

## **Draft Process – Research Review Board**

### **Scope and Purpose**

The Research Review Board will review whether proposals for classified research propose work that is ethical and appropriate at the University of Notre Dame. It will make recommendations to the Vice President for Research. Questions of the ethical conduct of other funded and non-funded research will be handled by the Deans, Vice President for Research, Provost and/or President as discussed in the Faculty Handbook and Academic Articles of the University.

### **Relevant Policy**

Under the Academic Articles of the University:

*Within the framework of University policies and procedures, the Vice President for Research has responsibility, under the Office of the Provost, for the general supervision, administration, and development of research activities, including all sponsored programs, conducted by the University and its faculty. The Vice President for Research is assisted in the duties of office by Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents, who are appointed by the President and who perform such duties and exercise such authority as may be delegated to them by the Vice President for Research.*

### **Appointment and Term**

The Research Review Board will consist of 3-5 faculty members appointed by the Vice President for Research from among the faculty with preference for individuals with experience in applied ethics. The Research Review Board is established to advise the Vice President for Research on questions related to accepting external funding for classified research. The Board shall base its recommendations on established ethical principles and the teachings of the Catholic Church with due consideration for the principles of academic freedom and with an understanding that research is expected to push the boundaries of current understanding.

The recommendation of the Research Review Board, along with the materials presented by the Principal Investigator of the research, will be transmitted to the Vice President for Research for final decision.

### **Initiating a review**

A review of proposed funded research by the Research Review Board can be initiated by any member of the faculty or staff of the University by raising a concern about the ethical nature of a particular proposed research program to the Vice President for Research. These concerns will often be raised during the proposal approval process, but the initiation of an inquiry is not limited to that proposal submission process.

All proposals for classified research will be considered by the Research Review Board.

### **Process**

The Vice President for Research will do a quick assessment of the issues with the individual that has raised these concerns to ensure that the concern is properly stated and ready for consideration by the Research Review Board.

The Principal Investigator of the proposed work (the Proposer) will be asked to provide the Research Review Board with a short project description (two pages or less) using clear, non-technical language for a general audience. The description should include:

1. Project Title and Principal Investigators
2. The objective of the project;
3. Background, previous work, and/or motivation;
4. The project approach and methods;
5. The anticipated outcomes.

The Proposer will also provide a self-assessment including:

1. Please consider the ethical implications of the results. Is there any part of the research that the Proposer has ethical questions about? Where does the Proposer see the main benefits of the project? If the outcomes could also be used for morally unacceptable or unethical purposes, what measures could be taken to minimize wrongful uses?
2. Please consider the ethical implications of the methods being used. Does the Proposer have any concerns that the methods might be violating any ethical principle that should be governing research? What measures could be taken to minimize this?
3. Please give an account of the partners and collaborators. How is the work distributed? If the contribution of the partners involves any part that would be considered morally problematic, in what ways is the Notre Dame own contribution linked to this activity? How essential is it to the success of the project overall?

The Proposer will be invited to a meeting of the Research Review Board for a discussion of the proposed effort. The Proposer will:

- a. Make a short presentation of the project to the review board. This will serve as a starting-point for the discussion.
- b. Answer questions for the review board.

### **Recommendation:**

Based on the written submission and meeting, the committee will deliberate and make a recommendation to the Vice President for Research. This recommendation will be shared with Proposer.

### **Decision**

The decision of the Vice President for Research shall be made and communicated to the Proposer within 2 weeks of receipt of the recommendation of the Research Review Board. The Proposer or the Research Review Committee may appeal the decision of the Vice President for Research to the Provost and in turn to the President.