

McMaster / Mohawk / Conestoga (MMC) Coordinated Review (G_13)

Ethics review for multi-center research presents many challenges to researchers and REBs. In order to minimize the duplication of effort and the time delays associated with concurrent or serial ethics review, the following centers agree to participate in a coordinated ethics review process:

McMaster University: Suzette Salama, HHS/FHS REB Chair
Deborah Mazzetti, HHS/FHS REB Coordinator
Mohawk College: Donna Rawlin, Mohawk REB Chair
Conestoga College: Maureen Nummelin, Conestoga REB Chair

1. This process applies to Health Science research conducted by Health Science faculty or staff, research conducted on Health Science faculty, staff or students, and research that involves Health Science resources.
2. In this document the term 'local' refers to the institutions involved.
3. In this document the term 'researcher' applies to faculty, staff, or a team of one or both of these categories.
4. If a local researcher wants to conduct research on local participants, a local ethics review is sufficient. (e.g. A Conestoga researcher conducting a study on Nursing students who attend Conestoga and who are part of the McMaster/Conestoga collaborative Nursing program)
5. If a local researcher wants to conduct research on non local participants, a coordinated review (CR) will take place (e.g. A Mohawk researcher conducting a study on Nursing students who attend McMaster and who are part of the McMaster Nursing program)
6. If a researcher wants to conduct research on participants from more than one centre, a CR will take place (e.g. A McMaster researcher conducting a study on Nursing students at all 3 centers)
7. Local REBs remain responsible for ethics approval and continuing review of research that falls under their jurisdiction, but the HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR will coordinate the ethics review process leading up to initial REB approval:
 - 7.1. The researcher will complete the HHS/FHS General Research Ethics Application, and the application will be submitted to the HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR.
 - 7.2. Any aspects of the research that are not captured by the HHS/FHS application should be noted by the researcher and submitted as an attachment.
 - 7.3. Researchers must obtain all necessary resource authorizations. Local resource issues remain subject to local approval.
 - 7.4. The HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR will send the application to the REB Chair at each center involved. The Chairs will assign the review to one reviewer at their local center. If the study involves all three centers, there will be three reviewers, one from each local center.
 - 7.5. Each reviewer will send their completed review to the HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR at McMaster. The HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR will coordinate the results of the individual reviews and will request revisions from the researcher as necessary. Reviewers will receive copies of all correspondence.

- 7.6. If the reviews conflict, the HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR will work with the reviewers to harmonize the results. If no resolution is possible, the coordinated review process will end and the researcher will be asked to seek approval from each local REB.
- 7.7. If the research is minimal risk, the revised submission will go to the REB Chair at each centre involved for expedited (delegated) review. The HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR will coordinate final changes (if necessary). Each Chair involved will send a letter of approval to the researcher, with a copy to each of the other REBs involved. When the researcher has received all necessary approvals, they may begin the study.
- 7.8. If the research is greater than minimal risk, the submission will go to each local REB for full board discussion. Local REBs are free to assign additional reviewers if they wish to do so.
- 7.9. Local REBs will be responsible for final approval at their center
- 7.10. Local REBs will be responsible for continuing review at their center.

Proposed time-line for review:

Day	Event
0	Researcher submits application to HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR: 293 Wellington St. N., Suite 102, Hamilton, ON L8L 8E7 mazzedeb@HHSC.CA
1	HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR sends application to REB Chair of centers involved
4	REB Chair assigns study to one reviewer at their center
18	Reviewers send reports to HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR
19	HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR coordinates reviews If reviews do not conflict, HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR requests revisions from researcher If reviews conflict, HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR works with reviewers to harmonize results If reviews cannot be harmonized, HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR instructs researcher to seek approval at each center
26	HHS/FHS REB COORDINATOR communicates results of review to researcher

- If study is minimal risk, the revised application goes to REB Chairs for expedited review; maximum wait for approval is 7 days
- If study is greater than minimal risk, the revised application goes to local REB meetings for full board review; maximum wait for next scheduled meeting is 30 days