

Chair of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board Appointment Profile

Time commitment: 0.5 full-time equivalent

Term: 3 years with the possibility of renewal

Overview

The mandate of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) is to review the ethical conduct of University of Calgary research involving human participants and their information. Through initial and continuing review, the CFREB ensures that research performed by faculty, staff, and students of the University of Calgary is conducted in accordance with the highest standards of ethical and scholarly integrity. The CFREB reviews research ethics applications from researchers appointed to these Faculties: Arts; Haskayne School of Business; Law; School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape; Schulich School of Engineering; Science; Social Work; Veterinary Medicine; and Werklund School of Education. The CFREB manages a high volume of activity, with approximately 450 new study applications per year and over 1,400 active studies at any given time.

The Chair of the CFREB provides leadership on research ethics to the CFREB, Research Services Office (RSO) staff, and the University of Calgary research community at large. The Chair is broadly responsible for ensuring the CFREB fulfils its mandate, reporting to the Vice-President (Research) or their delegate. The level of responsibility, nature of duties, time commitment, and impact on the University research community is significantly broader than a typical administrative or peer review committee.

Chair Selection and Requirements

The Chair of the CFREB is selected by the University of Calgary's authorized institutional official, the Vice-President (Research), on behalf of the Board of Governors. The procedure for this selection is determined at the discretion of the Vice-President (Research).

As a member of the CFREB, the Chair must satisfy the overall requirements of board membership as set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS), Chapter 6. While there are no specific educational requirements for the CFREB Chair, they must possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of human participant research and research ethics issues to be able to effectively read, interpret, and judge the ethical appropriateness of the research proposals considered by the CFREB. This requires extensive experience as a member of a research ethics board.

In addition, the CFREB Chair should have extensive knowledge and understanding of relevant federal, provincial, Tri-Agency, and University of Calgary regulations and policies.

The CFREB Chair must be a tenured faculty member of the University of Calgary.

Additional Qualifications

The Chair should be a respected member of the community, both within and beyond the University of Calgary, who is able to act fairly and impartially in managing the CFREB and the activities in which it engages. The Chair must be immune to possible pressures that could be brought to bear by those engaged in the research that the CFREB is reviewing.

The Chair must possess strong interpersonal skills to build trust and to work effectively with the members of the CFREB by leading meetings, focusing discussions, and directing decision making in a timely but thorough manner. The Chair should also be effective at interacting with the Vice-President (Research) and their delegates, as well as RSO staff who have been assigned to support the CFREB. Essential attributes of a qualified Chair include unimpeachable ethical and moral character as well as excellent written and verbal communication skills.

The Chair should be comfortable working in stressful and time-pressured conditions while balancing, and being able to explain the need for, rapid and thorough deliberation and decision making. The Chair should be comfortable discussing research directly with applicants and their study teams (faculty, trainees and students, and non-academic staff), avoid undue influence, and be committed to the principles for the ethical conduct of research as originally laid out in the Belmont Report and enshrined in Canada through the TCPS:

- Respect for persons involves a recognition of the personal dignity and autonomy of individuals, and special protection of those persons with diminished autonomy;
- Beneficence entails an obligation to protect persons from harm by maximizing anticipated benefits and minimizing possible risks of harm; and
- Justice requires that the benefits and burdens of research be distributed fairly.

Responsibilities of the Chair

- Chair full CFREB meetings, directing discussions, decision making, and voting on research proposals.
- Chair sub-committees of the CFREB, if applicable.
- Take an active role in reviewing CFREB terms of reference and establishing standard operating procedures, in accordance with applicable regulations, policies, and standards.
- Review research proposals, identifying all issues that require discussion by the CFREB and potential revision by the applicant.
- Assess potential risk to research participants in proposed research studies in order to determine whether full board or delegated review is appropriate.
- Conduct delegated reviews.
- Perform continuing review of CFREB-approved research, including review of annual reports, study modifications, adverse event reports, and closures.
- Vote as a member of the CFREB.
- Monitor and report any attempts to influence or coerce CFREB members.
- Recruit and renew members of the CFREB.
- Ensure board members are able to meet their commitments, particularly in the timely and rigorous review of research ethics applications.
- Respond to complaints that may be submitted to the CFREB by research participants or other, consulting with the Protected Disclosure and Research Integrity Office as necessary.
- Resolve any issues arising during the work of the REB or refer unresolved issues to the institution.
- Report to the Associate Vice-President (Research) and work closely with RSO support staff to:
 - ensure research ethics applications are reviewed in a timely and rigorous fashion;
 - ensure accurate records of membership, meetings, decisions, and research protocols;
 - ensure appropriate appointment of REB members, including diversity of institutional and community representatives, representation of scholarly disciplines relevant to the CFREB,

- diversity of experience, ability to meet obligations of time and rigour, and screening for potential conflicts of interest;
- prepare members for meetings and deliberations and provide any necessary training;
 - represent the REB in communicating with other constituencies within and without the institution, including researchers, other research ethics boards, government regulators, and professional associations;
 - ensure assessments and audits are conducted as required by the University, REB procedures, regulations, and external agency policies; and
 - ensure the membership and proceedings of the REB comply with provincial, federal, and external agency regulations and policies, as well as University and REB policies and procedures.
- Delegate Chair responsibilities as appropriate to a Vice Chair to ensure the CFREB fulfils its mandate effectively and efficiently.