



Research Ethics Board

Standard Operating Procedure

Document Number	REB.SOP.201
Title	Composition of the REB
Effective Date	September 23, 2021
Next Review	2026
Next Administrative Review	2023

1. Purpose

This standard operating procedure (SOP) describes the membership composition requirements of the Research Ethics Board (REB).

2. Definitions

See the MSVU **REB Glossary of Terms (REB.INFO.001)**

3. Scope

This SOP pertains to REBs that review human participant research in compliance with applicable policies and guidelines.

4. Responsibilities

All REB members and REB Office Personnel are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this SOP are met.

The REB Chair or designee is responsible for ensuring that the composition of the REB meets the applicable requirements.

5. Procedures and/or Specific Policies

Individual members of an REB must have the appropriate training, experience and expertise to ascertain the acceptability of proposed research in terms of ethical principles, and applicable policies, guidelines and regulations pertaining to human research participant protection.

To ensure thoughtful and proportional review it is important that the REB is composed of members with expertise in the disciplines and methods that match with the research submitted to them. Representatives of the communities from which research participants are recruited must also sit on the REB as members.

5.1. Selection of REB Members

- 5.1.1. In selection of REB members, equal consideration shall be given to qualified persons of any gender. No appointment shall be made solely on the basis of gender;
- 5.1.2. The REB will make every effort to foster diversity as it reflects the population from which research participants are recruited, within the scope of available expertise needed to conduct its functions;
- 5.1.3. REB members will be selected based on the needs of the REB as outlined below and per applicable policies, guidelines and regulatory and other requirements.

5.2. Composition of the REB

- 5.2.1. The membership of the REB will be in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*;
- 5.2.2. The REB Chair or designee monitors the REB membership composition for appropriate membership in relation to the nature and volume of research submissions;
- 5.2.3. The REB will include at least five members represented by the following categories:
 - At least two members who have expertise in relevant research disciplines, field and methodologies covered by the REB,
 - At least one member who is knowledgeable of ethics of research involving humans,
 - At least one member who is knowledgeable in the relevant law. This is mandatory for biomedical research and is advisable, but not mandatory, for other areas of research, and,
 - At least one community member who has no affiliation with the organization.
- 5.2.4. A member may only fulfill one representative capacity or discipline;
- 5.2.5. Membership will, whenever possible, reflect the diversity of the University and the community at-large;
- 5.2.6. At least one member, when possible, who is from an identifiable Indigenous community, when the REB reviews research that recruits participants from that community;
 - 5.2.6.1. Appropriate review shall be sought by external Indigenous research/ethics boards where applicable/available.
- 5.2.7. Additional membership as required by applicable legislation or guidelines.

5.3. Alternate Members

- 5.3.1. The REB Chair or designee may ask an alternate REB member to attend an REB meeting to draw on their expertise in an area that may be relevant to that meeting's deliberations, or to establish a quorum for that meeting in the absence of the regular REB member;
- 5.3.2. Only alternate REB members of comparable qualifications may substitute for an REB member;
- 5.3.3. The minutes shall document when an alternate REB member replaces a primary REB member

5.4. REB Chair

- 5.4.1. Whenever possible and practicable, the REB Chair will be selected from experienced REB members who are familiar with the applicable policies and guidance documents;
- 5.4.2. The REB Office Personnel updates the REB membership roster to reflect this change.

5.5. Ad Hoc Advisors

- 5.5.1. At their discretion, the REB Chair or designee may invite individuals with expertise and competence in special areas to assist in the review of issues that require expertise beyond or in addition to that available on the REB;
- 5.5.2. The ad hoc advisor may be asked to participate in the REB meeting to lend their expertise to the discussions;
- 5.5.3. All ad hoc advisors shall sign a *Confidentiality of Information and Conflict of Interest Agreement*;
- 5.5.4. The ad hoc advisor may not contribute directly to the REB's decision and their presence or absence shall not be used in establishing a quorum;
- 5.5.5. Documentation of key information provided by the ad hoc advisor shall be summarized in the REB minutes and if available, the written report shall be placed in the REB files.

5.6. Observers at REB Meetings

- 5.6.1. The REB may allow observers to attend its meetings;
- 5.6.2. Observers will sign a *Confidentiality of Information and Conflict of Interest Agreement* agreeing to abide by the REB conflict of interest and confidentiality policies;
- 5.6.3. Where the REB finds that an observer qualifies as an expert in relation to the research under consideration, the observer may be allowed to contribute input if it is relevant and significant to the discussion;
- 5.6.4. Observers shall not participate when the REB discusses its decision, reaches consensus or votes on the application;
- 5.6.5. The minutes will reflect the presence of any observers as well as their expertise and contributions, when applicable.

6. References

See MSVU REB.POL.002 Terms of Reference
Also see References listed (if applicable)

7. Acknowledgements

The development of this document has benefited directly from similar documents made public by the Tri-Council, as well as several Canadian universities. In some instances, specific formulations drawn from these sources have been incorporated into this document. Specific iterations were drawn from the following:

- Standard Operating Procedures for Observational Health and Non-Clinical Trial Research Ethics Boards - [N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOPs – Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards](#) (retrieved July 2021)
- N2/CAREB-ACCER REB SOPs - N2 Network of Networks - [Resources - N2 Canada](#) (retrieved July 2021)

8. SOP History

SOP Number	Key Changes	Effective Date
REB.SOP.201	Revised Version; new SOP # and title, adoption of N2 SOP	September 2021
REB.SOP.102	Minor Revisions, pulled into unique SOP	March 2012
Section 3 - Membership	Policies & Procedures: Ethics Review of Research Involving Humans (original UREB Policy Handbook)	2000