



University College of the North

Research Ethics Board Terms of Reference	Effective Date: November 15, 2024
	Review and Approval Date: November 15, 2024
	Replaces: April 11, 2023

## RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

Ensuring that ethical principles are applied to research involving humans is the mandate of the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University College of the North (UCN). The REB has two primary roles: educative and review. In its educative role, the REB serves the UCN research community as a consultative body thereby contributing to education in research ethics. In its review role, the REB has the responsibility for independent, multidisciplinary review of the ethics of research to determine whether the research should be permitted to start or to continue.

### Mandate

The mandate of the REB is to ensure that human research carried out within and/or under the auspices of UCN is of the highest quality, is conducted to protect the interests of participants/ subjects and of society, and is in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2022)* and amendments thereto, and other applicable laws and ethical guidelines. The REB shall function as an autonomous entity reporting directly to the Vice-President, Academic & Research at UCN.

### Membership of REB

a) Composition:

- Maximum of four faculty members from the Faculty of Arts, Business and Science.
- Maximum of two faculty members from the Faculty of Health.
- Maximum of two faculty members from the Faculty of Education.
- Maximum of two faculty members from the School of Skilled Trades, Apprenticeship and Technology.
- One member from UCN's Community Based Services.
- One student.
- One Elder from the UCN's Council of Elders.
- Two members not currently engaged in scientific, legal or academic work with UCN, but who are recruited from a community served by UCN.
- One member knowledgeable in the law, who is not legal counsel or risk manager for UCN.
- Manager of Research or similar designate from RAI (non-voting member).
- Administrative Assistant from RAI (minutes recorder) (non-voting member).

- *Ad hoc* members: Whenever REB receives ethics applications in areas where there was no representation on the REB, the Chair will invite faculty/staff from that areas as content experts to complete the review process.

All REB members must be knowledgeable in ethics. The REB Chair will formally appoint members based on the above composition. REB members shall be without conflict of interest in the review process as outlined in UCN's Conflict of Interest in Research and Scholarly Activity policy and shall disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest at the outset of a research ethics review.

- b) The REB shall select its chair from within its membership for a one-year renewable term. The REB chair will be a voting member.
- c) Where REB members do not have the knowledge or expertise to deal with a particular issue, the REB has the discretion to invite resource persons to sit as non-voting members for a term to be determined by the board.

### **Faculty Vacancies**

Faculty vacancies will be filled by sending a request to the respective faculty council to nominate a member to serve on the REB.

### **Student Vacancy**

Student vacancy will be filled by sending a request to all UCN Student Association Councils to assist in filling the vacancy.

### **Term of Office**

Other than ad hoc appointments, appointments are for three-year renewable terms. To ensure continuity in fulfilling the required tasks, initial appointments will be staggered one-, two- and three-year terms.

### **Quorum**

Simple majority of the appointed members shall constitute a quorum. Members whose positions are listed as non-voting shall not be included in the total when quorum is counted.

### **Meetings**

1. To be held once monthly from September through June. Additional meetings will be held whenever necessary. The REB will keep and maintain minutes of such meetings, with the minutes being accessible to authorized representatives of UCN.
2. Observers will be admitted to REB meetings provided that they sign a confidentiality agreement.

## **Absenteeism**

Members of the REB are expected to attend board meetings and are to inform the board chair of their inability to attend. Members absent for more than three (3) consecutive meetings will have their membership terminated unless determined otherwise by the chair.

## **Responsibilities of the REB**

1. To stay current on ethical issues related to research involving human participants, to educate the UCN community on these issues and to develop and recommend policies on these matters.
2. To review all projects that involve human intervention, including projects that involve interviewing human participants. Such review would be done using a proportionate approach to risk, followed by a recommendation to either approve, reject, propose modifications to, or terminate any proposed research or ongoing research involving human participants conducted at UCN sites or under the auspices of UCN by members of UCN and/or anyone affiliated with UCN. The REB shall satisfy itself that there is an appropriate mechanism in place for the review of student research as outlined in the Board's human ethics research policy. The REB shall assess and limit the risks to participants; and where there is more than minimal risk identified, the REB shall satisfy itself that the design of a research protocol is capable of addressing the questions being asked in the research.
3. To ensure that the resource implications of the proposed research have been pre-reviewed by the appropriate jurisdictions at UCN.
4. To ensure a mechanism is in place for the review, approval and monitoring of ongoing research that is considered minimum risk as defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement; the review at the termination of the research; the appropriate action to be taken regarding departure from approved research; the review of all amendments to existing protocols; the review of adverse events and for reconsideration and appeal of ethics review. The REB also reviews Adverse Event Reports, Amendment Reports and Annual Progress Reports of approved projects; as well as Study Completion Reports.
5. To serve as a resource to the research community through communicating and advising student and faculty researchers on guidelines, procedures, experimental design and other matters relating to the ethical conduct of research involving humans.

## **Record Keeping**

REB shall prepare and maintain comprehensive records, including all documentation related to the studies submitted to the REB for review, attendance at all REB meetings, and accurate minutes reflecting research ethics decisions. Where the REB denies ethics approval for a research proposal, the minutes shall include the reasons for this decision. All records will be housed within UCN's Office of Research at the Department of RAI on behalf of the REB.

## **Authority**

The REB operates as a standalone entity within UCN under the authority of Vice-President, Academic & Research.

## **Revision**

These terms of reference are to be reviewed and updated on the first meeting of every academic year, with the aim of addressing changes and new developments within any research or research centres taking place within UCN, as well as in response to changes within the broader research environment provincially, nationally and internationally.

At minimum, the following are to be reviewed annually:

- Composition
- Membership
- Research centres and institutes
- Executive Committee