



2016 Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board, George Brown College May 2017

A Message from the Chair

As my first term as Chair of the Research Ethics Board comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank past Chair Sarah Evans, board members and Baaba Lewis for their support during this time of learning and transitioning. This past year continued to offer opportunities to engage researchers both from within GBC and outside our doors in understanding the REB application process and the importance of complying with the TCPS-2.

The Board is excited to welcome our new community member, Ainun Afroza to our membership. We are also in the process of confirming our new legal expert member who will be joining us shortly. We continue to seek out alternate members in order to broaden representation on the REB. As well, an additional delegated faculty member was trained to review course based research within the ECE program research course.

This past year, the George Brown College REB participated with several colleges in working with the multi-college review process known as the Expert Panel. The Expert Panel was conceived to reduce the timeframe researchers had to wait when applying to multiple Ontario Colleges with the same application.

George Brown College is a very active academic institute and as such, this past year, the REB has seen multiple inquiries seeking to clarify the difference between Quality Improvement and Program Development and Research. It is exciting to see faculty reviewing and evaluating their course/programs and the REB will continue to assist faculty and departments in determining what projects are indeed research requiring REB approval. With this in mind the REB will use the coming year to create educational tools to assist faculty and researchers in understanding when REB approval is required.

The REB was also a direct contributor to the very successful Heads of Applied Research ethics research subcommittee PD event held at the Waterfront Campus in

June 2016. We are proud of our involvement in this event and look forward to hosting this event again this upcoming June.

I would like to extend many thanks to Ms. Baaba Lewis for all the hard work of coordinating and administrating the REB requirements. As a new Chair, Baaba has provided exemplary support and guidance and I am grateful for her knowledge, skill and patience. Dawn Davidson, Associate Vice-President (acting), Research and Innovation, has provided seamless support to the REB this past year for which I am grateful.

The REB is looking forward to continued work with the George Brown Community in the upcoming academic year 2017-18. Through continued collaboration, the George Brown College REB endeavours to shape informed researchers who recognize the importance of the ethics review process and its contribution to quality research.

In summary, as a novice Chair of the REB, I have learned a great deal over the past year and I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with such a dynamic board. Together we will continue with our work to support ethically sound research and ensure the safety and consideration of its participants.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Godfrey
Barbara Godfrey RN, MScN

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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 activities for 2017.

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 upholding 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 (TCPS 2)* as a guide. In the event of a problem or discrepancy with a research protocol, researchers and the REB consult the TCPS 2.

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 TCPS 2 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 hard work of all its members, who each have experience with the due diligence involved in human research. The Board has shown continued commitment to meet the challenges and ensure consistent conformity to the TCPS 2 ethical guidelines.

Following are the members for 2017 and for the coming year:

Name	Department/Institution
Barbara Godfrey, RN MScN	Chair, Centre for Health Sciences
Sarah Evans, RN, MN, EdD	Centre for Health Sciences
Taras Gula, M.Ed.	Centre for Health Sciences
Csilla Reszegi, Doctor Pharm., M.B.A.	Centre for Prep. & Liberal Studies
Paula Johnson, M.B.A., PhD	Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts
Rose-Marie Nigli, M.T.S, PhD	Academic & Student Affairs
Mariana Ionescu, PhD	Centre for Business
Robin Yap, MSc, LLB, DM	Centre for Business
Sharla Adams, RN, BScN, MN	Community Member
Ainun Afroza	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, 2016 to March 31, 2017. On average the REB reviewed 4.3 new REB protocol per month. This excludes July and August, when the REB is on summer break.

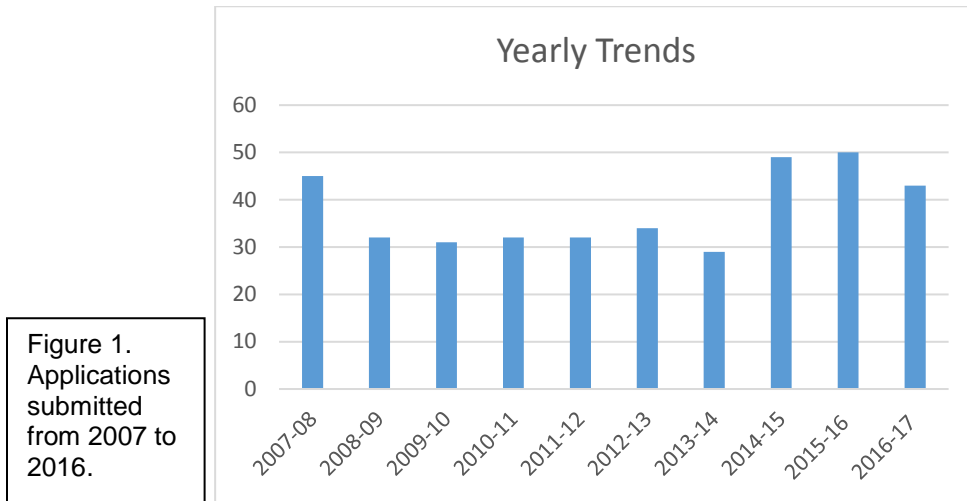
Table 1. Total number of REB applications, amendments, uncertainties, approval in principle, annual renewals and study completion reports from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

Types of application	Total
NEW RESEARCH PROTOCOLS	43
ANNUAL RENEWALS	14
STUDY COMPLETION REPORTS	32
AMENDMENTS	12
UNCERTAINTY APPLICATIONS	6
APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE	6

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Yearly Research Ethics Submissions Data

Figure 1 displays applications submitted from 2007 to 2016. In 2016 the REB received forty-three (43) applications. This is the fourth highest number of applications submitted to the college's Ethics Board.



Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Type of Research Ethics Submission

Twenty-two Ontario colleges accept the multi-site application to streamline ethics application process in member colleges. The REB received three applications 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:

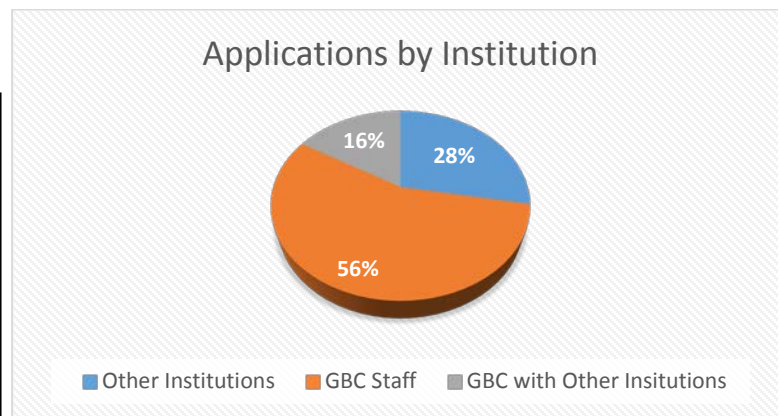
- The review is an annual renewal of a project previously approved by the REB, and the “open file” is up to date;
- The research involves only review of patient records by hospital personnel; or
- The Principal Researcher submits a letter of affirmation confirming that conditions laid down by the REB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

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Institutional Origin of Research Submissions

GBC staff submitted fifty-six percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year (Figure 2). Researchers based at other institutions submitted twenty-eight percent applications and sixteen percent of applications were collaborative projects between GBC staff and other institutions.

Figure 2. Institutional origin of REB applications from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 in percent.

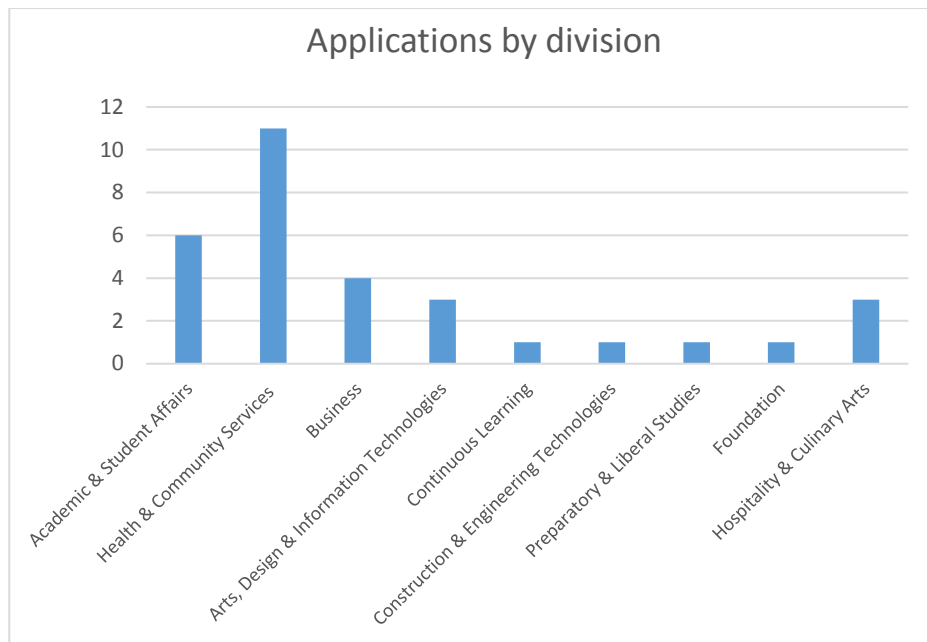


Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Centre for Health & Community Services submitted the highest number of applications followed by Academic & Students Affairs (Figure 3). We also received applications from Continuous Learning and GBC's Foundation.

Figure 3. Breakdown of REB submissions by GBC divisions from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 in percent.



Achievements in 2016-17

The Board was able to dedicate its tenth 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 workshop to staff;
- Participated in the Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) REB subcommittee conference. Representatives from Ontario colleges provide structure and process to support quality ethics reviews across the College system, safeguarding research participants and demonstrating consistent and reliable research ethics quality assurance to funders and other institutions;
- Facilitated concurrent sessions during the HAR REB subcommittee conference; and
- We will host the 2017 HAR REB subcommittee conference at George Brown College.

Goals for 2018

Our goals for the coming year are to:

- Provide increased resources and infrastructure to foster research excellence;
- Facilitating education about topical issues in research ethics;
- To enhance the ethical environment for research in institutions;
- Help resolve ethical conflicts and answer ethical questions;
- Promote a positive ethics culture throughout the institution;
- Ensuring that systems and processes contribute to/do not interfere with ethical practices;
- Promoting ethical leadership behaviors, such as explaining the values that underlie decisions;
- Stressing the importance of ethics, and promoting transparency in decision making; and
- Recruit and train professors now to slot into existing tiered membership types (core or alternate) to have a pool of successors from 2018 onwards.

Conclusion

In 2016-17, we have recruited a community member and in the process of onboarding a new legal member. 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 2018 will help educate 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 renew and strengthen our commitment to ethical standards for research involving human subjects.