



Environmental Review and Assessment

Office of Administrative Responsibility: Office of Research, Research Risk

Date of first version: January 2007

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Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to promote awareness about prescribed requirements for environmental reviews and/or assessments of research activities.

Scope

This guideline applies to University research activities (on-site and off-site) and activities related to the operation and maintenance of research facilities and infrastructure.

Guideline

Federal Environmental Assessment

Under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 (CEAA, 2012), environmental assessments are required for all “designated projects”, as described in the Regulations Designating Physical Activities. As a sponsor, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) will require confirmation of submission of a project description to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to determine if an environmental assessment is required for any funding associated with a designated project. If required, the environmental assessment will be completed by the appropriate agency.



Provincial Environmental Assessment

Environmental assessments under Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act are undertaken before government or public bodies (including Universities) begin an infrastructure project. Infrastructure projects include but are not limited to those associated with electricity generation or transmission, mining, forestry, municipal infrastructure, waste management, transit, and transportation. Research undertakings are exempt from provincial approvals, however large-scale infrastructure associated with the University e.g. development of a research station may require environmental assessment.

Sponsor Environmental Reviews

To fulfill their obligations under CEAA, 2012, "projects" funded by the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) are subject to environmental review by NSERC to confirm that they are not likely to "result in significant adverse environmental effects". See [NSERC's Guidelines on Environmental Review and Assessment](#) and [NSERC's Environmental Information Form](#) for further information.

Other research sponsors may require submission of information such that an appropriate review may be conducted to confirm that the environmental impact caused by the research is insignificant.

Definitions

Designated project

One or more physical activities that:

- are carried out in Canada or on federal lands; and
- are designated by regulations or by order of the Minister

Examples include construction, expansion, operation, decommissioning or abandonment of structures such as mines, electrical generating or transmission lines, railways, highways, bridges, dams, canals, airports, waste management and nuclear facilities.



Project

A physical activity that is carried out on federal lands or outside Canada in relation to a physical work and is not a designated project. For example, the construction, expansion, operation, decommissioning or abandonment of structures such as observation blinds, boardwalks, or field camps.

Research undertaking

An undertaking that is carried out for the purpose of, or that consists of research (where research includes measuring, monitoring and testing as per [Regulation 334: General](#)).

Related External Legislation or Policy

- [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 \(CEAA 2012\)](#)
 - [Regulations Designating Physical Activities \(SOR/2012-147\)](#)
- [NSERC's Guidelines on Environmental Review and Assessment](#)
- [Ontario Environmental Assessment Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E. 18](#)
 - [R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 334: General](#)

Location of Research Guideline

This guideline is published at: www.uoguelph.ca/research

Review Frequency

It is the responsibility of the Office of Administrative Responsibility to initiate review of this document. This guideline is to be reviewed every 5 years.