

## **Washington State Institutional Review Board**

### **RULES OF ORDER<sup>1</sup>**

#### 1. Basic Rules

- a. All members are equal and their rights are equal. Those rights are:
  - To attend meetings
  - To make motions
  - To speak in debate
  - To vote
- b. A quorum must be present to do business:
  - A quorum is a simple majority of IRB members; at least one member whose primary concerns are in non-scientific areas must be present
  - Members who do not vote (abstain) are counted toward the quorum
- c. The majority rules:
  - A majority means the majority of members present
  - The minority has the right to be heard
  - Once a decision has been made by the majority, the vote will stand and the minority opinion will be captured as a controverted issue in the minutes
- d. Silence is consent:
  - Members who do not vote (abstain) agree to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence
  - All members are strongly encouraged to voice their opinions in the appropriate manner at the appropriate time
- e. One question at a time and one speaker at a time:
  - No motion is in order which does not directly relate to the question under consideration
  - Once a member has been recognized by the chair, they have the floor
- f. Controverted issues:
  - Members may make a comment and a rebuttal; once heard, then the Chair may decide if enough information has been exchanged

#### 2. Duties of Chair

- a. Be on time and start on time.
- b. Follow the agenda and keep on schedule.
- c. Be in control of the floor:
  - “Assign” the floor by recognizing members who wish to speak
  - Remind those who interrupt that the floor has been assigned to another
  - Discourage private conversations during the meeting
  - Be impartial in calling on members to speak
- d. Direct deliberations to focus on essential review concerns.
- e. Facilitate consensus on critical issues by eliciting individual votes.
- f. Restate the main motion before taking a vote.
- g. Lead the Board to develop clear instructions to IRB staff for correspondence to investigators.
- h. Use general consent when possible (e.g., “If there is no objection, ...”).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from “Robert’s Rules in Plain English,” by Doris P. Zimmerman, Harper Collins, 1997

- i. Allow the withdrawal of motions by general consent.

### 3. Motions and Process

#### a. Main motions:

- Require a second
- Discussion should be held prior to the formal motion
- Can be amended
- Require a majority vote

#### b. Process:

- The floor is assigned to the primary or secondary reviewer
- The primary or secondary reviewer presents the proposal and the issues
- Discussion is held “one speaker at a time”
- Pertinent discussion that is provided in writing during the meeting will be read aloud by Chair or another Board member
- A motion for disposition of the proposal is made (the motion is “on the floor”)
- The motion is seconded
- The chair states the motion (the motion is “pending”)
- The chair puts the question to a vote
- Votes are taken verbally or by a show of hands
- The chair announces the vote

#### c. Other points:

- A member can modify their own motion
- A member can amend their own motion after it has been stated by the chair
- A member can withdraw their own motion with the group’s permission (e.g., general consent)

#### d. Amend: Changes the wording of a motion to make it more clear, complete or more acceptable *before* the motion is voted upon.

- An amendment must be germane to the motion on the floor
- A member must obtain the floor to offer an amendment
- An amendment must be seconded

#### e. Limit Debate: Chair or ES/AES or their appointees exercise special control over the discussion by reducing the number and length of speeches allowed or by requiring that debate be limited to a period of time after which the vote must be taken.

- Can be used with any motion
- Once a direction has been given to limit debate, the direction and motion are no longer debatable

#### f. Previous Question: Used to cut off debate and bring the group to an immediate vote on a pending motion.

- Can be applied to any pending question
- Requires a two-thirds vote

4. Voting

- a. All votes on motions for disposition are taken verbally or by a show of hands; the number in favor, opposed, and abstaining are recorded.
- b. To be adopted, a majority of members present at the meeting must vote in favor.
- c. The Chair votes only to break a tie vote.

d. Disposition Options:

- **Approval:** This should be moved when the proposal can be approved as submitted or amended prior to the meeting.
- **Conditional Approval:** This should be moved when (1) the simple concurrence of the investigator to a specified set of conditions is all that is required for approval of the proposal, or (2) based upon the assumption that conditions are satisfied, the Board is able to make all the determinations required for approval. Final approval is delegated to a subcommittee; generally there is no need for review at another meeting.
- **Defer Consideration:** This should be moved when the number of issues, concerns and/or questions are too great to be resolved by the simple concurrence of the investigator. The proposal must go back to another meeting.
- **Disapproval:** This should be moved only after the investigator has been invited to a meeting to resolve serious issues OR further attempts to negotiate required revisions would be fruitless. While this disposition puts an end to review of the research application, the investigator is free to submit a new application for consideration at a later meeting.