

Research Proposals Approval Committee Terms of Reference

December 10, 2019

Purpose

The mandate of the Research Proposals Approval Committee (RPAC) is to review research proposals that propose to either:

- a) access data for which Eastern Health is the data custodian,
- b) impact Eastern Health resources in the conduct of research, **and / or**
- c) conduct research at an Eastern Health facility.

In fulfilling its legislative obligations under the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), RPAC requires that appropriate processes are in place for data use, disclosure, collection, protection, storage, retention and destruction. Additionally, RPAC assesses impact on Eastern Health resources and requires compensation or management, as necessary.

All research reviewed by RPAC will have approval from the Health Research Ethics Board (HREB) or other duly constituted research ethics board.

Composition

The members of the Committee shall consist of:

- Two Co-Chairs which include:
 - Director of Research and Innovation
 - Director of Privacy, Planning and Performance
- Manager of the Clinical Trials Division,
- Minimum of one physician representative,
- Manager of Privacy (or designate),
- Clinical Research Scientist,
- Other clinician and research membership as identified by the Co-Chairs to ensure effective committee operations and representation of required skill sets,
- Additional ad hoc representation may be invited from time to time to assist with the evaluation of various proposals.

Voting

All committee members are eligible to vote. Decisions will be reached by consensus; however, in the event of a disagreement among members, a decision will be made by a majority vote. Ad hoc members are not eligible to vote.

A quorum shall be in excess of fifty percent of the voting members, and must include a co-chair, a scientist/physician and a privacy representative. An individual may serve dual roles on the committee. Members attending electronically shall be included in determining a quorum.

Operations/Process

Committee members will:

- review all assigned applications prior to each meeting. A primary and secondary reviewer will be assigned to present each application to the Committee,
- consider for final approval all research proposals that have approval from the HREB, or other duly constituted research ethics board, that either impact Eastern Health resources, propose to use data for which Eastern Health is the data custodian and/or is being conducted at an Eastern Health facility,
- consider whether the research is compliant with PHIA in the appropriate use, disclosure, collection, protection, storage, retention and destruction of data,
- assess the impact on Eastern Health resources and determine whether Eastern Health will be adequately compensated for all uninsured services and/or resource impact associated with research projects,
- advise investigators of the results of the Committee's deliberations including clarifications required for approval,
- develop and implement procedures for submissions of proposals including, but not limited to, submission deadlines, application forms and supporting documentation,
- recommend changes on policies and procedures to the Vice President responsible for the Department of Research and Innovation.

Committee meetings will take place regularly with a minimum of eight meetings per year or at the call of a co-chair.

Conflict of Interest

Members involved in the review are asked to declare any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest.

- An **actual** conflict of interest may arise when an employee is asked to make a decision as a public officer that directly affects or impacts their personal or private interests.
- Some conflicts may only be **perceived**—an employee's decision could be questioned based on a personal or private interest that may not actually have impacted any decision.
- A **potential** conflict of interest arises where a public officer has private interests that could conflict with their official duties in the future, or where a public officer has competing interests because they hold more than one official role or public duty.

Management of a declared conflict of interest will be determined by the members present at the meeting. A record of the conflict of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If a member is recused from voting on a review they will be ineligible for approving the minutes of the meeting where the recusal occurred.

Reporting

Copies of meeting minutes shall be available to the Vice President responsible the Department of Research and Innovation. Annual reports of research activities will be available to the Board of Trustees and the Vice President responsible the Department of Research and Innovation.

Paper records of RPAC applications and approvals will be retained for a period of 3 years. Electronic records will be retained for an indefinite period.