

Mohawk College Research Ethics Board Terms of Reference

I. Mandate

Mohawk College Research Ethics Board (MCREB) is responsible for conducting ethical reviews of all research involving humans conducted by Mohawk College faculty, staff, or students, or involving Mohawk College faculty, staff or students as participants, whether conducted by Mohawk College faculty, students or staff or conducted at Mohawk College by a researcher who is not a member of the Mohawk College community.

All REB decisions will comply with the most recent version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans -TCPS 2 (TCPS2).

Deliberations of MCREB will be conducted in accordance with the most recent version of TCPS2.

II. Responsibility

MCREB is responsible for ensuring the safety and rights of all research participants at Mohawk College. MCREB will:

- assess and limit risks to participants in research involving humans;
- respect a person's right to autonomy, self-determination and dignity;
- ensure that all research involving human participants conducted within or on behalf of Mohawk College, reflects high standard of ethical values;
- ensure that protocols are maintained in accordance with college policies and standards, and provincial and federal legislation;
- develop guidelines and policy recommendations regarding ethical conduct of research conducted at Mohawk College and all affiliated sites; and,
- serve as a consultative entity contributing to education in research and ethics.

These responsibilities are shared by the researcher.

III. Authority

MCREB is authorized to approve, reject, request revisions to, or terminate any proposed or ongoing research within its jurisdiction. MCREB's deliberations are independent of the Mohawk College's reporting structure.

The MCREB Terms of Reference are approved by the Vice President, Academic (VPA) of Mohawk College.

Members of MCREB are appointed, and may be dismissed, by the VPA, on recommendation of the College Executive, Academic Deans, MCREB committee or the member's own good judgment.

Mohawk College will ensure that MCREB receives appropriate financial and administrative independence to fulfill the mandate of ethical review of proposed research applications.

IV. Structure, Membership, and Tenure

MCREB will consist of at least seven (7) members.

The membership of MCREB will reflect Mohawk College's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and strive to reflect intersectionality.

- Two members will serve as co-chairs.
- At least one member will be a community or external member with no affiliation to Mohawk College (additional community members will be additional to the minimum seven members).
- At least two members will have expertise in research disciplines, fields and methodologies.
- All members will be knowledgeable in ethics and have completed the most current TCPS 2: CORE (Course on Research Ethics) within 6 months of an update.
- At least one member will have knowledge of applicable laws (e.g., PHIPA (Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004); and, PIPEDA (The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act).
- At least one member is knowledgeable in ethics involving Indigenous peoples, also identified as First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples as described in the most current TCPS2 revision.

Each member will initially be appointed for a term of two (2) years, with the option of additional terms of two (2) years. Where possible, membership replacement will be staggered to ensure a blend of new and experienced members.

MCREB may invite individuals with competence in specific areas to assist in the review of any application which, in the opinion of MCREB, requires expertise not held by MCREB members.

All MCREB members must file their updated TCPS 2: CORE completion certificates with the REB Coordinator.

V. Responsibilities of the Co-chairs

The Co-chairs will serve a term of three (3) years with the option of re-appointment for additional terms of two (2) years. With the support of the REB Coordinator, the Co-chairs are responsible for the administration of MCREB and for chairing meetings of MCREB.

The Co-chairs will work closely with the REB coordinator to plan and schedule meetings, prepare and approve the agenda for each meeting, ensure that protocols are circulated for review, issue requests for additional information, and oversee the revision and approval process.

In addition, MCREB Co-chairs or their designate(s) are responsible for clearly articulating all required duties associated with membership of MCREB, to potential and current MCREB members.

VI. Responsibilities of the Members

All members are responsible for assessing each application for compliance with the most recent revision of TCPS2. Specifically, they will review and provide feedback on applications before each meeting and, in the meeting, offer feedback where appropriate, request revisions as required, and approve or deny the application.

To allow for the efficient running of MCREB, and to ensure quorum of 60% is met, regular attendance at meetings is imperative. Any member who will be absent from a meeting must notify the REB Coordinator in advance.

To maintain quorum, members of MCREB are required to attend all scheduled MCREB meetings unless they are granted an MCREB-approved leave of absence or are on vacation. If a member misses 2-3 consecutive meetings without an approved leave, the Co-chairs, in consultation with the Office of the VPA, may, at their discretion, request that the member relinquish their position on MCREB.

VII. Responsibilities of Principal Investigators

Required Signatures:

- If a Principal Investigator is conducting a research project for academic credit (i.e., course work requirement, capstone project, thesis, etc.), their academic supervisor must sign off on the application. The approval of a Faculty Advisor helps to ensure the academic quality of the project.
- Whether a Principal Investigator is affiliated with Mohawk College or not, Departmental Acknowledgement is required (Director, Chair, or Dean of the school or department where the research will be conducted). Where the Principal Investigator requires access to Mohawk College students, Faculty, or staff, an Institutional Approval must be submitted with the application. The signature of the VPA will be obtained by the REB Coordinator on behalf of the Investigator.
- Approval from MCREB is a prerequisite for the release of institutional data for research purposes but is not a guarantee that the Department of Institutional Research & Data Analytics will be able to provide the information requested.

VIII. Responsibilities of Student Representatives

Each student representative will be appointed for a one (1) year term to provide a student's perspective on research proposals, including considering potential impacts on student participants. Students are not members and therefore do not count towards quorum for MCREB meetings. Student representatives shall:

- Actively engage in reviewing research proposals, including critical analysis of methodology, potential risks and benefits, and ethical considerations, while adhering to MCREB's established procedures for reviewing proposals and making decisions.
- Attend all MCREB meetings, contribute to discussions in a constructive manner and uphold strict adherence to confidentiality regarding research proposals and participant information.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to projects under review.

While not required to maintain quorum, Student representatives are required to attend all scheduled MCREB meetings unless they are granted an MCREB-approved leave of absence or are on vacation. If a student representative misses 2-3 consecutive meetings without an approved leave, the Co-chairs, in consultation with the Office of the VPA, may, at their discretion, request that the student representative relinquish their position on MCREB.

IX. Procedures

MCREB will meet virtually eight (8) times in the academic year. For above minimal risk research, quorum is 60% of membership, including one community member and a Co-chair. Some minimal risk research may be eligible for delegated review by the Co-chairs or a Co-chair and one other MCREB member.

Researchers will submit applications electronically through an online submission system. The REB Coordinator will prepare an agenda for the Co-chairs' approval and make applications available for review no later than ten days prior to each MCREB meeting.

Both individual applications and course designation applications will be reviewed at each meeting. Amendment, extension, and completion documents will undergo delegated review and will be made part of the meeting minutes. Other items on the agenda may include the review of forms, the review of policies, or other matters relevant to the interests of ethical research practice.

Members of MCREB will act individually to give an impartial opinion on the ethics of each research proposal. Where there is a conflict of interest, the MCREB member with the conflict may be asked to absent themselves from the discussion and vote for the particular application.

Each member will make a decision based only on the ethical acceptability of the proposed research. Ideally, MCREB members will reach a consensus on each application. In cases where one or more members have concerns, the members will work together to identify needed revisions that would make a project ethically acceptable. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, MCREB will consult first with the VPA. If a disagreement persists, the majority position will stand, and the minority position will be communicated to the Principal Investigator in writing by the REB Coordinator.

Following each MCREB meeting, the REB Coordinator will communicate rejections, approvals and requests for revision within five (5) working days of the meeting.

X. Record Keeping

The REB Coordinator will collect all applications, amendments, amendment requests and completions forms; and verify their completeness, including signatures. The REB Coordinator will prepare the agenda for each MCREB meeting for the Co-chair's approval, take minutes, communicate decisions of MCREB to applicants, track the revisions where applicable, and issue approval letters for the Co-chair's signature. The REB Coordinator will maintain a complete file on each application, including amendments and extensions; track each protocol to completion and collect a completion document; and track course designations for renewal and/or amendment.

Non-Mohawk College researchers requesting access to Mohawk College faculty, staff or students for any research must first obtain MCREB approval. The REB Coordinator will maintain files on all non-Mohawk College researchers.

XI. Revision Date

MCREB will review these Terms of Reference not less than six (6) months following the publication of any update to TCPS2.