

**BROCK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**  
**Monday February 22, 2021**  
**12:00 – 2:00 p.m.**  
**Teams**

**Minutes of the SREB Meeting**

**Attendance**

Alyssa Bax (non-voting)  
 Angela Book  
 Christine Tardif-Williams  
 Dipanjan Chatterjee  
 Heather Chalmers  
 Jo-Ann Boyle-Jackson  
 Linda Morrice

Lori Walker (non-voting)  
 Michele Donnelly  
 Robert Steinbauer  
 Sandra Kroeker  
 Tom O'Neill  
 Nicole Luke  
 Veronica Panchyshyn  
 Xiaoyang Xia

**Regrets**

Sandra Bosacki  
 Elizabeth Shulman

<b>MINUTES</b>		
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1	<p><b>Motion to approve Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion to approve November Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion to approve November – January Decision Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved</li> </ul>	<p>Motion to approve: LM          Seconded: RS          All in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: LM          Seconded: HC          Tom O'Neill Abstained (Absent)          All else in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: RS          Seconded: NL          All in favour</p>
2	<p><b>Discussion Items</b></p> <p><b>COVID Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Office update the board on the current stage of lockdown for Brock.</li> <li>Brock announced that the university would remain in "Grey" until at least February 22, 2021.</li> <li>The entire Niagara Area is still in grey due to the high COVID-19 case numbers (similar to York/Toronto)</li> <li>The "Grey" stage indicates that no in-person (face-to-face) research will occur unless it is essential to the wellbeing of participants or if the participants are a part of the same household.</li> <li>Participants will not be asked to leave their houses for research purposes unless it is essential, as determined by the <a href="#">Research Access Process</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>MTurk/SONA Presentations</b>          Outlining how they work and the ethical issues of each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MTurk (based on Waterloo Guidelines)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crowdsourcing: open request via internet in exchange for monetary remuneration</li> <li>"Workers" are paid for completing tasks called "HITS"</li> <li>Typically use external servers (e.g., Qualtrics and Survey Monkey)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ External servers can be subject to the Patriot Act/Homeland Security (USA based)</li> <li>▪ Privacy Policy link required in the consent form (confidentiality section)</li> <li>○ Prohibited HITS include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disclosure of participant identity/email address</li> <li>▪ Requiring registration</li> <li>▪ Violating terms/conditions of an activity or website (i.e., voting on something)</li> <li>▪ Violating intellectual property</li> <li>▪ Explicit or offensive content (unless warnings provided about content)</li> <li>▪ Snowball sampling</li> <li>▪ Requiring software downloads for participation</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Ethical Issues of MTurk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Justification required for the use of eligibility criteria: exclusionary criteria (e.g., only men)</li> <li>▪ Deception? Only allowed in mild forms with proper justification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Q: How do we know what “mild deception” is?</li> <li>◆ A1: It is a judgement call. If you're unsure, ask for clarification on the level of risk to participants.</li> <li>◆ A2: Mild deception example: reading media articles that were manipulated or being told that better performance on a task would result in a higher pay (when everyone received the highest pay regardless). Partial disclosure of deception can mitigate this risk.</li> <li>◆ A3: Moderate-high deception example: tricking participants into a certain type of behaviour (e.g., aggression) or having participants leave with a false sense of the purpose of the study.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Risk Level: typically, low or minimal risk researcher only. Since the researcher cannot monitor the participants reaction, a higher level of risk would require a greater amount of justification.</li> <li>▪ Incomplete tasks/ Withdrawing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Not allowed to penalize participants for withdrawing.</li> <li>◆ It is often assumed that only those who complete the study/survey and complete it correctly will be compensated. (e.g., failed attention checks = no pay)</li> <li>◆ However, MTurk as an option to still pay those who withdraw.</li> <li>◆ Other Universities (Waterloo) require that researchers pay all participants even if they withdraw</li> <li>◆ Brock GPPC will also be creating a guideline to clarify our requirements.</li> <li>◆ SREB member suggested that if researchers are worried about having to pay for low quality data, they can use the MTurk high-quality filter which screens participants prior to their participation. This requires a fee from the researchers, but it would likely result in more reliable participants and can eliminate bots etc.</li> <li>◆ Q: Is there a difference between a penalty vs. withdrawing compensation?</li> <li>◆ A1: Compensation cannot be taken away because it is meant to offset the inconvenience of participation and the</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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		<p>time spent on participation. Incentive such a draw can be taken away because it was never meant to compensate participants for their time/effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A2: Some researchers pro-rate their compensation so that as you complete more of the study you gain more compensation rather than receiving the total at the end of the study. For example, \$5 per day for a two-day study instead of receiving \$10 after only the second visit. This allows participants to be more fairly compensated for the amount of time they put into their participation.</li> <li>◆ Q: Is this unfair to the researcher, who has to pay for incomplete research data?</li> <li>◆ A: Potentially, but there are ways for researchers to avoid having bots and incomplete data (discussed above). The REB's concern lies with not judging participants based on their responses. We must always err on the side of caution for the participant and give them the benefit of the doubt.</li> <li>◆ Q: Who protects the rights of researchers?</li> <li>◆ A1: Many institutional policies are in place to protect the researchers, who hold more power than then participants do, so we must protect the participants' rights.</li> <li>◆ A2: Researchers are also able to put protective measures in place for themselves. For example, researchers can put in attention checks so that they can tell which data is of "good" quality. Attention checks should not, however, be used to determine if participants should be paid, as researchers do not have a right to "good" data.</li> <li>◆ Q: Can consent forms inform participants that they will only be paid if the quality of their data is good?</li> <li>◆ A1: Theoretically that would work, but who decides what "good" data is? Researchers created the problem of whether or not to withdraw compensation in certain situations. MTurk was not originally meant for researcher purposes – which requires the protection of participants rights.</li> <li>◆ A2: Research is voluntary, so we need to ensure researchers are not paying for data and only compensating for time/effort. This is often difficult because it is hard to determine the line between fair compensation and coercive payments.</li> <li>◆ Q: What is the TCPS stance on paying for data?</li> <li>◆ A: Secondary-use commercialized data is okay, otherwise data should not be paid for – only compensation provided for participants' time/effort.</li> <li>◆ Q: Are payment bonuses for correct attention checks allowed?</li> <li>◆ A: Yes, we could allow this – but we need to develop a guideline on how to properly go about deciding how much of a bonus is fair for the attention checks first.</li> <li>▪ Remuneration – fair/ consistent with other HITS? Need to justify how much compensation is offered to participants and it should watch their time/effort.</li> <li>▪ External HITS – ensure you know where the servers are housed so that the proper privacy policies are included, and requirements are met.</li> </ul>	
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- **SONA**

- Used for recruiting participants online.
- Participants sign-up for SONA and create an account so that their participation can be linked to course credit (marks for participation)
- How it works:
  - Anonymous (automatic credit) – no identifiers required
  - Withdrawal/incomplete tasks
    - ◆ Required to grant course credit regardless of withdraw – cannot deny course credit
    - ◆ Compensation is for time and not for data, so it is also required to be provided regardless of withdrawal.
  - Remuneration on top of credit?
    - ◆ Consider: is it fair or too high?
    - ◆ Similar platforms should provide the same level of compensation (SONA vs. MTurk)
  - Alternatives should always be provided to participation (e.g., course assignment instead). Any alternatives should be of a similar difficulty and duration.
  - Discussed how in the Psychology Department the assignments used to be graded but they were eventually understaffed so they gave a “credit” for the assignment. Now it is not required that the assignments be marked – only completed to receive a course credit.
  - Q: What should we look for in our reviews in terms of compensation?
  - A1: Ensure that compensation is not so high that individuals would consider participating when they would otherwise not have (especially if there is any risk involved).
  - A2: Keep in mind who the population is that would be participating. For example, \$25 holds a different value for students than it does for faculty. To avoid this, some researchers use minimum wage as a guideline for how much compensation would be appropriate.

**REB member & Chair Recruitment Guidelines**

- Discussed that a change to the faculty handbook may be necessary to go through the GPPC. Currently during Senate meetings, the Brock VPR is required to leave during votes. However, this could be changed because the VPR has no conflict of interest.
  - No members were opposed to striking this line from the faculty handbook.
- Discussed that currently REB positions at Brock are advertised online and the ADRs can help distribute the information if we do have enough applicants/ interest in the position.
- When finding REB Chairs this has become a challenge. Alternatively, should we vote in a chair from within our own membership since it is best if the chair is on our board first anyways?
  - Q: How long is a term for a Chair and how long can they keep it?
  - A: Two years, renewable once
  - Discussed that the announcement should be made to the whole university formally and that the best and most qualified candidate should be chosen. This person would likely be a current or past

		<p>REB member as it would be very difficult for someone who has never been on the board to step into the Chair role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SREB members who did not get a chance to have their input included in the discussion due to time were encouraged to send their thoughts to Lori so that they could be included in the final decision.</li> <li>• Should general members be tenured before being on the board to protect them from reprisal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members agree that general members should not have to be tenured to sit on the REB.</li> <li>○ Brought up that faculty members should potentially only be those who are researchers and not those who are only instructors for example.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Should Chairs be tenured? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most members agree that Chairs should be tenured so as to protect them from reprisal/liability and so that they have more experience going into the position. It also protects the un-tenured faculty from having too high of a workload or negative repercussions of difficult files.</li> <li>○ In the past un-tenured chairs have felt uncomfortable making some decisions and stepped down from their roles, which is not ideal for the REB or for the faculty member.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
3	<b>Adjourn</b>	<b>Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.</b>	<p>Motion to adjourn:  Seconded:  All in favour</p>