

## UFV Human Research Ethics Board

### Terms of Reference

#### A. Introduction

The University of the Fraser Valley Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) was established to fulfill the ethical responsibilities concerning research involving human participants in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2).

#### B. Mandate

The HREB has the responsibility of education of research ethics, and for independent, multidisciplinary review of the ethics of research involving human participants to determine whether the research should be permitted to start or to continue.

#### C. Authority

The board has the authority to approve, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate all proposed or ongoing research involving humans within the institution's jurisdiction based on the ethical considerations as set forth in the Research Ethics Policy.

#### D. Accountability

The HREB is an appointed body of, and accountable to, the President of UFV. In its decision-making with respect to evaluating the ethics of proposed or ongoing human subjects research at UFV, the HREB is administratively independent.

The Chair will report annually on the HREB's activities to the Provost and Vice-President Academic and to the President.

The HREB refers to the Provost and Vice President Academic any breaches of compliance of the HREB's reviewing mandate and with approved protocols, with standard operating procedures (SOPs), or with other standards of practice that cannot be corrected by the HREB.

The HREB has the authority to establish its own procedures and internal policies that do not conflict with those established by the Senate or the TCPS2, and to make recommendations to the Senate or Provost and Vice President Academic for revisions to the HREB Policy or the Terms of Reference of the Board.

#### E. Membership of the HREB

Annually, the HREB determines the need for expertise in relevant research disciplines to ensure competent independent research ethics review (TCPS2 2022 Article 6.4), in accordance with the TCPS2 (2022). Regular members shall be appointed to a representative capacity by the President on

the recommendation of the Chair of HREB, on behalf of the HREB. The HREB may consult with Faculty Deans, Department Chairs and Directors, and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies in maintaining appropriate REB membership.

In accordance with the TPCS2 (2022), the composition and size of the HREB will be determined by the ongoing needs of the University, but shall include at least five members with the following criteria:

- At least two members with expertise in relevant research disciplines, fields and methodologies covered by the HREB.
- one member with knowledge in ethics, capable of identifying and consulting on potential ethics issues and options. This can be someone who has a teaching or research specialization in ethics, or someone who has had extensive experience in the area of research ethics.
- one member who has no affiliation with UFV or the sponsor, but is recruited from the communities served by UFV.
- One member with knowledge in the relevant law. That member should not be the institution's legal counsel or risk manager. This is mandatory for biomedical research and is advisable, but not mandatory, for other areas of research.

A member may not fulfill more than one representative capacity or discipline during a discussion and review of an application while attending the convened HREB meeting with the minimum membership requirements. Where the size of the HREB exceeds the minimal requirements, additional members may fulfill more than one capacity.

As the size of the HREB increases, every effort will be made to ensure that the number of community representatives will also increase.

At the HREB's discretion, ad hoc advisors may be consulted in the event that the HREB lacks the specific expertise or knowledge to review the ethical acceptability of a research proposal competently.

For the review of research on topics related to Indigenous peoples or impacting Indigenous communities, the HREB may seek consultation with an external reviewer with relevant and competent knowledge and expertise in Indigenous cultures and research methods.

The Ethics and Compliance Officer is the Secretary to the HREB and provides guidance and support to the HREB.

The Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) is the senior advisor to the HREB in all matters associated with its mandate, compliance monitoring, and reporting. However, in accordance with the TCPS2 2022 (Chapter 7: Conflicts of Interest), and to preserve the independent decision-making capacity of the HREB, the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies and other University administration at the level of Associate Dean/Director or above shall not be members of the HREB, nor attend meetings other than as an invited guest or applicant.

In the selection of HREB members, equal consideration shall be given to qualified persons in accordance with the university mandate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The HREB must not consist entirely of members of one academic division. Every non-discriminatory effort will be made to ensure that membership includes a balance of members with expertise in a variety of research methodologies. Members will collectively have the qualifications and experience to review and evaluate the ethics of the proposed research.

## **F. Terms and Selection**

### **Regular Members**

Appointed members will serve three-year terms. To ensure continuity and diversity of experience in fulfilling the required tasks of the HREB, initial appointments of a new board will be staggered for one, two, and three year terms. All representatives after this will be appointed to serve three-year terms. Additional three-year terms may be granted upon mutual agreement of the HREB member, HREB Chair, and the Associate Vice-President, Research & Graduate Studies.

To ensure there is sufficient continuity of background, expertise, and perspectives, within six months of a term ending without renewal the HREB will submit calls for expressions of interest to serve on the board. In the event of a failed search, the HREB Chair may request members whose terms are coming to an end remain on the board for an additional year.

An exception to the term of an appointment can be made for members elected to the Chair and/or Vice-Chair positions to ensure continuity of leadership on the HREB. The Chair will serve two years as Chair and will be reviewed annually. The Chair may continue for a third year. The Vice-chair will serve two years and should be able to step into the role as Chair, following their term as Vice-Chair.

A Past Chair will continue as a member on the Board for at least one year following their term as Chair.

If a member takes sabbatical or leave in the middle of their term, their position will be held if they express the desire to return.

### **Chair**

The Chair shall be appointed by the AVP RGS, based on the recommendation of the HREB, normally from among the appointed regular members.

The HREB Chair is responsible for ensuring that the HREB review process conforms to the requirements of the TCPS2. Their role is to provide leadership and to facilitate the REB review process, based on institutional policies and procedures and the TCPS2. The Chair should monitor the HREB's decisions for consistency and ensure that these decisions are recorded accurately and communicated clearly to researchers in writing as soon as possible by the Chair or designate (TCPS2 2022 Article 6.8).

### **Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall be appointed by the AVP RGS, based on the recommendation of the HREB, normally from among the appointed regular members.

The HREB Vice-Chair is also responsible for ensuring that the HREB review process conforms to the requirements of the TCPS2. The Vice-Chair will fulfil the role of the Chair when the Chair is either not available, or there is a conflict of interest declared by the Chair.

### **Community Member:**

The community member(s), who can be either scientific or non-scientific reviewers, should be knowledgeable about the local community and be willing to discuss issues and research from that perspective. Consideration should be given to recruiting individuals who speak for the communities from which UFV researchers normally draw their research participants. The community member(s) should not be vulnerable to intimidation by the professionals on the REB.

## **G. Meetings and Attendance**

The HREB will meet regularly to carry out their prescribed duties. Regular monthly meetings are scheduled from August to June. It is necessary for members to attend and participate in synchronous meetings whether scheduled face to face or virtually. Meetings may be cancelled if no protocols or urgent business is presented to the ethics officer by the meeting deadline.

## **H. Quorum and Meeting Decisions**

Quorum is met when the minimum requirements of membership representation are present, as described in Section E above (TCPS2 2022 Article 6.4).

If there is less than full attendance, decisions may not be adopted if the members in attendance have the specific expertise, relevant competence, and knowledge necessary to provide adequate research ethics review of the proposals under consideration (TCPS2 Article 6.9).

Ad hoc advisors, observers, research ethics administration staff and others attending REB meetings should not be counted in the quorum for an HREB nor should they be allowed to vote on HREB decisions.

Every effort will be made to reach a decision by consensus in accordance with the TCPS2. The HREB may suspend discussion on the protocol and consult with the researcher or external members if necessary.

An HREB member with a conflict of interest will declare and recuse themselves from the decisions on the protocol.

**I. Reconsideration and Appeal**

UFV maintains a reciprocal Research Ethics Appeal Board with Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Other agreements may be accepted. The terms and procedures for filing an appeal are outlined in an inter-institutional agreement between both Universities in accordance with the TCPS2.

The researcher and HREB must have fully exhausted the reconsideration process, and the HREB must have issued a final decision before the researcher initiates an appeal.

**J. HREB Support**

The university shall provide sufficient financial support to the HREB to enable them to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

The Research and Graduate Studies office shall provide the administrative support required to process applications, take minutes, and maintain appropriate records.