Templates will not be appropriate for every imaginable study, as different types of studies require different details. Adapt them to fit your research. Feel free to cut and paste from any example in this document.

The following consent form template can be used as the opening page of an online survey.

Language used in this form should be easily understood by participants. The REB recommends a grade 8 reading level in most cases.

The content of this form must be consistent with information presented in the REB application. Adjust this template to accurately reflect your study.

For some research (e.g., anonymous online surveys) it is inappropriate to get a signature, because signed consent eliminates what would otherwise be anonymity. Check boxes indicating consent can be used in lieu of signatures where the identity of participants should not be revealed.

CONSENT FORM

[Template #2: Online survey/no signature required]

PROJECT TITLE

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by, [insert name], [an undergraduate/graduate student/faculty member] in [department] at Dalhousie University. The purpose of this research is to [insert one to three brief sentences explaining the purpose of the project and methods used, and who can participate] (e.g., have undergraduate students complete a survey on why they decide to pursue their degree). The study is funded by [insert funder name].

If you choose to participate in this research, you will be asked to [insert a few—one to three—sentences explaining what is involved in participation (e.g., answer XX questions in an anonymous online survey on insert topics covered by survey). The survey should take approximately XX minutes to complete.

Your participation in this research is entirely your choice. You do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer (by selecting prefer not to answer), and you are welcome to stop the survey at any time if you no longer want to participate. All you need to do is close your browser. I will not include any incomplete surveys in my analyses. If you do complete your survey and you change your mind later, I will not be able to remove the information you provided as I will not know which response is yours.

Your responses to the survey will be [anonymous/de-identified/coded]. This means that [there are no questions in the survey that ask for identifying details such as your name or email address/any identifying information will be removed/identifying details will be replaced with a code, etc. Explain how you will handle any direct or indirectly identifying information]. All responses will be saved on Dalhousie's secure OneDrive. Only [insert names] will have access to the survey results.

If identifiable information will be accessible from outside Canada due to use of software/tools/apps/artificial intelligence, describe this use and potential risks (amending the information in the previous paragraph so that information presented to participants is not contradictory).
Example: We will use a [app/software etc.] in this project called [blank] for [data analysis/other use]. [Name of tool/company] might make identifying information such as your [personal information, opinions, data, etc.] available to others, including those outside of Canada. We cannot control how [your data/information, etc.] will be used then. This is a risk of participating in this research. If you would like more information about [tool], here is a link [insert link] to their privacy policy.

I will describe and share general findings of this research in [describe where results will be presented. E.g. in presentations/my honours thesis/academic journals, etc.]. [State:] I will destroy all information [XX] months/years after completing/reporting the results. OR: With your permission, I/my supervisor will keep the anonymous survey information indefinitely for use in future research. OR: With your permission, information you provide in this research project may be shared publicly in a research database called [name of repository]. Your information might be used by others anywhere in the world. These people may not have to follow the same ethical research standards we have in Canada. To protect your identity, I will remove or replace personal information that could identify you [state what this might be in the context of this research] in an effort to ensure that no one will be able to identify you. Despite these measures I cannot guarantee your anonymity or predict how those who access the data will use them. Even if you don't want your information put into [the data repository/biobank] you can still participate in this research.

[State either:] The risks associated with this study are no greater than those you encounter in your everyday life. [Or, if some risks (e.g. discomfort) are anticipated:] The risks associated with this study include [insert potential risks and the probability of these risks. This should be followed by information on how risks are mitigated.]

There will be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research. The research, however, might contribute to new knowledge on [insert sentence on the topic of the research]. If you would like to see how your information is used, please feel free to visit my website [insert website link] after [date] [or include alternative ways to learn about the research].

[If incentives are offered, include information on this. E.g.: To thank you for your time you can choose to enter a draw for a chance to win a XX gift card at the end of the survey. Your contact information for the draw will be entered on a separate page that is not linked to any of your survey responses].

You should discuss any questions you have about this study with [researcher name and supervisor name]. Please ask as many questions as you like before or after participating. My contact information is [insert contact information. Use a Dalhousie email address and include a phone number].

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-3423, or email ethics@dal.ca (and reference REB file # 20XX-XXXX)."

[Include applicable options:]

I consent to complete this survey (required to proceed to survey). ☐Yes ☐No
I agree to have my data stored by the researcher for future research (optional). ☐Yes ☐No
I agree to have my data stored in a data repository for future research (optional). ☐Yes ☐No

Please follow the link here/click continue [ensure participants can proceed only if they click "Yes" in the first consent button above].

See TCPS Article 3.2 for additional suggested consent form items that may need to be addressed for your particular study, such as conflict of interest, commercialization, and not waiving legal rights.