

BROCK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
Tuesday September 21, 2021
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Teams

Minutes of the HREB Meeting

Attendance

Stephen Cheung
 Shawn Beaudette
 Nicole Chimera
 Alyssa Bax (non-voting)
 Jenalyn Yumol
 Megan Magier

Maureen Shantz
 Terrance Wade
 Lori Walker (non-voting)
 Kimberley Gammage
 Jennifer Matunin-Brown
 Connie Schumacher (non-voting)

Regrets

Gail Frost

MINUTES		
ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1	<p>Motion to approve Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved <p>Motion to approve June Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved <p>Motion to approve June-August Decision Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved 	<p>Motion to approve: SC Seconded: SB All in favour</p>
2	<p>Discussion Items</p> <p>Reviewer checklist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Research Access Process through ADRs is no longer required as of September 7, 2021. In person research has opened up as long as researchers check with us and provide us with the In-Person Research with Human Participants Risk Checklist. This form is still changing, especially regarding vaccination requirements. However, we should have a finalized copy within the next few days. It is currently unclear where funding for COVID-19 testing of individuals who are exempt from receiving the vaccine will come from. This information will be updated when we learn more. Off-campus locations are out of our jurisdiction so there are no vaccine requirements in place for those settings. Brock researchers are not responsible for collecting person health information and as such are not required to do so if their data collection occurs off-campus. Discussion: Q1: How will the new requirements and risk checklist form for in-person research be disseminated to researchers? A1: It is currently being emailed to all researchers who submit a new application or a modification to the REB that includes in person research. Once the form is finalized it will be on our website and instructions will be included in all outgoing clearances to ensure that all researchers are aware of the process when they receive clearance for their files (including renewals for existing projects). 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment: This may lead to a flood of new and/or restarted research coming into the REB for review, but the forms will be ready in the next couple of days to cover the incoming requests. • Q2: Is a PCR test prior to participants arrival sufficient for participation? • A2: No, guests are required to be fully vaccinated to access campus unless they are exempt. In cases where a participant is found to be exempt the antigen test would be appropriate. However, the exemption must be approved by the university first which requires either medical or religious proof of exemption. • Medical exemption: Doctors note sent through the office of the secretariat detailing either an allergic reaction to a first dose of the vaccine or a heart condition. • Religious exemption: Letter detailing exemption that is supported by doctrine and a faith leader. Also required to have not received previous vaccinations. • Comment: This is also the case for all guests at the university including technicians and training personnel. • Q3: Now that the Research Access Process has been removed there are some new and some duplicate steps from the previous review process. Will this information be sent to all researchers who have projects that have previously received in-person research clearance through the ADR Research Access Process? • A3: We have a list of all approved in-person (FTF) research projects that we will use to send out an email detailing the required steps for those who have already received in-person clearance. There is no need to put research on hold in the meantime. • Q4: On the ORS FAQ page research participants are said to be required to proceed to the visitor booths to prove their vaccination status before entering research labs. Is that also the case for students who have already proved their vaccination status? • A4: No, students do not need to prove their vaccination status again unless they haven't been approved to be on campus (i.e., didn't prove their vaccination status to the school already due to online classes etc.). Unfortunately, at this time it is unclear how we will ascertain which students are allowed to be on campus. All other steps are the same for the public and Brock students (i.e., risk assessment form and contact tracing required for students as well). • Q5: Is in-person research currently approved through the ADR on hold? • A5: No, they just need to add information about the vaccine mandate. An email will be sent out to all researchers with active in-person approved projects. • Q6: Should all in-person research that was shut down during the pandemic and wants to be re-started go through reviewers again or just the chair? • A6: Just the chair for now and if the workload becomes too much we will re-evaluate. 	
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- Q7: It appears that some of the questions (#7-10) regarding the social and psychological risks would be difficult for the researchers to evaluate. How should we assess these risks?
- A7a: If a researcher is unsure of the risks to participants, they can ask their anticipated participant pool. Vulnerabilities can be heightened by COVID-19, especially in certain populations (e.g., research on depression). Our review should be conducted the same way we evaluate risks and benefits in a typical REB application. Much of the COVID-19 attributable risk is outlined to participants in the [Risk Acknowledgement Letter](#) which participants are required to read. This form protects both the participant and the institution.
- A7b: It also reminds researchers that conducting in-person research during the COVID-19 pandemic does come with an amount of risk, so they need to consider if the benefit to participants outweighs any risks they will encounter.
- A7c: We can also deny clearance if a risk that is greater than “everyday life” is not properly justified.
- Q8: Is it fair to put the burden on the researcher to evaluate the psychological risk? Should researchers ask each participants’ opinion of the risk level prior to their participation?
- A8: Research that is being reinstated does not have COVID-19 risks/precautions written into the original application. However, new applications that are currently being submit also don’t cover COVID-19 in the application. The in-person risk checklist linked above helps researchers detail the COVID-19 related risks that come with in-person projects during the pandemic and allows us as reviewers to ensure that adequate supports are being provided where applicable.
- Q9: How is loss of employment during/due to the pandemic any greater of a psychological risk than pre-pandemic? This risk is exacerbated for everyone who has lost a job or is worried about losing a job.
- A9: Job loss due to the pandemic put individuals in a position of potentially heightened risk. For example: research on unemployment during the pandemic or the impact of school closures on mental health for families and children. Note: the risk checklist is only required for research that is in-person. We will likely not deny clearance for projects that show an increased physical or psychological risk due to COVID-19, we will just use our assessment of the risk to ensure that adequate supports are in place for participants.
- Q10: Would this impede research?
- A10: No unless we find that the risks of participation are greater than the benefits to participants (ratio). In most cases COVID-19 risks are considered everyday risk at this stage of the pandemic so this situation will only apply to specifically vulnerable populations as discussed above.
- HREB members asked to submit any further questions/comments/concerns to the REB (reb@brocku.ca) by September 22, 2021. If no further communication is received by that date, we will assume the checklist has been approved.

Deception guideline

- This form is an updated version of the original form that was created in 2017. It was updated by Lori Walker (Manager, Research Ethics) and Angela Book who is familiar with conducting research involving deception. Prior to being approved it will be further reviewed by Gordon Hodson, who is also involved in research involving deception.
- The updated copy includes improved wording and additional information.
- If there are any questions/comments/concerns: HREB members asked to send an email to the REB (reb@brocku.ca) by September 24, 2021.
- The form will be formally approved at the next HREB meeting (Thursday October 28, 2021).

TCPS2 Public Consultation 2021 responses

- Proposed changes to the TCPS2 include: broad consent in research; the review of multijurisdictional research; the review of research involving cell lines; and research involving totipotent stem cells.
- A summary of the questions/comments/concerns that were discussed at the last HREB, SREB, and GPPC meetings.
- Our formal institutional response will be sent to the Panel on Research Ethics and the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research on October 4, 2021.
- HREB members ask to send any questions/comments/concerns to the REB (reb@brocku.ca) by September 24, 2021.

GPPC discussion

- Options provided to revise the framework of the GPPC because the contributions and framework were not what we originally expected.
- Overall, we are interested in the opinions of all REB members as to if we need to have the GPPC or not.
- This REB sub-committee was originally created due an imbalance between the ORE and the REB. It was comprised of interested REB members.
- It is important that researchers' perspectives are included in the documents and guidelines. This is supported by the faculty handbook which includes the creation and revision of guidelines in the duties of REB members.
- Recently we have cancelled a number of REB meetings for both boards due to a lack of agenda items so we could potentially use this extra time to review/create documents as a group during our existing meetings or to present revisions that were completed by members between meetings.
- REB members may not be familiar with our own documents which presents an opportunity to strengthen the background knowledge of our members.
- Some members have already indicated a preference for option #2 (fold the GPPC tasks into the REB).
- All members who did not indicate their preference at the meeting are asked to submit their "vote" to the ORE (reb@brocku.ca) by Friday September 24, 2021.
- Discussion: The GPPC has been very useful in the past, creating many guidelines and SOPs that are used by researchers including ourselves. These guidelines have positive impacts on researchers by minimize applicant errors and streamlining the review process.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members have indicated that there is not always time for REB members to take on additional responsibilities and/or join additional committees. Mentioned that it might be useful to have the Chair develop which guidelines need to be revised and bring them to the REB meetings to discuss them when needed. Members reminded to submit their votes to reb@brocku.ca by September 24, 2021 at the latest. 	
3	Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5N01/7N01 Presentation – HREB Chair, likely November 2021 	
4	Adjourn	Meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.	Motion to adjourn: SC Seconded: NC All in favour