About the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board

The Human Research Ethics Board reports to the Associate Vice-President of Research Operations. The Board’s mandate is to certify that all research projects involving human participants or human biological materials conducted by University of Victoria members conforms with agreed upon ethical guidelines (University Policy RH8105).

As a condition of receiving federal research funds, the university has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tri-Council—the major federal funders comprised of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to abide by the research ethics guidelines as described in the second edition of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2).

Composition

The Board is comprised of about 24 members with various areas of expertise. This includes 2-3 community members, and 2-3 graduate students. The Associate VP Research Operations is an ex officio member of the Board. Staff members from the Office of Research Services work closely with the Board and the Chair and Vice-Chair, but are not voting members.

Term of Service

Board members are appointed for a term of three years and can be reappointed for a second three year term.

Graduate student members are normally appointed for one year and can be reappointed for a second term. The length of the second term may depend on their anticipated program completion.

Responsibilities and Time Commitment for All Board Members

- Reviewing Research Ethics Applications

August 2012
The office receives approximately 500 applications for new research from faculty, students, and staff per calendar year. According to guidelines set out in the TCPS 2, a portion of these are assigned for review by board members based on the level of risk associated with the research. Board members are expected to review an average of 1-2 applications per month subject to volume.

Board members are given about **10 days to review an individual application.**

Board members may also review applications as a group (“full board”) at scheduled board meetings or on an ad hoc committee outside a board meeting.

- **Attendance at Board Meetings**

Board members meet every two months from September to May inclusive. Currently, meetings are scheduled on the third Tuesday of the month from 2-3:30 pm. **All members are expected to attend.** Agendas and meeting locations are sent beforehand.

Prior notification of sabbaticals or holidays is appreciated and will help us manage our workflow. We encourage board members to consider reviewing a few applications before anticipated leaves in order to avoid buildup of applications upon their return.

**Orientation and Training**

Orientation and training for new board members are provided by the research ethics staff.

Ongoing professional development opportunities are scheduled during board meetings; these may include guest speakers, Full Board review of ethically challenging applications, and special topics for discussion. Members are encouraged to suggest speakers or request special topics, or share their own expertise with the Board.