



Policy Title	Brescia University College Research Ethics Board - Terms of Reference
Issued By	Research and Scholarship Committee
Contact	Office of the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean
Approved By	Brescia Council
Effective Date	26 March 2021
Last Review	N/A (2021 is the first iteration of Terms)
Next Review	5 years (2026) OR when next iteration of the <i>TCPS 2</i> document is released, whichever comes first

Purpose

The Brescia University College Research Ethics Board (BREB) is responsible for addressing the evolving needs of the Brescia research community in promoting the ethics of research involving humans. It functions as an independent interdisciplinary advisory body, providing Brescia with arms-length reflection and advice on human research ethics, consistent with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition, 2018 (TCPS 2 (2018))*.

The Brescia REB works to:

- Promote high ethical standards of conduct in research involving humans;
- Advise researchers about the ongoing development and evolution of the *TCPS 2*;
- Provide interpretations of the *TCPS 2* for its implementation and use; and
- Recognize the diversity of approaches used in research involving humans.

In carrying out its purpose, the BREB is committed to collegially supporting the research work of Brescia faculty, staff, and students, and others conducting research with the Brescia community.

Committee Duties

The BREB will:

- Undertake review of non-medical research applications involving human participants carried out by Brescia faculty, staff, and students or, as required, those involving research participation of Brescia faculty, staff, or students;
- Monitor research carried out at Brescia involving human participants to ensure compliance with ethics-related policies and procedures;

- Assess and update procedures, policies, and forms/templates pertaining to the BREB, as applicable, to ensure documents are up-to-date with Tri-Council guidelines and expectations.

Board Membership

BREB typically has four-to-six (4-6) **voting** members, including the BREB Chair. A listing of substitute members, each with appropriate knowledge, expertise, and training, will be kept to ensure the BREB functions successfully. The Research Officer is a non-voting member of the BREB.

BREB membership shall include:

- a balanced representation of researchers in food and nutritional sciences, behavioural and social sciences, leadership and social change, and arts and humanities who are undertaking research and/or have expertise in ethics involving humans;
- expertise and experience in the interpretation of research ethics, Board operations, and research administration at an institutional level;
- a representative from the community who will help broaden the perspective and value base of the BREB and advances dialogue with and accountability to, relevant communities; and
- *ad hoc* advisors for consultation on specific projects or issues, as needed (e.g., legal issues, etc.). *Ad hoc advisors are not counted in the quorum, nor allowed to vote on BREB decisions.*

All voting members are volunteers. They do not receive honoraria or other compensation for their contribution of expertise and time.

Appointment and Terms of Brescia REB Chair

The BREB Chair is appointed by the Office of the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean (VPAD) through consultation with the nominees for Chair. Normally, nominees for Chair would be nominated by BREB and recommended to VPAD. The nominee will have ideally served on the BREB (or another institutional REB) as a regular member for at least one, three-year term. In circumstances where the Chair is on sabbatical or on leave, nominees for Acting Chair will originate internally from the BREB and be named in consultation with VPAD.

The initial term of appointment is for three years with the option to serve an additional three-year term.

Appointment and Terms of Brescia REB Members

The Office of the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean at Brescia appoints BREB members through consultation with School Chairs and the nominees. Nominees are identified through an open call to the Brescia community. Effort will be made to have representation from every School.

Member terms are for a period of three years, with the possibility of extension. The appointments, ideally, are staggered to provide flexibility, continuity, and on-going expertise to the committee.

Responsibilities of Chair

The role of the BREB Chair is to provide overall leadership for the REB and to facilitate the research ethics review process based on institutional policies and procedures, and the *TCPS 2* (2018). The Chair monitors BREB decisions for consistency and fairness, ensures these decisions are recorded accurately, and communicated clearly to researchers in writing as soon as possible by the Chair or designate.

Responsibilities of All Members

BREB members are responsible for making informed independent analyses and decisions on the ethics of research involving humans. REB members contribute to the review process based on their experience and knowledge in their relevant discipline and area of expertise.

Members shall undergo and complete training as prescribed by the Tri-Council (currently: TCPS 2: CORE tutorial - <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>) before they undertake their role on the BREB.

Members shall declare real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to the BREB immediately. When a conflict is determined, the member will withdraw from BREB deliberations and decisions regarding the situation in question. If the Chair is required to withdraw, another voting member will be asked to step-in as Acting Chair for the deliberations/decision.

Members shall maintain confidentiality of meetings, discussions, and documents to protect the privacy and identity of involved individuals. This includes consulting *ad hoc* advisors on specific projects or issues.

Members shall work to build consensus in the decision-making process.

Responsibilities of the Research Officer

The Research Officer supports the overall administrative activities of the BREB and ensures adherence to institutional and *TCPS 2* (2018) policies and procedures. The Research Officer assists the BREB Chair with the review of submissions, including any recommendations from Board meetings, and participates in the meetings to facilitate the deliberation and approval process. The Research Officer acts as a non-voting member of the BREB.

Quorum

Quorum shall be achieved with a majority of the BREB voting members (minimum 3), which must include the Chair, or designate. *Ad hoc* advisors, observers, the Research Officer, and any others attending meetings will not be counted in the quorum for the BREB.

Meetings

The BREB invites submissions with dates to be communicated in advance through official Brescia channels and meetings held scheduled to align with those submission times. Under special circumstances, the BREB may consider reviewing an application outside of these deadlines.

The BREB may invite Principal Investigators (PIs) or *ad hoc* advisors (per the *TCPS2* (2018)) to a meeting to discuss ethical issues arising in the proposed research protocols. PIs or others shall not be present when the BREB votes on approval decisions.

Full-Board or Delegate Review

The BREB will meet regularly to review submitted research proposals. All members of the BREB will normally review all applications for research ethics approval, and will make recommendations for revision as required to ensure compliance with the *TCPS2* (2018).

Following the *TCPS2* (2018), delegate review may be employed for the following types of submissions (see Article 6.12):

- research that is confidently expected to involve minimal risk, as defined by the *TCPS2* (2018);
- minimal-risk changes to approved research;
- annual renewals of approved minimal risk research;
- annual renewals of more than minimal risk research where the remaining research-attributable risk is minimal (e.g., the research will no longer involve new interventions to current participants and no additional participants will be enrolled in the study);
- annual renewals of more than minimal risk research in which there has been:
 - no significant changes to the research,
 - no increase in risk to (or other ethical implications for) the participants since the most recent review by the full REB, and
 - when the BREB Chair has determined that the delegate review process is appropriate.

The BREB Chair will make the final determination around whether a submission qualifies for delegated review. Delegates will document the review process and report to the BREB.

The *TCPS2* (2018) policy states that course-based research activities require ethics review (Article 2.1). Delegate review will be applied for the review of Type B activities as outlined in the: *Brescia University College Guidelines for Students Conducting Research and Pedagogical Activities Involving Human Participants*.

Reference

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2018).

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/documents/tcps2-2018-en-interactive-final.pdf>

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