios

1. We note that the videos are under construction. Can you provide a general description of what the videos will contain for our records and, once finalized, a copy of the video(s) can be provided to us for our records.

Here are the video samples (they are final unless we find any issues). I add a short description.
Introduction: <https://youtu.be/tq5Jlj5PIp4> - A short introduction to the experiment iRL Training:
<https://youtu.be/HSx4FollzCI> - A 15 minute video presenting the language under evaluation.
Overlap: <https://youtu.be/N0nm7sLNOlw> - Introducing the first task: self-reporting concept overlap.
Case - Thermostat: <https://youtu.be/sYgBjZdxZM> - Introduction of the modeling case: a "smart" thermostat.
Relevance: <https://youtu.be/D-kUoP-498U> - Introducing the third task: relevance rating for each concept.
Completeness: <https://youtu.be/HpN6hz41nvl> - Introducing the fourth task: completeness rating for the whole vocabulary.

2. As some participants may be asked to participate in an additional session, this should be noted on the consent form – i.e., in the ‘What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research’ section.

See attached. I hope it is clear..

-----Original Message-----

From: Nadia D'Angelo via RT <ethics@ore.research.yorku.ca>
Sent: February 21, 2025 11:38 AM
To: Sotirios Liaskos <liaskos@yorku.ca>
Subject: RE: [ore.research.yorku.ca #4482] Evaluating an agent-oriented language for Reinforcement Learning

Hi Professor Liaskos,

I hope you are doing well! Thank you for responding to the committee's comments and for your suggestion regarding the instructions on how to respond. We will incorporate this into future communications – thank you!

Based on the response provided, there are two very minor additional comments:

1. We note that the videos are under construction. Can you provide a general description of what the videos will contain for our records and, once finalized, a copy of the video(s) can be provided to us for our records.
2. As some participants may be asked to participate in an additional session, this should be noted on the consent form – i.e., in the 'What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research' section.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Nadia

Nadia D'Angelo

(She/Her)

Ethics Review Coordinator

Office of Research Ethics

naddan@yorku.ca | Research Ethics

Division of VP Research & Innovation | YORK UNIVERSITY

Kaneff Tower

4700 Keele Street Toronto ON, Canada M3J 1P3

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-----Original Message-----

From: liaskos via RT <ethics@ore.research.yorku.ca>

Sent: February 10, 2025 11:28 AM

Subject: RE: [ore.research.yorku.ca #4482] Evaluating an agent-oriented language for Reinforcement Learning

<URL: <https://ore.research.yorku.ca/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=4482> >

Hello Nadia,

Thank you very much for the feedback. Attached please find response letter and updated protocol and consent form. Let me know if there is anything else needed from me.

Thanks, Sotirios

PS: I am hoping I am sending them to the correct address. For future, perhaps consider including response submission information (e.g., "by replying to this email") in the HOW TO RESPOND TO REB COMMENTS AND REQUEST(S) FOR REVISIONS section.

-----Original Message-----

From: Nadia D'Angelo via RT <ethics@ore.research.yorku.ca>

Sent: February 7, 2025 4:27 PM

To: Sotirios Liaskos <liaskos@yorku.ca>

Subject: [ore.research.yorku.ca #4482] Evaluating an agent-oriented language for Reinforcement Learning

Hello,

I am writing to inform you that the Human Participants Ethics Review Sub-Committee has reviewed the above project and, prior to approval, would like the following concerns to be addressed:

1. A committee member noted that, in these types of studies in which the material is interactive and online, tasks should be clearly defined and explained for participants as they may find navigating tasks to be confusing.

2. For Part A, Question 9 b) – please provide a response.

3. For Part B, Question 5 c) – we are unable to access the sample instrument via the link provided, however, we note that a separate document containing the survey questions has been provided.

a. For our records, please provide a copy of the video to be shown to participants.

b. In your response to Part B, Question 10 b), you state “Participants may be asked to take another session for validation purposes. Consent will be sought again in the same way.” However, this was not discussed in 5 c). Please ensure appropriate information is included in this section.

4. For Part B, Question 11 h) – typically, it would be better to store the final, de-identified or anonymized research data in a data repository, rather than a personal webpage, as data repositories are more aligned with the FAIR principles. Consider the following reasons for storing data in a repository, such as the York U Dataverse:

a. Research data repositories usually create a permanent identifier for the dataset (such as a digital object identifier), which helps improve the findability of the research data.

b. High quality data repositories will also have preservation plans that help ensure long term preservation of research data.

c. York University's Dataverse is free for YorkU researchers. The platform allows researchers to collaborate on submissions. For example, members of your research team can create a Dataverse account and help submit datasets. The data are stored on secure Canadian servers.

d. Using York University's Dataverse helps improve discoverability, as the data will be discoverable on Google, DataCite, and OpenAIRE.

e. Dataverse will assign a digital object identifier to each dataset, which makes the data more findable. It also accepts all types of data and formats (such as CSV files). Submitters can add robust metadata to their datasets.

f. York University's Dataverse is part of the Borealis - the Canadian Dataverse Repository - and has a long-term preservation plan for all submitted datasets.

g. You could deposit your data to York University's Dataverse and then link to the dataset from your personal website.

h. The following resources will help researchers learn more about Dataverse.

Should you have questions, can also contact yul_rdm@yorku.ca:

i. Dataverse's Collection Policy (<https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/research-learn/research/rdm/york-university-dataverse-collections-policy/>).

ii. Deposit Guidelines

(<https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/research-learn/research/rdm/york-university-dataverse-deposit-guidelines/>)

iii. York University's Dataverse FAQ (<https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/research-learn/research/rdm/york-u-dataverse-account-faq-for-researchers/>).

5. For the Informed Consent Form:

a. The inducement stated on the consent form is different from that indicated on the protocol form. Please confirm the correct amount and revise accordingly.

b. The 'Confidentiality' section should be revised to indicate the potential for the data to be deposited to a data repository. For example, consider including and adapting the following language:

i. Please note that at the end of the study, [indicate whether identifiable, or anonymized, or de-identified data] may be deposited into one or more publicly accessible scientific repositories, such as York University Dataverse, so that data may be inspected and analyzed by other researchers. , [If data is not identifiable] the data that will be shared on [insert database/publication] will not contain any information that can identify you. [If initiating a customized data reuse agreement, please describe].

c. Please revise the contact details for the ORE in the 'Questions About the Research?' section to "If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential."

d. Additional consent should be sought, at the end of the consent form, for data deposit. For example, "Consent to data deposit: I understand that my de-identified data will be placed into an open research data repository. Y / N".

Researchers are advised that failure to adhere to the requirements outlined in current guidance documents may result in the suspension of your certificate(s) of ethics approval.

Instructions on how to respond to the committee are listed below in the “HOW TO RESPOND TO REB COMMENTS AND REQUEST(S) FOR REVISIONS” section of this memo.

Best,

Nadia D’Angelo

Research Ethics Coordinator

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HOW TO RESPOND TO REB COMMENTS AND REQUEST(S) FOR REVISIONS**:

Many research ethics protocols require changes or clarifications prior to being approved. More often than not, the changes are minor, and a simple clarification is all that is required. Should the HPRC provide comments to the researcher that requires a response, researchers are asked to respond as

follows:

1. Please create a letter responding to each of the questions/comments provided by the committee (the letter can be an attachment or reply within the body of an email);
2. Where the committee requests changes and/or clarification regarding questions in the HPRC protocol form, please provide a revised copy of the HPRC protocol form, inclusive of your responses to the committee (for each relevant question);
3. Where the committee requests changes to the Informed Consent Form and/or other attendant documents (e.g., recruitment materials, etc.), please use the “tracked changes” function in the revised document and re-submit.

For protocols submitted via the online system, please reply to the email received and include relevant attachments (please do not change the email subject heading). The files will be automatically uploaded into the online ethics review system and date-stamped as the most recently submitted for review.

What the HPRC is asking for and why:

a) Elaborate – provide further detail to the REB as the procedure or concept is not complete;

b) Clarify – provide further information to help the REB understand what you are doing and why;

c) Comment – your understanding of the respective ethical principles on the issue is being sought;

d) Justify – provide an explanation of why you have chosen the methodology, participants, data management etc.

Responses to the comments as well as any revised documents (where applicable) must be submitted to ORE for review by the HPRC before full approval can be granted and research may commence.

If the revisions required are significant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ORE@yorku.ca) to make an appointment to discuss your protocol and clarify what is being requested by the HPRC.

Please Note: If a response is not received within six months of the date of this letter, your file will be closed, and you will be required to submit a new protocol for review.

** Please note: This document contains text which has been adapted and/or adopted from documents originally created by the University of Toronto as well as the University of Windsor.