



2019 Annual Report of the
Research Ethics Board
George Brown College
May 2020

A Message from the Chair

This year continued our evolution and learning with our Research Ethics Board (REB). I would like to thank our board members for their expertise in supporting research excellence for our faculty, staff, student and other researchers. I appreciate and thank Krista Holmes for her continued guidance and sharing of her REB experience to the board, for Baaba Lewis for her efforts in ensuring processes are in place for complex applications and other REB activities, for Barbara Godfrey for her REB experience, for Noor Kabani for representing George Brown College (GBC) at the Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) Research Ethics subcommittee and for our community member, Attorney Sandeep Sandhu for her continued dedication to our strategies and for sponsoring our REB Ethics and Law professional development day.

Our GBC family continues to be a source of quality research as our diverse community provides a good representation of Canada, as a whole. This year, our board have engaged both internally and externally, in various capacities, to 32 research projects. We started tracking our student research projects and this year 89 projects have been identified. We anticipate more projects as more faculty report their student's work. Our overall interactions with researchers represented over 169 projects this year.

We've set out to continue contributing to GBC's research-focus strategy and this year we ran three (3) research sessions geared for anyone in the GBC family who is interested in conducting research. A total of 33 researchers attended these rich discussion sessions and we have seen an overall quicker processing times as there were less inquiries and errors in applications. We will continue this strategy in the coming year.

Our REB board memberships are up for transition in the coming year with members either reaching their term limits as per our 'terms of agreement' or new members joining the group. We are encouraged by the makeup of our new board for the coming year.

With the dedication of our REB team, the pandemic did not impact our approval process as well as other REB activities, but it affected the number of research projects submitted. Although we continue to not have a dedicated software system to support our REB work, we have been able to work through what we

needed to provide the necessary approvals for our researchers due to less applications to process. As we return to the school in the coming years, an anticipated steady increase in research applications we may again see challenges brought on by not having a dedicated software tool for the REB. The pandemic also impacted our sponsorship of the annual Heads of Applied Research (HAR) PD session. It is hoped that my suggestion to consider an online session come to fruition to continue our dialogue, engagement, connection, and network with our Ontario Colleges REB teams.

We are looking forward to the upcoming 2020-2021 academic year as we continue to align our REB strategies with our GBC Research and Innovation department strategies and our GBC Strategy 2030.

Our REB board will continue to guide and inform the GBC community on our REB processes. We have updated our internal forms which allowed our REB members to streamline their review activities. I thank our board for their support and active engagement.

We're here together to continue to strengthen our research-practice focus and ensure that our researchers and their research participants are respected, feel safe, and participate in an ethnically sound research practice.

Sincerely yours,



Robin Yap, LLB, MSc, DM, Fellow
Chair, GBC Research Ethics Board

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About this Report

This report is published annually to inform the George Brown College community, research staff and other interested stakeholders of the achievements, forward-looking plans and role of the George Brown College Research Ethics Board (REB). Far more than a summary of the REB's activities, this report documents how various departments and divisions at GBC are engaged in research and are working together to foster and strengthen a rich ethics culture within the College. This report will provide a brief summary of the role, procedures and activities of the REB, as well as outline proposed high-level activities for 2021.

Overview of Research Ethics at George Brown College

GBC is committed to the highest ethical and academic standards for its students, faculty and staff. GBC respects the academic freedom of all research conducted with its support and ensures that this research meets the highest academic standards. The College requires research involving its employees, students and/or equipment and facilities to be conducted using ethical and moral research practices. The conscious commitment of GBC to uphold modern standards of research ethics has led to a policy obliging all research projects conducted under the auspices of the College, irrespective of the source of financial support or location of research, to undergo a research ethics review.

The REB is a vital part of research at the College and reports directly to the President. The primary purpose of the REB is to ensure that ethical principles are applied to research. The REB endorses and uses the Tri-Council Policy 2 Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) as a guide. In the event of a problem or discrepancy with a research protocol, researchers and the REB consult the TCPS2.



George Brown College's Research Ethics Policy

GBC's research ethics policy, Ethics Guidelines & Review Process for Research Involving Human Subjects, applies to all faculty, staff and students regardless of where their research is conducted. The policy states that all research involving humans, even when conducted by researchers who are not affiliated with the College but who may access its resources (either equipment or personnel), falls within the jurisdiction of the GBC REB. The policy clearly states that no research on human participants shall be undertaken without the prior approval of the REB.

The REB ensures that the highest ethical standards are met and maintained from the time the research proposal is submitted, throughout the data collection stage, to the dissemination of results. The Board is accountable to ensure that all research involving human subjects conforms to the ethical standards outlined in the College's policy. In reviewing each research protocol, the Board ensures compliance by articulation of TCPS2 guidelines and updates to the guidelines. The core guiding principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy 2 Statement include:

- Respect for Persons
- Concern for Welfare
- Justice

The Research Ethics Board

The REB functions with the commitment and due diligence of all its members, who each have experience in research involving human subjects. The Board has shown continued commitment to meet the challenges and ensure consistent conformity to the TCPS2 ethical guidelines.

We are currently reviewing REB member applications and community members interested in joining the REB for the 2020-2021 school year to augment our current board.

Name	Department/Institution
Robin Yap, MSc, LLB, DM, Fellow	Chair, Centre for Business
Sharla Adams, RN, BScN, MN	Centre for Health Sciences
Nastaran Dadashi, Ph.D	Centre for Arts, Design & Information Tech.
Barbara Godfrey, RN MScN	Centre for Health Sciences
Noor Jehan Kabani, PhD., RECE	Centre for Community Services & Early Childhood
Paula Johnson, M.B.A., Ph.D.	Centre for Hospitality & Culinary Arts
Przemyslaw Pawluk, Ph.D	Centre for Arts, Design and Information Tech.
Sundeep Sandhu, LLP	Community Member
Ainun Afroza, MMed	Community Member

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Total Research Ethics Submissions

Table 1 displays the total number of new research applications, amendments, uncertainty, approval in principle, annual renewal applications, and study completion reports received by the REB from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020. On average the REB reviewed 4.4 new REB protocol per month. This excludes July and August, when the REB is on summer break.

Types of application	Total
New research protocol	32
Annual renewal	12
Study completion reports	23
Amendments	10
Uncertainty applications	2
Approval in principle	1
Course-based research	89
Total applications	169

Table 1. Total number of REB applications, amendments, uncertainties, approval in principle, annual renewals and study completion reports from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Yearly Research Ethics Submissions Data

Figure 1 displays applications submitted from 2007 to 2020. In 2020 the REB received thirty-two (32) applications.

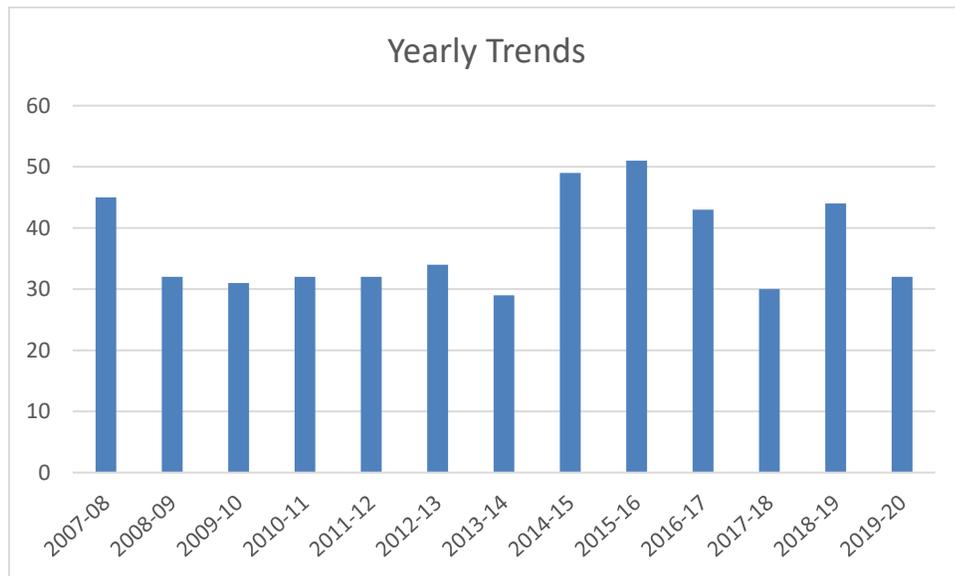


Figure 1.
Applications submitted from 2007 to 2020.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Type of Research Ethics Submission

Ontario colleges accept the multi-site application to streamline ethics application process in member colleges. The REB received one application requiring full board review; all other applications were reviewed under the delegated process. A delegated review is conducted by one member of the REB and the Chair. Risk is the primary criterion used to determine if a protocol may be reviewed through the delegated process rather than by the full Board. The Tri-Council 2 Policy Statement states that: "if potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research, then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk." Reviews may also be delegated if:

- The review is an annual renewal of a project previously approved by the REB, and the "open file" is up to date;
- The research involves only review of patient records by hospital personnel; or
- The Principal Researcher submits a letter of affirmation confirming that conditions laid down by the REB have already been approved by another institution or funding agency.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Institutional Origin of Research Submissions

GBC staff submitted 44% percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year (see Figure 2). Researchers based at other institutions submitted forty-three percent applications and nine percent of applications were collaborative projects between GBC staff and other institutions.

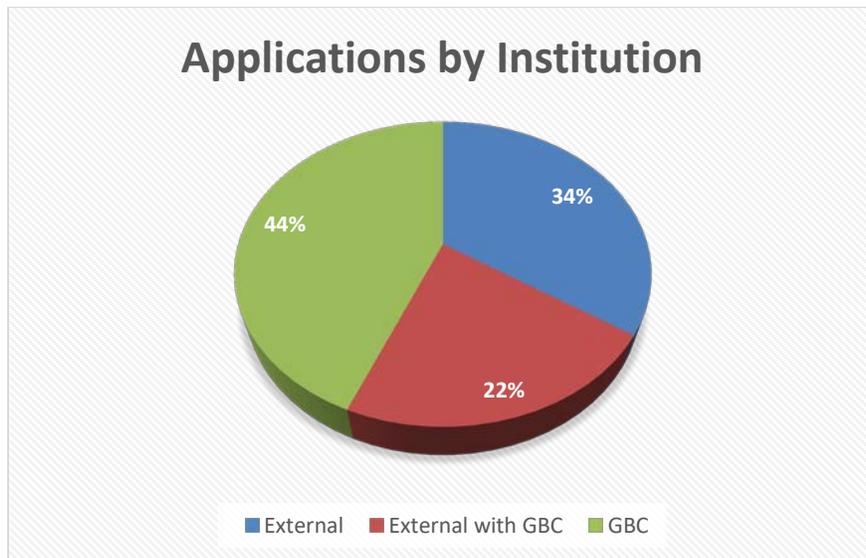


Figure 2. Institutional origin of REB applications from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 in percent.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Community Services & Early Childhood submitted the highest number of applications (Figure 3). It is important to note that all divisions have submitted applications which shows the widespread need for support and representation throughout the college.

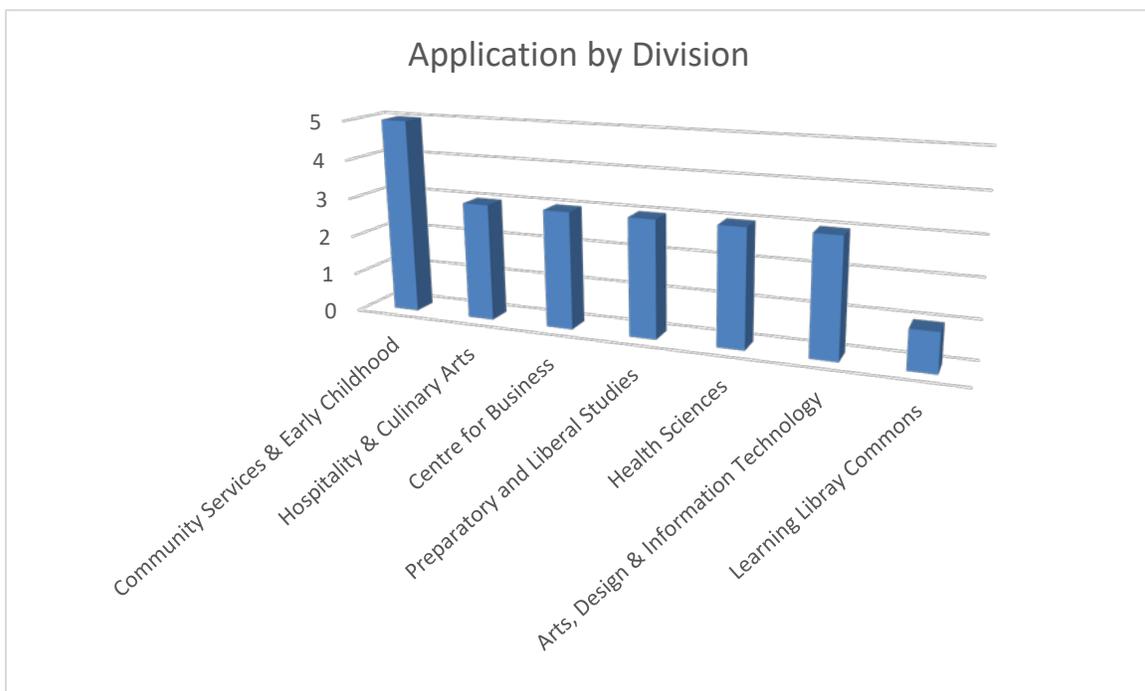


Figure 3.
Breakdown of REB submissions by GBC divisions from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 by numbers.

Achievements in 2019-20

The Board was able to dedicate its 13th year to improving processes. Some of our most important achievements were:

- Capacity building via recruitment;
- Board members met with potential researchers to offer advice and guidance to strengthen researchers' applications;
- Provided three workshops to faculty from different GBC departments;
- Improved protocol for course-based research;
- Updating of the REB website;
- Virtual REB meetings due to the pandemic;
- Pivoted smoothly from face-to-face meetings with researchers to providing e-support during pandemic; and
- Created a database of faculty who have approved course-based research.

Goals for 2021

Our goals for the coming year are to:

- Facilitate education about topical issues in research ethics (e.g. PD on “responsible research within emerging technologies” like the ACM ethics code);
- To enhance the ethical environment for research in institutions;
- Help resolve ethical conflicts and answer ethical questions from potential applicants;
- Continue to track course-REB designated classes, their professors and their students conducting research;
- Promote a positive ethics culture throughout the institution;
- Promote ethical leadership behaviors, such as explaining the values that underlie decisions by chairs and administrators via sessions that we will offer them;
- Stress the importance of ethics, and promoting transparency in decision making;
- Recruit and train professors now to slot into existing tiered membership types (core or alternate) to have a pool of successors from school year 2021 onwards;
- Developing a video to support new research applicants;
- Continuation of virtual REB meetings; and
- Continue providing e-support to researchers.

Conclusion

We have recruited community and alternate members. Overall, the Board members have provided extremely positive feedback about their experiences as members of the REB. We hope that the proposed improvements and activities for 2019 will help inform GBC staff and students about research ethics and further promote the college's research culture. As more researchers become familiar with our process, we are certain that the significance of the REB will be recognized in the College research community. As we move forward with the new leadership, we will uphold and strengthen our commitment to ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

