

REB Guideline: Definition of a Research Team

Current Status: Approved and Posted

Date introduced: Sept 2017

Last reviewed: May 2018

Research Team:

All members of the research team should be listed and kept current in the REB file. The “research team” refers to anyone involved in a research study at any level of investigation. This may include participant recruitment and consent, interaction with participants, data collection and storage, analysis of data or tissues taken during the study, and publication or dissemination of the results of the study.

Members of a Research Team:

- Principal Investigator (PI):

The PI is the researcher who has the overall responsibility for the ethical conduct of the study, and for the actions of any member of the research team. Correspondence with the REB must be signed or emailed by the PI. Please consult **REB Standard: Eligibility to Serve as a Principal Investigator** regarding eligibility to serve as PI for an ethics application.

- Student Investigator (SI):

In studies where the research is part of a student’s graduate or undergraduate thesis work or project, they should be listed as a SI. This definition may also include students who are conducting research as part of a course or collaborating in research outside their degree requirements, if they are involved in key aspects of research including but not limited to interacting with human participants, data, or tissue samples. In studies where there is more than one SI, the first student listed on the application may be designated as a point of contact for correspondence on the file. According to Brock University policy, all Brock graduate students involved in research with human participants must complete the CORE tutorial and submit a certificate of completion to the Office of Research Ethics prior to engagement with human participants or data.

- Investigator:

Any investigator who is involved with the research, but is not an SI or PI. This could include researchers from Brock University or other institutions, or post-doctoral fellows who are not directly employed by Brock University, but who are no longer considered “students.” The investigator may be involved in key aspects of research including but not limited to interacting with human participants, data, or tissue samples.

- Research Personnel:

Research personnel are those members of the research team that do not fit into the categories above. They may include graduate or undergraduate students, community members, coordinators, technicians, research/laboratory staff, project managers, or research assistants where they will be responsible for recruiting or interacting with human participants or have access to data in an

identifiable form. Research personnel may be paid or unpaid (as volunteer helpers). According to Brock University policy, all Brock graduate students involved in research with human participants must complete the CORE tutorial and submit a certificate of completion to the Research Ethics Office prior to engagement with human participants or data. Sometimes research personnel are not students, but may be hired or brought into the research team for a specific project. Research personnel may come and go from the research team throughout the duration of the project, as long as the REB is updated with these changes on an annual basis at minimum. If the nature of the research is such that research personnel will be coming and going frequently, researchers are asked to describe the anticipated practices for handling such changes in personnel in their REB application.

Please consult **REB Guideline: Minor and Substantive Changes to Research with REB Clearance** to determine whether changes to the research team constitute a request for substantive changes to a REB approved study, prior to implementing those changes. If there is any doubt as to whether a change requires REB review, the researcher should contact the Office of Research Ethics (reb@brocku.ca) to confirm their individual case.