

Research Ethics Board

Terms of Reference



Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic

September 2022

A. MANDATE OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

A.1. Purpose

The Research Ethics Board ("REB") has been designated by the Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic to review the ethical acceptability of research involving human participants according to the principles described in the Government of Canada's most current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* ("TCPS") and the College's Research Ethics Board Policy.

A.2. Establishment of the Research Ethics Board

The Provost and Vice President Academic shall establish the REB and ensure that the REB is provided with reasonable and necessary ongoing financial, administrative, and training resources to fulfill its duties. There is one REB at Okanagan College that conducts research ethics reviews.

A.3. Accountability and Independence in Decision-Making

The REB is independent in its decision making and is accountable to the Provost and Vice President Academic in carrying out the process of research ethics review. The REB shall require that research conducted at or under the auspices of the College is in accordance with these Terms of Reference, College policies, relevant laws, and the current TCPS, including any amendments.

B. COMPOSITION

Okanagan College is committed to fostering Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice (EDISJ) practices by identifying and eliminating systematic barriers that impede the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups to becoming members of the Research Ethics Board. The diverse membership on the REB shall include Co-chairs, voting and non-voting members as described below.

B.1. REB Chair

The role of the Chair is to provide overall leadership for the REB and to facilitate the REB review process based on the current *TCPS*, College policies and procedures, and these Terms of Reference. The Chair monitors REB decisions for consistency and ensures that these decisions are recorded accurately and communicated clearly to researchers in writing as early as possible. The following provisions apply to appointment of the REB Chair:

(a) Eligibility

The Chair shall have been an internal OC community REB member for at least one year prior to becoming Chair.

(b) **Chair Appointment**

The Provost and Vice President Academic shall appoint the Chair of the REB from among the Okanagan College REB members on the recommendation of the REB members. If no REB member wishes to serve as Chair, the Provost and Vice President Academic may appoint a Chair from the College, following the guidelines in B.2 **REB Membership** below.

(c) **Term of Office**

The appointment of the Chair shall be for a two-year term, normally commencing August 1st.

B.2. REB Membership

The REB shall have sufficient members to ensure that the ethical review process has input from a multi-disciplinary membership with relevant expertise and experience. Provisions for member eligibility, composition, appointments, and terms of office are set out as follows:

(a) **Eligibility**

Members of the College community herein (including students) are eligible to serve. To ensure the independence of the REB's decision making, institutional senior administrators shall not be eligible to serve on the REB.

(b) **Composition**

The REB shall be composed of at least five members, but typically not more than fourteen members, and shall make every effort to ensure that EDISJ best practices are followed and that applications from underrepresented groups, including women, Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), persons with disabilities, members of a visible minority/ racialized groups and members of LGBTQ2+ communities be carefully taken into consideration for REB membership. Representation must include:

- i. four employee members from separate faculty, instructional, or support groups, who together have broad expertise in the content area and research methodology reviewed by the REB (henceforth, referred to as members-at-large);
- ii. one member who is knowledgeable in ethics;
- iii. one member who is knowledgeable on Indigenous research methodologies;
- iv. one member who is knowledgeable in the relevant law; and
- v. one member who has no current affiliation with the College (recruited from the community served by the institution, henceforth, referred to as the Community Representative).

Of those appointed, members may contribute in more than one of the required expertise or knowledge categories. If the size of the REB increases, every effort will be made to ensure that the number of community representatives will also increase accordingly.

(c) **Member Appointment**

The REB Chair shall seek applications for upcoming REB member vacancies in April each year. Notification of recruitment for REB vacancies shall be provided to the OC community with the assistance of the Office of Learning & Applied Research. Applications shall occur via email, and necessarily include a one-page letter of interest and an abbreviated CV. Applications will be reviewed by the REB, with appointment recommendations forwarded by the REB Chair to the Provost and Vice President Academic by the end of June each year. The Provost and Vice President Academic shall make member appointments, normally commencing August 1st. All appointed members must complete the *TCPS certification*

before commencing duties. Submission of the certificate of completion shall be emailed to the REB assistant and remain on file for the duration of the member's term.

(d) **Terms of Office**

The term of office for all REB members, including the Community Representative, shall be for two years. At the expiry of the initial two-year term, the appointment may be renewable for an additional term with mutual agreement of the member, REB Chair, and Provost and Vice President Academic. Further terms of office may occur in exceptional situations with mutual agreement of the member, REB Chair, and Provost and Vice President Academic. The start date of REB appointments shall be intentionally staggered on an annual basis such that recruitment of some new REB members is required each year.

(e) **Ad Hoc Advisors**

Where deemed necessary, the REB may invite ad hoc advisors to assist in evaluating research ethics applications where specialized or methodological expertise is required and is not represented in current REB membership. Advisors are not counted in quorum and do not vote.

(f) **Resignation and Termination**

If a REB member is unable to complete the term, a letter of resignation should be submitted to the Chair, providing as much notice as possible (preferably at least three months) so that a replacement, if necessary, may be sought. Should a Chair be unable to complete the term, notice should be submitted to the Provost and Vice President Academic.

In the event that a REB member does not adequately fulfill their duties (e.g., not performing reviews, not attending meetings) and it is the opinion of the REB Chair that the member should be replaced, the REB Chair shall recommend to the Provost and Vice President Academic that said member's appointment be terminated and a replacement found.

C. MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

C.1. Meeting Schedule

The REB shall have regular meetings (usually once per month) to discharge its responsibilities. Face-to-face, videoconferencing, teleconferencing or other technologies may be used as necessary to conduct meetings. Members shall attend a minimum of two thirds of the annually scheduled meetings.

Additional meetings may be held as deemed necessary by the REB Chair, or as requested by the majority of REB members.

C.2. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the REB shall comprise a minimum of 50% of the appointed membership.

D. GOVERNANCE OF RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW

The REB shall observe the following procedures in conducting research ethics reviews:

D.1. Eligibility of Applications for Review

The REB shall receive completed REB applications prior to a researcher initiating a research project. Applications received after the application deadline, not using official College REB forms, missing a completed research proposal, or without the appropriate signatures (actual or electronic) will be deemed incomplete and will not be reviewed.

D.2. Reconsideration and Appeals of REB Decisions

If the REB does not approve a proposal, prohibits research, or recommends termination of an approved application, it must state its reasons in writing. A Principal Investigator has the right to request, and the REB has an obligation to provide, reconsideration of a decision. If the REB and the Principal Investigator are unable to reach an agreement through discussion, the Principal Investigator may appeal the REB's decision. The REB will follow the appeal process outlined in the Research Ethics Board Policy. The appeal process is an external partnership with the UBC Okanagan REB committee.

D.3. Recordkeeping

The REB shall prepare and maintain comprehensive records, including all documentation related to the projects submitted to the REB for review, attendance at all REB meetings, and accurate minutes reflecting REB decisions.

The REB shall also maintain general records related to documents for submission, REB membership and qualifications of members in a secure location with appropriate data protection measures.

D.4. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may arise when activities or situations place an individual or institution in a real, potential, or perceived conflict between their duties or responsibilities related to research, such that an impartial observer might reasonably question whether actions or decisions taken or made relating to that situation would be influenced by consideration of the researcher's private interest. The REB must ensure that conflicts of interest are disclosed and managed according to TCPS policy and College policies, including the Conflict of Interest in Research policy. The REB will include a Declaration of Conflicts of Interest agenda item at the onset of every meeting to ensure compliance of policy.

E. ANNUAL REPORT

The REB Chair will provide an annual report in June to the Provost and Vice President Academic that outlines the number of REB applications reviewed during the year, an overview of the types of research being conducted, and other key information as determined by the REB or as requested by the Provost and Vice President Academic. The annual report will be posted on the REB website.

F. POLICIES AND RELEVANT WEBSITES

F.1. Relevant Links

- (a) *Okanagan College Research Ethics Policy*
- (b) *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*

G. REVIEW

- G.1.** The Terms of Reference for this Committee will be reviewed by the Committee at least once every three years and changes will be forwarded to the VP Academic for review and approval.

H. REVIEW HISTORY

Date	Review
2022-11-09	Revision approved by President and Provost and VP Academic