

REB Guideline: Meetings, Quorum, and Attendance

Current Status: Approved and Posted

Date introduced: unknown

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1. Face-to-face meetings are essential for adequate discussion of, and effective REB decision-making on research proposals, and for the collective education of the REB. The REB(s) shall meet regularly to discharge their responsibilities and review proposed research that is not assigned to delegated review as outlined in N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOP302.001 “REB Meeting Administration”. Frequency of meetings should reasonably reflect the needs of researchers. It is within the prerogative of the Chairs to cancel meetings; however, REBs should meet a minimum of 10 times per academic year. The Chair may convene other meetings of the REB as required.
2. A regular schedule of meetings should be publicized in order to notify researchers about submission dates for proposals. The REB will make reasonable effort to accommodate requests from researchers to participate in discussions of their proposals, but the researchers will not be present when the REB makes its decision. If the researchers cannot attend the scheduled meeting, they can choose for their file to be reviewed at the next REB meeting or to be reviewed without their presence.
3. In order to ensure the soundness and integrity of the research review process, quorum at REB meetings shall meet the minimum requirements of membership representation outlined in the TCPS2 and N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOP201.001 “Composition of the REB”. At least five members must be present for quorum, which is necessary for any and all decisions. When quorum is met with less than full attendance, decisions requiring full board review should be adopted only when the members in attendance at that meeting have the specific expertise, relevant competence and knowledge necessary to provide an adequate research ethics review of the proposals under consideration. As such, the five members must include both men and women and
 - at least one member who is knowledgeable in ethics;
 - at least two members who have expertise in the relevant research discipline, field, and/or methodology of the project under review;
 - at least one community member; and
 - where appropriate, one member knowledgeable in the relevant law (mandatory for biomedical research and advisable but not mandatory, for other areas of research).

Note that each of the five REB quorum members should be counted as fulfilling one capacity only. The Chair will decide whether the members present meet the requirements of quorum as outlined above.

4. REB members who cannot attend full board meetings are expected to send comments via email, which will be considered by the quorate. Technology (e.g. videoconferencing, teleconferencing) may be used in assisting quorum when exceptional or exigent circumstances limit the feasibility of face-to-face meetings. Use of such technologies requires the Chair to ensure active participation of members not physically present.
5. The REB may decide to use email voting or secret ballots after a discussion has occurred in a quorate meeting.

6. Regular attendance at REB meetings is an essential part of REB members' responsibilities (refer to N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOP 202.001 for full description of responsibilities). Where a member is frequently absent, the Chair and Research Ethics Manager shall review the situation with the member in question and make recommendation to the REBs governing authority whether that member should continue to serve on the REB (refer to N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOP 202.001 "Management of REB Membership", section 5.6.3).