March 21, 2020

SFU REB COVID-19 Update

To all members of the SFU Research Community,

Please note that SFU is continually assessing the COVID-19 outbreak and that the University will provide updates to the research community regarding impacts on the University’s research operations. We wish to assure you that the University’s response at this time is guided by a desire to protect both the health of our community and the continuity of critical research activities.

To expand upon the notice that was issued by the Office of the Vice-President, Research & International on Friday the 20th, both the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) and the Research Ethics Board (REB) 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 ORE/REB if you think your research fits into these exceptions.

- As noted on the ORE website, if you wish to change your study to eliminate an immediate risk to participants (e.g., changing in-person interviews to online interviews), you may do so without prior notice to or approval from the REB. In such cases, you will need to ensure that you are not increasing the level of risk to participants and you may need to ask participants to sign revised consent forms. Such changes may be implemented immediately but must be reported to the REB at the earliest opportunity (within 10 business days as a guide).

- The REB will continue to review new research applications under the following restrictions:
  - 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 issued.
When submitting materials for review by the REB that relate to the COVID-19 outbreak, we kindly ask that you do the following:

- If submitting a new application for review please include the following text at the end of your study title - *(COVID-19).*
- If submitting a request for amendment or annual renewal please include the following text in the subject line of the email to dore@sfu.ca – *(COVID-19).*

Doing this will bring these submissions to the attention of ORE staff, allowing us to prioritise the review of these materials. Should you have any questions about the content of this message, do not hesitate to contact the Office of Research Ethics at dore@sfu.ca. Please be sure to also visit the research-specific FAQs that have been created to address current concerns related to the continuity of SFU’s research activities. The FAQs will be updated frequently so please check back often.

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