

March 28, 2020

COVID-19 UNBC Chair Bulletin #1

Dear UNBC Researchers and Staff,

In addition to information you have been receiving from the University of Northern British Columbia, we would like to inform you of the following:

- All research activities and new recruitment of participants to research that involve in-person interactions should **be suspended until further notice** (exceptions may be made in special situations, such as research involving COVID-19 or where stopping the research could put participants at risk. Please contact the REB if you think your research fits into this exception);
- If you need to make immediate changes to your research methods, e.g. changing an in person interview to a skype interview, and will not have time to submit an amendment before engaging with participants, you may make the changes without REB approval when the change is **necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participants** [TCPS2 Article 6.15]. You will temporarily be granted a maximum window of 10 days to submit the amendment to the REB;
- The REB will **continue to review** new research applications and work with PIs to bring them to a state of readiness for approval;
- No new studies involving **in-person interaction** with participants will receive a Certificate of Approval and recruitment may **not** begin until further notice (exceptions may be made in special situations, such as research involving COVID-19);
- New studies that **do not involve in-person** interaction with participants, and do not pose any risks to researchers or research staff, will be reviewed using standard procedures and research can begin once a certificate of approval is received;
- We ask that any New Applications or Amendment Applications, or e-mails sent to the REB that relate to issues or queries relating to COVID-19 are named accordingly so that they can be easily tracked.

Please be aware that, as the current situation is very fluid, these interim policies may well change, and we will update you as necessary in future bulletins. Should you have any questions about these policies or other issues, please do not hesitate to contact Isobel Hartley, Research Ethics Officer, at isobel.hartley@unbc.ca, or email reb@unbc.ca.

Dr. Henry Harder,
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Dr. Kathy Lewis,
Acting Vice-President, Research