



2018 Annual Report of the
Research Ethics Board
George Brown College
May 2019

A Message from the Chair

This year has been filled with changes, transitions, evolution, and learning for the Research Ethics Board. I would like to thank our past chair, Barbara Godfrey, for her continued support especially in sharing the nuances of the role. I would like to thank our REB board members whose expertise in their field constantly provide grounded feedback to our applicants. My heartfelt thanks to Krista Holmes for her leadership and guidance, and, to Baaba Lewis, whose institutional knowledge of our REB work coupled with her kind and congenial demeanor provided solid support on my first term as chair.

The demographic makeup of our GBC staff and student-body provides a microcosm of Canadian society that lends well with researchers. In various capacities, the board engaged with researchers internally and externally to George Brown College for a total of 98 times this year. I am forecasting an increase of this number in the coming years.

One of the ways our board can increase this number is by providing REB-process sessions with faculty and staff. This was one of our goals last year and I piloted this at the Centre for Business' (CfB) all-staff meeting. The result was six CfB professors teaching research-focused classes requesting course-based REB application process for their students' research. Just these six professors will amount to over 500 student researchers in the coming year. This is promising news and when conducted smoothly will significantly increase the total number of applications processed for the year. The student-research applications have not been tracked in the past and we look forward to determining the types of research, the quality and impact of our student's work.

Our board also have had transitions this year as some members have reached their term limits as per our 'terms of agreement.' With a revitalized membership drive, we will be encouraging professors to join the board to fully represent the different departments of George Brown College. An internal job post will become available before the end of the Spring semester. Part of our board membership are our community members, Ainun and Sundeep, and we thank them for their continued support of our REB decisions.

Our back-end software support has sunset this year. It would benefit our REB board to have a sustainable back-end software system to efficiently manage what I am forecasting to be an increase in the number of research applications in the coming years. This increase aligns with our college's research mandate.

The “Expert Panel,” comprised of a multi-college review process, is now in place reducing timelines for researchers applying to multiple Ontario Colleges with the same application. The Ontario Colleges REB chairs continue to discuss how to streamline REB work processes to support applicant experience and have a consistent and efficient experience across the colleges.

One of the approaches in streamlining the processes is the inclusion of the REB administrator sessions at the Heads of Applied Research (HAR) ethics research subcommittee PD event. George Brown College led this day-long event at our Waterfront Campus in May 2019. This was an opportunity for all our REB administrators to connect, share knowledge, and provide support to each other. We are proud of our involvement in this HAR event and look forward to hosting it in the future. I would like to extend many thanks to Krista Holmes for managing the whole event, to Baaba Lewis for all the hard work of coordinating and administrating the REB requirements and to the many volunteers who made this event a success.

The upcoming 2019-2020 academic year is an exciting year for George Brown College as we transition to our Strategy 2030 plan. The REB looks forward to the continued alignment with our GBC research vision and collaboration with the George Brown College community. Our REB board will continue to guide and inform the GBC community on our REB processes. This was a year of learning for me, in my first year as chair, and I thank our board for their support, patience, and engagement.

As we look ahead, our REB board will continue to provide support to our researchers in ensuring our research participants are respected, feel safe, and participate in an ethnically sound research practice.

Sincerely yours,



Robin Yap, LLB, MSc, DM
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 activities for 2019.

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 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 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.

Following are the members for 2019 and for the coming year:

Name	Department/Institution
Robin Yap, MSc, LLB, DM	Chair, Centre for Business
Sharla Adams, RN, BScN, MN	Centre for Health Sciences
Nastaran Dadashi, PhD	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
Csilla Reszegi, MBA., Pharm.D.	Centre for Preparatory & Liberal Studies
Milan Shahani, BA., MFA.	Centre for Arts, Design & Information Tech
Sundeeep Sandhu, LLB	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, 2018 to March 31, 2019. 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	44
Annual renewal	20
Study completion reports	18
Amendments	12
Uncertainty applications	1
Approval in principle	3
Total applications	98

Table 1. Total number of REB applications, amendments, uncertainties, approval in principle, annual renewals and study completion reports from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Yearly Research Ethics Submissions Data

Figure 1 displays applications submitted from 2007 to 2019. In 2019 the REB received forty-four (44) applications. This is the fourth highest number of applications submitted to the college's Research Ethics Board since its inception.

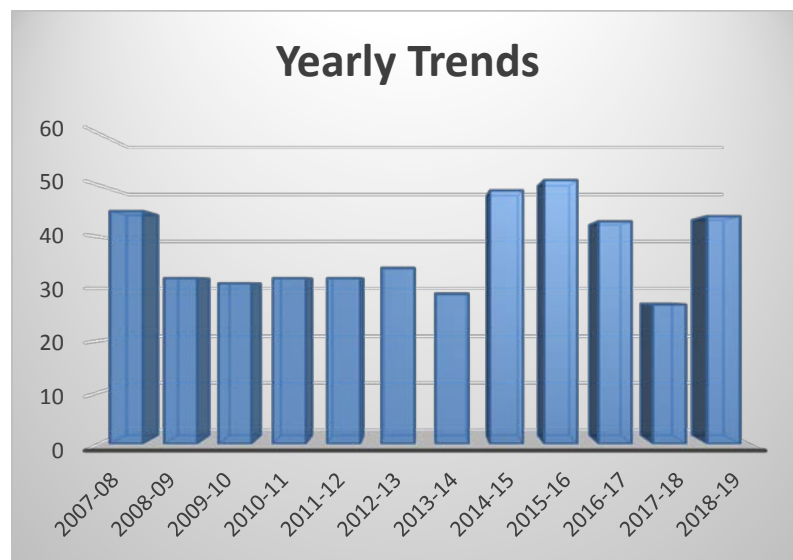


Figure 1.
Applications submitted from 2007 to 2019.

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 forty-eight 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.

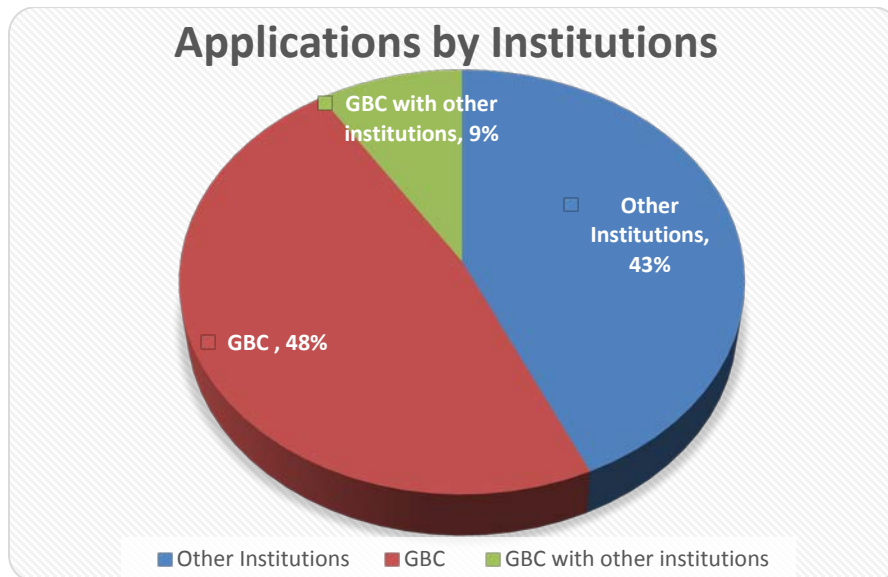


Figure 2. Institutional origin of REB applications from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 in percent.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Centre for Business submitted the highest number of applications followed by Centre for Community & Early Childhood (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.

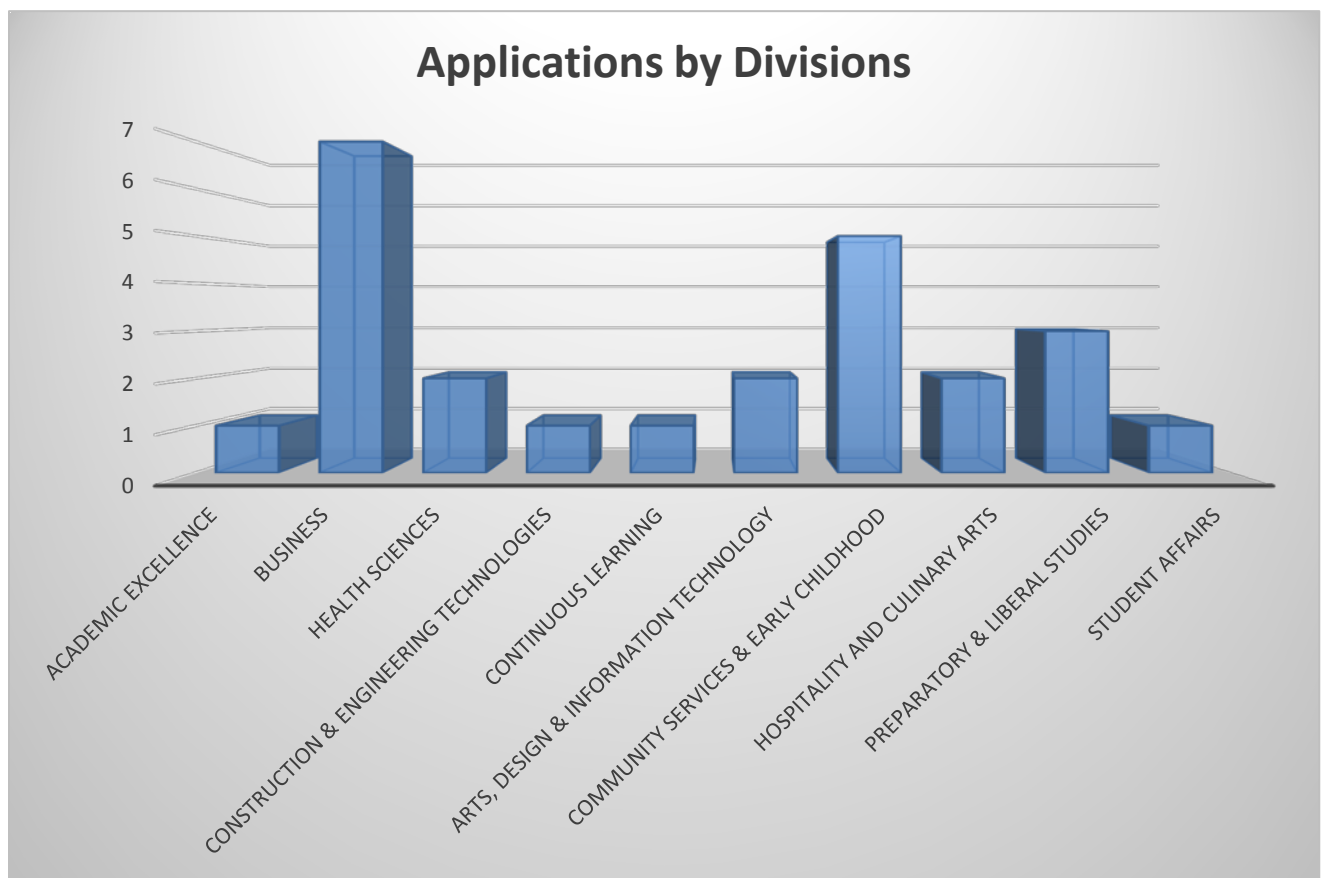


Figure 3. Breakdown of REB submissions by GBC divisions from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 in percent.

Achievements in 2018-19

The Board was able to dedicate its 12th 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 the Centre for Business administrators and staff;
- Participated in the Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) Research Ethics 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 hosted both the 2018 and 2019 HAR Research Ethics subcommittee conference at George Brown College.

Goals for 2020

Our goals for the coming year are to:

- Provide increased resources with respect to research ethics issues;
- Facilitate education about topical issues in research ethics (e.g. PD on “legal considerations in research ethics” and “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;
- 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; and
- Recruit and train professors now to slot into existing tiered membership types (core or alternate) to have a pool of successors from 2019 onwards.

Conclusion

In 2018-19, we have recruited community member and are in the process of on boarding 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 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.

