

USING QUALTRICS FOR INFORMED CONSENT

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Can Qualtrics be used to capture informed consent as part of electronic data collection?

The short answer is yes – but how you use Qualtrics depends on what your IRB protocol requires.

If you are not required to document consent, then you may put a consent agreement in a Qualtrics survey and have the participant indicate “yes” or “no” before participants continue with the remainder of the survey.

However, if the IRB requires an electronic signature then more than just using the Qualtrics signature field is required. At Ohio State, an electronic signature is an electronic process, symbol or sound attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.

The key requirements include:

- Authorization – the person signing must be authorized to sign (e.g., a parent is authorized to sign on behalf of a child).
- Authenticity – is there a way to prove that the person signing is who they say they are (many times a login is required).
- Nonrepudiation – The signer must take an affirmative action of some kind (e.g., clicking a box to signify “I agree”). This is to prevent the signer from making a legitimate or supportable claim that they did not (intend) to sign it.
- Integrity – From an audit perspective, it is possible to tell if a completed electronic signature has been falsified or tampered with.
- Recipient Copy (Ohio Revised Code Section 1306.07) – Electronic records capable of retention by recipient at time of receipt (e.g., they have to be able to print or obtain a copy of what they have signed).
- Recipient Opt Out (Ohio Revised Code 1306.04 and Section 1306.16) – In some cases, it is possible to opt out of signing electronically for a particular transaction.

The easiest way to understand these requirements is with the example of the OSU eLeave system. When you create a leave request it involves the following criteria, steps and functionalities:

1. You are an OSU employee which gives you (Authorization) to request leave.
2. You must login with your OSU Credentials (Authenticity)
3. You must click the Create Leave Request button (Nonrepudiation)

4. Only your authorized supervisor can approve and they cannot change data (Integrity)
5. You can View Leave and print a PDF or HTML copy of the request (Recipient Copy)
6. You can delete a request (Recipient Opt Out)

All of these criteria, steps, and functionalities must be part of the electronic data collection process. For more information and guidance on how to use Qualtrics to collect an electronic signature contact the [Office of Responsible Research Practices](#).

Information for this article came from a presentation by the Office of Responsible Research Practices and the Office of the Chief Information Officer that happened on February 20 2018. Recording and handouts are [available](#).

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