

**RA0600 – RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
SIGNING AUTHORITY**

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, Syilx, and T̓silhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace includes the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

1.0 PURPOSE

To describe who has the authority for issuing Approval Certificates and signing documents on behalf of the Interior Health (IH) Research Ethics Board (REB).

2.0 DEFINITIONS

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 Authorization and Delegation of Signing Authority
 - 3.1.1 The REB Chair or Designee is authorized to sign documents related to the ethical review and approval of research projects involving human participants that have been reviewed and approved pursuant to IH and REB policies and procedures. If the task of signing is delegated to a qualified individual, the responsibility for oversight remains with the REB Chair.
 - 3.1.2 The REB Chair or Designee may not delegate his/her signing authority to ad hoc advisors or to independent contractors.
 - 3.1.3 The REB Chair or Designee may only delegate signing authority to REB members or staff with the skill and knowledge necessary for the effective exercise of the authority.

Policy Sponsor: Vice President, Human Resources		1 of 4
Policy Steward: Chief Nursing and Allied Health Officer & Professional Practice Leader		
Date Approved: November 17, 2014	Date(s) Reviewed-r/Revised-R: January 2019 (r); November 2021 (r); July 2023 (R)	
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- 3.1.4 The REB Chair or Designee should clearly define the parameters of the delegated authority.
- 3.1.5 Delegation of signing authority must be documented and kept on file.
- 3.1.6 Authorization to sign documents not described in this policy may be made by the REB Chair.
- 3.1.7 In the rare instance where an actual or perceived conflict of interest or obligations exist, signing authority may be delegated to a REB member
- 3.2 REB Reviews and Decisions
 - 3.2.1 The REB Coordinator records the results of research project reviews and decisions taken by the REB at a full Board meeting in the Minutes of that meeting.
 - 3.2.2 The record of designation to act on behalf of the Chair is recorded in REB records.
 - 3.2.3 All reviews, actions and decisions are generated and filed within the REB records or within RISE study files. Correspondence is signed by the Chair or his/her Designee in writing or with electronic signature, or recorded directly onto the Correspondence page of the RISE file. Correspondence is issued electronically by the REB Coordinator.
- 3.3 Correspondence with the researcher
 - 3.3.1 REB approval or deferral of an Application for Ethical Review must be communicated to the researcher in writing by the Chair or Designee.
 - 3.3.2 Approval certificates are issued on behalf of the full board subsequent to the approval being noted in meeting minutes, a delegated activity report, or in the RISE file.
 - 3.3.3 The formal record of the REB regarding approval or rejection may be the Minutes of the REB meeting, the activity report on New Applications, Renewals, or Amendments (as applicable), and/or the record in the RISE file for a specific research project.
 - 3.3.4 The REB Chair or Designee’s written decision regarding approval or rejection, coupled with the security provided by the Campus Wide Login user ID and password, serve as the electronic signature for studies housed in RISE.

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3.3.5 Once a final decision is documented by the REB Chair or Designee, the REB Coordinator may issue the decision or letter.

3.3.6 The REB Coordinator may be designated to review and approve minimal risk renewals, amendments, safety reports, and closure reports; and minimal risk harmonized reviews when IH is not the Board of Record.

3.4 Correspondence with External Agencies

The responsible IH Administrator or the REB Chair or Designee will sign or authorize all correspondence with agencies of the federal government or US government, and with all funding agencies and sponsors.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 REB Chair

The Chair has the the authority to sign documents on behalf of the REB. These documents include but are not limited to Approval Certificates, Letters of Acknowledgment, and Exemption Letters.

4.1.1 Correspondence for studies not housed on the RISE electronic platform is signed electronically and saved in the corresponding study file.

4.1.2 Approval Certificates for studies housed on the RISE platform are considered to have been signed on behalf of the REB once they are issued via RISE. Prior to issuing Approval Certificates, the approval must be documented by the Primary Reviewer or by the Chair or Designee.

4.2 REB Coordinator

4.2.1 The REB Coordinator may be designated to affix the electronic signature of the REB Chair on Certificates of Approval for (a) studies that have received initial approval by or on behalf of the full board; (b) minimal risk Continuing Review certificates and (c) Approval Certificates for Continuing Review activities that received full board approval at an IH REB meeting.

4.2.2 The REB Coordinator signs routine correspondence from the REB that requires acknowledgment only.

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- 4.2.3 The REB Coordinator distributes and files documents signed by the Chair per REB Standard Operating Procedures.
- 4.2.4 If the Chair is unavailable, the REB Coordinator arranges for the appointed, alternate signatory to review and sign or authorize documents.
- 4.2.5 The REB Coordinator may issue Approval Certificates via RISE when the corresponding documentation has been added to the file by the Primary Reviewer, Chair or Designee.

5.0 REFERENCES

1. Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards and N2 Network of Networks. (2019). Standard Operating Procedure 106.003: *Signatory Authority*.
2. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, December 2022.
3. UBC Office of Research Ethics. (2022). Standard Operating Procedure 107: *Signatory Authority*.

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