

BROCK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
Wednesday September 14, 2021
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Teams

Minutes of the SREB Meeting

Attendance

Alyssa Bax (non-voting)
 Angela Book
 Dipanjan Chatterjee
 Elizabeth Shulman
 Jo-Ann Boyle-Jackson
 Lori Walker (non-voting)
 Linda Morice

Michele Donnelly
 Nicole Luke
 Robert Steinbauer
 Sandra Bosacki
 Sandra Kroeker
 Veronica Panchyshyn

Regrets

Heather Chalmers

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: DC Seconded: RS All in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: DC Seconded: VP All in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: LM Seconded: ES All in favour</p>
2	<p>Discussion Items</p> <p>Reviewer checklist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person research no longer requires distancing protocols. The reviewer checklist draft is a combination of Health, Safety, and Wellness and Facilities Management forms to create a single form that the REB can review independently. As of September 7, 2021, the ADR research access process is no longer required. Researchers who want to conduct in person research can now submit the In-Person Research with Human Participants Risk Checklist (revised copy presented to the board) to the REB alongside their REB application for review. Other institutions have not reopened in person research in this way, so the updated checklist allows for the REB to keep track of those who are conducting in person research in case another shutdown is required in the future. <p>Updated form includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What type of research interaction is involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: Top line "Very low risk: Remote data collection (online or telephone)" could be removed since the form is only to be completed by those conducting in person research. Is the research site or location for in-person data collection off-campus? Who will be present in the space during research interactions? Provide the following information: Please describe your plans for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Examples include hand hygiene, masking, distancing, 	

		<p>ventilation, contact tracing, signage regarding protocols, cleaning between participants, and adequate time between participants.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How will research assistants/students be supervised and trained on COVID-19 mitigation strategies? See “Fall Planning: Return to Campus” document (to be given to research assistants). 6. Do participants belong to a vulnerable population that makes them more likely to contract COVID-19 or to experience more severe disease or outcomes (e.g., elderly, underlying medical condition, immunocompromised)? See Vulnerability factors. 7. Do you anticipate that the target participant population is at increased social risk due to the pandemic (e.g., unemployment, dependents, lack of space)? See Vulnerability factors. 8. Will you confirm that no members of the participants’ households are at high risk for contracting COVID-19 (e.g., elderly, immunocompromised)? See Vulnerability factors. 9. Please describe your plans for ceasing data collection should the COVID-19 situation change, and in-person research must be suspended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q: change the wording to ensure that participants are protected in the event of a shutdown. ○ A: “Please describe your plans for ceasing data collection <u>while still ensuring participants’ wellbeing</u> should the COVID-19 situation change, and in-person research must be suspended.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers must also attest/confirm that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participants and researchers will be fully vaccinated and masked if on Brock campus or facilities (unless they have an approved exemption). Prior to coming on campus/facilities, research team members and participants will confirm. vaccination by completing the Vaccine declaration form. b. All participants will be informed of the risks posed by COVID-19 to their health and complete documentation for contact tracing (see link). c. All participants will be advised about necessary precautions to enhance their own and others’ safety during travel, if applicable. d. Participants and researchers will complete the Brock University self-screen survey each day prior to in-person interaction on- or off-campus. e. Participants and researchers will complete COVID-19 Safety Considerations on Campus and (if applicable) COVID-19 Safety Considerations for Laboratory Spaces training on Sakai (for employees or students as relevant), as well as any applicable required department-specific training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q: Does this apply to BUFA members? ○ A: Yes, as it is a university policy. • Discussion: Non-Brock members are unable to use the “mybrock” portal to upload their proof of vaccination. So, it remains unclear how participants will provide their proof of vaccination status. • The current system for approving Brock members’ proof of vaccination status includes a team of faculty volunteers. We should be careful to not over-burden them with also asking them to review the participants’ proof of vaccination as well. • Q1: Are Brock researchers unable to collect proof of vaccination from their participants? 	
--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: That is correct. When avoidable, researchers should not be put into situations that could become confrontational. • Q2: Are there exclusions for those who are exempt from receiving the vaccine or wearing a mask? • A2: Ethically, we cannot exclude participants if they have proven that they have a legitimate exemption. However, it is possible to increase the number of precautions taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in those cases (e.g., face shields, gloves, double masks, further distancing etc.). However, this may never become an issue because there is a very strict exemption process which has only allowed for a few cases to be approved out of the whole university population. • Q3: Should there be a line in all in person research consent forms asking participants to confirm their vaccination status and acknowledge COVID relate risks? • A3: It is not necessary to include this information in the consent forms because it is already covered in other forms (e.g., COVID risk attestation, contact tracing, campus access) that the participants must fill out prior to their arrival on campus. • Q4: Since “mybrock” cannot be accessed by the general public could we wait to hear what the process will be for verifying visitors’ proof of vaccination and use the same or a similar method for research participants? • A4: We can use a similar approach however the method has not been finalized yet either and a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow where we can offer our insights into what might work best for researchers and participants. • Q5: Is there an age restriction for participants (e.g., many children are too young to be eligible for the vaccine)? • A5: Children are exempt from receiving the vaccine if they are too young, so they are still allowed on campus (as far as we know). • Q6: How do we manage positive cases? • A6: We are unaware of positive cases since the contact tracing is all completed through public health. • Q7: Would it be possible to conduct in person research that requires the use of VR goggles with the appropriate cleaning between uses? • A7: Leila would be able to provide specific information on which cleaning techniques/products would be accepted for this research to proceed. • Q8: How do we quantify/address the risks vs. benefits of in person research during the COVID-19 pandemic? While research on students may not increase their risk since they are already coming onto campus, the same cannot be said for the public/community members. • A8: The forms in place are all designed to help assess the amount of risk that a study poses because of the pandemic. If we believe that a project is too risky, we can further evaluate it using a full-board review. We should also acknowledge that participants can make their own decisions/assessments of whether they want to assume the risk of coming onto campus to participate in a study (as described in the forms discussed above). 	
--	--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q9: Wouldn't that shift the analysis of risk onto the participant? • A9: We assess the risk and ask that the researchers provide participants with true informed consent documents. If we think that the project is not safe, we can also deny clearance. Our assessment of risk levels will be based on provincial/government guidelines and each project will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. • Q10: If we expect participants to be able to appropriately judge whether they want to assume the risk of coming onto campus, should we raise the "age of consent" (e.g., 18 years unless a student is 17). • A10: If we did this, it may go against justice and inclusion. Regardless of the pandemic, researchers must convince us that the participants have the capacity to provide informed consent prior to allowing parental consent to be waived. • Q11: Are children allowed to be on campus without being vaccinated? • A11: Yes, children are allowed to be on campus without being fully vaccinated because they are currently exempt from vaccination since it is not an option for them yet. • Q12: How will we minimize the spread of COVID due to unvaccinated children? Should we have specialized plans for children participants getting to/from labs without contacting other people in the building? • A12: This oversteps our mandate as we are only responsible for the wellbeing of participants. • Discussion: We could include a description of how participants will get to a research space in the risk checklist. We can include vaccination status on the risk checklist form as well if it is not already covered elsewhere in the process of entering the campus as a visitor/participant. Lori will check at the COVID-19 planning meeting. • Q13: Could this issue be discussed with Health, Safety & Wellness? • A13: Yes, our decisions will be based on the University/Public Health guidelines. <p>Deception guideline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please send Lori any wording suggestions or recommended changes by Friday September 24, 2021. • If no comments are received the guideline will be considered confirmed and posted on the website. <p>TCPS2 Public Consultation 2021 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please also send Dipanjan any wording suggestions or recommended changes by Friday September 24, 2021. • Our comments were based on the potential changes to the TCPS2. • Our responses will be compiled and made public under the institutions name following submission on October 4, 2021. <p>GPPC discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options provided to revise the framework of the GPPC because the contributions and framework were not what we originally expected. • Overall, we are interested the opinions of all REB members as to if we need to have the GPPC or not. 	
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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. <p>COVID-19 Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that campus is open again the ADR Research Access Process has been removed. • COVID-19 Risk Checklist has been updated (as discussed above), and soon the ORE website information will be updated as well. • Michelle McGinn has updated the Research Q&A section of the website. <p>Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirin is back while Carly is off on maternity leave for 18 months. • Research Ethics Officer position posted (Carly's position split between Shirin and the new REO). • New HREB chair introduced: Stephen Cheung. • Vaccination screening prior to arrival on campus must go through each department chair. • Brock has confirmed a 90% vaccination rate among its members; however, this does leave 10% who have not declared their vaccination status which is concerning. • Since vaccinated individuals can still have COVID-19 and spread it, all people on campus must fill out the forms each time they arrive on campus. • For in-person research we will include a notice with REB clearance that reminds researchers of the required forms and their responsibilities. • Students are also required to send their form to their supervisors. • Contact tracing is not our responsibility and will be completed through public health online. 	
3	Adjourn	Meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.	Motion to adjourn: LM Seconded: MD All in favour