

Humber Research Ethics Board (REB): Top 10 Frequently Asked Questions

September 2023

1. I have missed the REB submission deadline. Can I still submit my application?

Yes, you can submit an REB application at any time. If your study is minimal risk, it will be delegated for review. Delegated reviews can take up to 10 business days. If you have missed the submission deadline and your study is higher than minimal risk, it will be placed on the agenda for full review at the next month's meeting. Full reviews can take up to 35 business days.

2. Is there anyone who can speak with my class about Humber's research ethics review process?

Yes, the Chair of the REB would be happy to have a session with your class about the REB review process. To make a request, please send your request to reb@humber.ca

3. The REB does not accept applications from undergraduate students. The lead faculty for the course is required to submit a course-designation application to Humber's REB. With an approved course designation, the instructors in that course are responsible for ensuring students are following the ethical parameters outlined in the course designation application. The course-designation approval is valid for two years from the approval date. Any changes to the course require a resubmission for REB review.

4. Do I need to let the REB know that I have completed my research study?

Yes, you must complete and submit the REB Protocol Status Form in order for the REB to close your file.

5. If I am applying for a grant, when should I submit my ethics application?

We recommend that you submit your ethics application once the award has been granted.

6. Humber REB approval for my study expired more than 12 months ago. I would like to carry out the same study. Can I apply for continuation of my previous REB approval?

If your Humber REB approval has been expired for more than 30 days, you are required to submit a new application that will be either delegated for review or slated for full review depending on level of risk.

7. I received REB approval from another college/university for this study already. Why does the Humber REB need to assess this study? Aren't all post-secondary institutions following the same evaluation requirements?

Yes, all REBs follow the federally mandated Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) for risk assessment. However, each REB is independent and must evaluate the risk for its institution separately as every organization is unique in its operational policies, its environment and its community.

8. I received funding from Humber for my study, which has already undergone a review for that funding. Why do I need to go through another review?

The REB review focuses on the ethics of the research and related ethical factors. The funding review focuses on the viability of the project. Securing approval from one body does not mean automatic approval from the other. For example, the project may be financially feasible, but data handling may not fully meet the TCPS 2 requirements.

9. How much support do you provide researchers in preparing their application? How do you handle requests for guidance?

The Humber REB's Coordinator and/or Chair explain questions in the application but do not help researchers prepare answers to questions in their application. The REB Coordinator and/or Chair also assist researchers in their understanding of when to submit an application and what type of application is appropriate for their specific research. For example, some researchers are not sure whether or not to apply for REB review. In this situation, we discuss with the researchers their work to determine whether an REB application will be necessary and what type – such as a course designation vs. a full research study. To assist beyond this could lead to conflict of interest and require the REB Chair to recuse herself from the review process. This would be inefficient and impractical as the REB team has a limited number of members.

Of course, REB members themselves conduct research and/or are colleagues with applicants and provide input as colleagues within their program/department/faculty. In these circumstances, the REB members recuse themselves from any evaluation/discussion of the applications under REB review.

10. How are REB members recruited? Do they get paid or compensated for their time?

REB members are appointed for a two-year term (eligible for two renewals for a maximum of six years) through Humber's Office of the President. Members are not paid, but this is not a voluntary position. This is a formal responsibility that is reflected in each member's workload. Anyone interested in joining the REB must secure the approval of his/her manager.

Every spring, the REB Coordinator and the REB Chair review REB membership status to determine any vacancies and the need for new members. A notice requesting expressions of interest is published in the Humber Communiqué. We currently have 10 members, including the Coordinator and a community member (both of whom serve in an ex-officio capacity). We are actively seeking an additional community member to complement our team.