

Professional Job Position Description

Section I: Position information

Effective date	2024-12-20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update only	<input type="checkbox"/> Classification review
Position title	Research Ethics Officer		
Position number	999107		
Classification level	PB		
Position affiliation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUFA <input type="checkbox"/> Excluded		
Location	Virtual		
Department	Research Office (Research Services Unit)		
Reports to	Manager, Research Services (999784)		

Position summary

Briefly describe the main purpose(s) of the position.

The Research Ethics Officer (REO) works under the general supervision of the Manager, Research Services and provides senior level administrative support to the AU Research Ethics Board (REB).

The REB receives and reviews research applications involving humans and operates in accordance with the policies/standards of the federal granting councils and AU's *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy and related Procedures*.

The Athabasca University Animal Care Committee (AUACC) receives and reviews research protocols involving the use of animals and operates in accordance with the policies/standards of the federal granting councils, Canadian Council on Animal Care, and AU's *Animal Ethics Policy and related Procedures*.

The REO is the primary administrative point of contact for ethics related issues for all researchers conducting research involving humans or animals at AU and is responsible for managing the AU research ethics review processes, under the direction of the REB/AUACC and in compliance with relevant regulations/standards. The role involves:

- facilitating and documenting the internal review processes; interpreting relevant AU and external funding agency policies, procedures/guidelines; and providing advice to researchers and reviewers.
- managing the research ethics applications within AU's research information management system (Pure), which includes both maintaining all research ethics related records/files, evergreening processes to operate smoothly within this system, and

assisting researchers in using these processes and system with regard to research ethics activity.

- monitoring the University of Alberta (UofA) ARISE application management system with respect to applications for research with humans under the Health Information Act and animal research protocols submitted by AU researchers.
- monitoring internal and external regulatory developments affecting the ethical review of research involving humans; developing and implementing appropriate policies and procedures, in conjunction with the REB and Research Services; and communicating updates to the AU research community.
- providing training/orientation to REB members to ensure that AU is in compliance with regulatory requirements.
- initiating and managing the AU Institutional Permission to Access Resources for Research process and providing advice and guidance to researchers on procedures for recruitment, etc.
- liaising with other roles and functions related to emerging priorities in research integrity, including research security and research data management.
- assuming additional responsibilities and duties assigned by the AVP Research and/or Manager Research Services, as required.

The REO must be able to address confidential and sensitive issues on a wide range of topics on a continuing basis.

The REO assists the REB to develop and implement educational resources to enhance understanding of research ethics and the research ethics review process within the AU research community.

Duties and responsibilities

Organize by key responsibility area and include % of time spent where possible.

The REO is responsible for oversight of the human and animal ethics review processes and for assisting with the provision of human research ethics training to the AU research community.

1. REB Support (75%)

Provides senior level administrative support and guidance for the AU REB, including but not limited to Full Board Reviews, Delegated Reviews and appeals of REB decisions, as required.

Arranges for regular meetings and establishes agendas in consultation with the REB Chair. Ensures minutes and other documentation are prepared and follows up on actions arising from meetings, as required.

Arranges for and recommends appointment of panel members to hear appeals of REB decisions to the President, as required.

Prepares all appeal materials and arranges appeal panel meetings, as required.

Provides statistical data to the AVP Research for inclusion in regular Research Services reporting.

Shares responsibility with the REB to develop, implement and review research related policies and procedures to promote ethical conduct of research involving humans at AU.

Liaises with researchers, team members within the Research Office, and other key stakeholders on behalf of the REB and fosters close collaboration between the REB and the AU research community.

Monitors AU's ethics review and approval processes and makes recommendations for quality assurance and improvement purposes.

Liaises with the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office and University Veterinarian with respect to the oversight and administration of AU's animal care and use program.

Prepares all necessary documentation for regular Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) assessment visits to ensure AU's compliance with and maintenance of, a CCAC Certificate of Good Animal Practice.

Prepares responses to recommendations arising from CCAC assessments for the AVPR. Prepares all required CCAC reports and data with respect to AU's animal care and use program, including annual animal use protocol data.

Maintains and updates AU's Animal Care and Use Policies and Procedures as required.

2. Ethics Administration (20%)

Conducts individual consultations to provide guidance regarding federal granting agencies' policies/standards to AU researchers and their supervisors (if applicable), as it relates to the context of their research.

Pre-reviews ethics applications prior to formal review by the REB or sub-committee(s) and

provides feedback to foster adherence to regulatory requirements.

Conducts ethics reviews and makes decisions on minor amendments, extensions and/or exemptions, under the delegated authority of the REB.

Maintains application files and records, in accordance with regulatory requirements, and adopts appropriate records management practices, as per AU Policy.

Administers the management of research ethics content within AU's research information management system (Pure) and assumes responsibility for the development and maintenance of the related content (including updates/revisions to all applications for ethical approval, as required, as well as evergreening of processes).

Arranges for annual and ongoing meetings with appropriate personnel from AU and UofA with respect to the oversight and management of AU's animal care and use program in accordance with established policy and standard operating procedures.

Manages the formal agreements with the UofA regarding oversight of AU's animal care and use program and ethical review of research with humans that falls under the Provincial Health Information Act.

Gathers statistical data and interprets and communicates the information collected, as required.

Represents AU on provincial and national committees dealing with research ethics.

Provides input for, and assistance in maintaining and updating the ethics content on the AU Research website.

Collaborate with the Research Security Specialist to enhance AU's reputation and posture with regard to the broader research integrity umbrella, under which both research ethics and research security sit.

3. Educational Activities (5%)

Develops and implements educational strategies related to the ethical conduct of research involving humans for REB members and AU researchers.

In collaboration with REB, provides assistance, instruction and training as appropriate in the organization of in-house ethics-related information sessions, retreats and workshops.

Maintains constant awareness of research ethics and REB best practices, and adapts new developments into the AU context wherever possible.

Attends conferences related to ethics administration to establish and maintain AU's presence within the regional and national research ethics communities.

Fosters collaboration within the research community through participation on ethics conference panels and/or in speaking engagements.

Occupational health and safety

Employees:

Responsible to participate in the AU OHS program as required.

Supervisors:

Responsible for awareness of one's OHS Responsibilities as an AU employee and supervisor, for participating in the AU OHS Program as required, and for ensuring the participation of employees in the AU OHS Program as required.

See: <https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li008>

Classification factors

Communication

The REO communicates regularly and clearly with key stakeholders. They must be able to establish and maintain superior working relationships with members of the AU research community (e.g., faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and other personnel involved directly or indirectly in research, including, but not limited to research assistants/ associates, technical staff, adjunct professors, visiting professors, and institutional administrators) as well as with external stakeholders (e.g., other post-secondary institutions; government; funding agencies/sponsors) and their Program Officers. The REO also:

Consults effectively with relevant stakeholders throughout the ethics review process to assist in the development and conduct of ethically sound research protocols.

Provides advice in accordance with federal, provincial, and institutional requirements and best practices.

Provides instruction and training through the organization of in-house information sessions, as required.

Provides historical context and identifies best practices to REB members to facilitate continuity in REB operations and decision-making.

Attends research ethics training seminars and information workshops.

Supervision

None

Impact of service or product

The REO monitors research ethics practices for compliance with provincial, national, and international legislation and regulations/ guidelines for research involving humans.

The research ethics review processes must be in compliance with pertinent legislation, regulations/guidelines and funding agreements to ensure the protection of humans participating in, and animals used, in research conducted by members of the AU research community and/or under the auspices of AU.

Failure to comply with federal granting council regulations and CCAC Guidelines may result in loss of federal funding to AU researchers.

Independence of action

Must perform duties independently, with minimal supervision from the Manager, Research Services, to address and support the REB and ad hoc appeals panels as required.

Acts independently, but in accordance with the directives of the REB/AUACC and Research Office leadership.

Uses independent judgement to determine when issues must be escalated to the REB and Research Office leadership, for further discussion or action.

Complexity

Advises and provides authoritative information to the AU research community regarding ethics review processes and compliance requirements.

Coordinates the human ethics review process and identifies areas of concern or vulnerability with respect to REB procedures. Works with the REB to resolve complex and/or high-risk issues in the course of ethics review.

Works with the REB to develop and implement policies and procedures for the ethical conduct of research involving humans, in accordance with related AU, provincial, federal and international regulations/guidelines.

Monitors research activity for ethical compliance with AU and sponsoring agency policies and procedures and takes action as required to ensure adherence to regulations/guidelines.

Monitors AU's ethics review and approval processes for quality assurance and improvement purposes.

Provides administrative leadership and guidance to institutional and community REB members and REB sub-committee members in relation to ethics protocols, policies, procedures and/or guidelines and REB operations.

Liaises with the UofA in the oversight of AU's animal care and use program.

Maintains confidentiality at all times.

Planning

Works with key stakeholders to establish, orient and train faculty-level REB sub-committees to conduct delegated ethical reviews of minimal risk student research protocols.

Provides instruction, training and assistance with the organization of in-house information sessions, as required.

Keeps apprised of changes to federal granting agency policies for the ethical conduct of research involving humans and assists to ensure that AU's policies and procedures are consistent with evolving standards.

Works to ensure compliance of both internal and external researchers with relevant standards for the ethical conduct of research involving humans and the ethics review and approval process at AU and CCAC requirements for the use of animals in research.

Signatures for section I

Incumbent signature		Date Select a date.
Supervisor signature		Date Select a date.

Section II: Qualifications

Qualifications

Includes education, experience, skills, abilities, and any other special qualifications required. The qualifications relate to the position not the incumbent.

Minimum of Bachelor's degree with at least three years senior administrative experience working with Boards and/or Committees (equivalent combination of formal education and work experience may be considered). A Master's degree would be an asset.

Preference will be given to persons with a broad knowledge of scientific methodologies and research ethics. Knowledge of and experience with provincial, national and international research ethics and privacy legislation, policies, regulations/guidelines is preferred, as is experience with research involving humans.

Relevant work experience in a research-related field or university environment. Current knowledge of AU administrative and organizational structures and systems would be a definite asset.

Required Qualifications/Competencies

- Current knowledge of Canadian and international human research ethics principles and administrative practices; familiarity with the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Board and the resources provided through that association.
- Current knowledge of Canadian Council on Animal Care requirements and guidelines.
- Current knowledge of Canadian and international Indigenous people's cultural practices as they relate to ethical research.
- Superior interpersonal, oral and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to prioritize and readily adapt to changes in duties and responsibilities.
- Track record of exemplary self-management, initiative in problem-solving, leadership and ever- increasing knowledge and skill development, including a demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality and exercise a high level of tact and diplomacy in dealing with a wide variety of contacts.
- Independence and reliable judgement, to appropriately determine times to seek solutions to routine problems with minimal supervision and time to discuss problems/solutions with more senior staff or the REB.
- Integrity, to work within guidelines of established procedures and past practices that may govern tasks.
- Dedication, to pursue organizational and departmental purposes and goals.
- Ability to research and analyze significant amounts of information for comparison and contrast with specified requirements.
- Ability to attend to detail with a high degree of accuracy and to organize and prioritize a high volume of work to meet both internal and external deadlines.
- Knowledge of and ability to interpret and implement complex policies, systems and operations.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively.
- Proficiency using computer-based communications, including but not limited to word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation software, e-mail and navigating the Internet.
- Proficiency in meeting documentation and record keeping, including a working knowledge of committee meeting rules of order (e.g., Robert's Rules of Order)

Assets

- Current general knowledge of Athabasca University Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) policies and procedures related to graduate student research.
- General knowledge of adjacent areas of research compliance including research security and research data management.

Signatures for sections I and II

Department Head signature		Date Select a date.
Executive Officer signature		Date Select a date.
Human Resources review		Date Select a date.