

Title: Research Conflict of Interest Committee Terms of Reference	
Approved by: PHSA Board of Directors Research Committee	Last Approved: June 20, 2024 Last Reviewed: June 20, 2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To establish the mandate of the Research Conflict of Interest Committee (RCOIC) in administering the *Research Conflict of Interest Policy # C-99-11-20600* (Policy), approved by the PHSA Board.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

- 2.1. As specified under the Policy, the RCOIC is to:
 - 2.1.1. Assess COI declarations that were not resolved at a lower level of review;
 - 2.1.2. Review appeals from lower levels of review;
 - 2.1.3. Perform annual audits of COI declarations and management plans;
 - 2.1.4. Provide consultation, advice and guidance to Researchers and/or Reviewers for management plan development;
 - 2.1.5. Actively work to advance adoption of the Coast Salish Teachings gifted to PHSA;
 - 2.1.6. Act as final adjudicator and recommend the appropriate management of conflicts; and
 - 2.1.7. Prepare reports for the Research & Academic Development (R&AD) Committee.
- 2.2. In performing these duties, as outlined in 2.1.1. to 2.1.7., the RCOIC may choose to:
 - 2.2.1. Approve the COI declaration and associated management plan or lower level decision as is;
 - 2.2.2. Reverse the decision; and/or
 - 2.2.3. Require a revised management plan.
- 2.3. Decisions will be made in a timely fashion and reported to the Researcher in writing.
- 2.4. Where the R&AD Committee deems necessary, additional duties and responsibilities may be instituted.

3. Composition and Operations

- 3.1. Suitable candidates for the RCOIC will be identified by the PHSA Chief Administrative Officer – Research, reviewed by the R&AD Committee, and approved by the Board.
- 3.2. RCOIC Members (Members) will be appointed based on their qualifications and expertise to assess conflicts of interest within the health sciences research environment.
- 3.3. The PHSA Chief Administrative Officer – Research is appointed to the RCOIC permanently, and will fulfill the functions of Chair with the power to delegate this function when required.
- 3.4. In addition to the Chair, the RCOIC shall be composed of no fewer than three and no more than five Members.
- 3.5. Members, excluding the Chair, will be appointed for up to three consecutive three-year terms.

- 3.6. The majority of the Members shall be persons employed or affiliated with PHSA. External candidates will be considered for appointment as Members based on their knowledge and expertise.
- 3.7. Meetings will be called by the Chair, when necessary, to meet the duties and responsibilities of the RCOIC.

4. Process of Reviews, Audits, and Appeals

- 4.1. Procedural aspects of reviews, audits, and appeals, including distribution of COI declarations to Members, meeting coordination, follow up actions, and drafting of reports to the R&AD Committee, will be completed by the office of the Chief Administrative Officer – Research.
- 4.2. RCOIC meetings will be held *in camera* and will not be open to the public. Invitees may attend, when approved by the RCOIC, and all invitees shall maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and may not disclose the substance of deliberations of the meetings. All invitees will be advised of this requirement prior to the meeting and their attendance at the meeting will be deemed to constitute acceptance of the confidentiality obligations.
- 4.3. The RCOIC or any/all of its members may conduct audits to verify Policy compliance on their own initiative or at the request of the R&AD Committee, Chair, or PHSA executive.
- 4.4. Within 30 days after receiving an application for an appeal or a review, the RCOIC will meet to review the application and the RCOIC may:
 - 4.4.1. Dispose of the issue immediately;
 - 4.4.2. Request further information;
 - 4.4.3. Require further investigation;
 - 4.4.4. Set dates by which the further information referenced in 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 must be available; and/or
 - 4.4.5. Set a date for final deliberation of the issue.
- 4.5. The RCOIC will act as the final reviewer. Decisions made by the RCOIC cannot be appealed.

5. Decision-Making Process

- 5.1. A quorum of three Members, including the Chair, currently appointed to the RCOIC is required for meetings to convene.
- 5.2. Members may attend meetings by teleconference/videoconference.
- 5.3. Each Member, including the Chair, has one vote.
- 5.4. It is preferable that a unanimous resolution be reached for all decisions. In situations where this is not viable, decision-making will be made by majority vote.
- 5.5. Decisions may be deferred in circumstances where additional information is needed or where consultation with legal counsel is recommended.

6. Presiding Officer

- 6.1. The Chair will preside over all RCOIC meetings.

- 6.2. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Chair may designate one of the Members to act as Chair.
- 6.3. The Chair will liaise with the R&AD Committee, and if needed, legal counsel.

7. Ethics and Conflicts of RCOIC Members

- 7.1. Members shall not participate in the voting process when the RCOIC reviews COI declarations for which they have already acted as reviewer (at any level). However, in such circumstances, the Member has the option of sitting in on discussions and providing insight as to why they made the decision they did.
- 7.2. Members employed by or affiliated with a specific service, program or research institute do not have to remove themselves from voting when the RCOIC reviews a COI declaration relating to that Member’s organization.
- 7.3. Members shall adhere to PHSA policies, specifically the *Fostering a Culture of Respect #C-99-11-20204*, *Standards of Conduct #C-99-11-20201*, and the Policy.
- 7.4. Members shall not participate in the decision-making process when the RCOIC reviews COI declarations for which they have any financial interest, non-PHSA external interest, and/or involves a Related Person. The Member shall physically remove themselves from any meeting or discussion relating to such interest.

8. Accountability

- 8.1. The RCOIC shall submit reports on audit results and a summary of any RCOIC decisions at least on an annual basis, or submit reports when requested, to the R&AD Committee.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1. RCOIC Members shall maintain all information disclosed to them as confidential and for the sole purpose of performing duties outlined under the Policy in compliance with PHSA’s *Confidentiality Policy*.
- 9.2. Assessing conflicts of interest requires the collection, use, disclosure, and retention of personal information as defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c.165 (Act). PHSA, including the RCOIC, will conduct conflict of interest activities in compliance with the Act.

Terms of Reference Created on: September 23, 2011		
Revision Dates:		
20-JUN-2024	Updated pronouns, RCOIC member responsibilities to align with updated RCOIC Policy and Procedure, updated links and references to PHSA policies	PHSA Research and Academic Services