



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Tips for Smooth Sailing through IRB Review

- 1. DEADLINES:** You are probably not subject to the submissions deadlines posted on the IRB website for full board meetings. The IRB chair reviews lower risk studies throughout the month. You can submit your protocols whenever you are ready to.
- 2. REQUIRED TRAINING:** Make sure everyone listed as research team members on your application has completed the required human subjects training. Make sure they did not accidentally complete the Responsible Conduct of Research training. The IRB does not accept that course for human subjects research. The IRB strongly recommends to anyone completing the training that they follow the registration instructions posted on the Human Subjects Research Compliance website so they do not inadvertently complete the wrong course:
<http://uncw.edu/sparc/integrity/irb.html>
- 3. CLARITY:** When you complete your application, be sure that it is clear and thorough. We will conduct an initial review of your protocol and will return it to you with stipulations if there are contradictory statements or incomplete responses. We now have a new training video that is a great resource for learning how to create a strong application. Look for the video in the Resources column on the IRB homepage:
<http://uncw.edu/sparc/integrity/irb.html>

If you are conducting research on a class activity, be careful in your application to differentiate between the course requirements (not optional) and the research activities (optional).

Use lay terms. Write your application so that anyone not familiar with your field can understand it.

4. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** If you are a faculty member, make sure you have completed your annual conflicts of interest disclosure and external professional activities for pay reports (if applicable). Students are not subject to this requirement. If your research is externally funded, you will also be required to submit a project-specific conflict of interest disclosure.
5. **EXEMPTIONS:** The IRBIS application has a section to request an exemption for your study. Please read the instructions carefully, as your response to the question will determine how the system constructs the rest of the application.
6. **TERMINOLOGY:** Anonymous data is different from confidential data. If data are truly anonymous, there is no need to keep anything confidential.

Adults can consent to participate in research. Minors (under age 18) cannot legally consent, but can give “assent” along with parental permission.

7. **CONSENT:** The IRB expects that you will use the standard consent process for most studies unless it is not feasible to do so, or the low risk of your study warrants an alteration of the standard process. The standard process involves explaining the study to prospective subjects, confirming understanding, and obtaining signatures on IRB-approved consent documents. However, the IRB requires only a few brief consent statements for anonymous paper or online surveys that researchers can add at the beginning of their survey instruments.
8. **SITE LETTERS OF SUPPORT:** If you are conducting research off-campus at a nursing home, public school, health clinic, day care or other facility where the subjects have a reasonable expectation of privacy, request a site letter of support from the facility administrator or school principal as early as possible. Protocol reviews are frequently held up because principal investigators have trouble obtaining site letters of support in a timely way. Some public school systems have their own research review process, so check with the district on its requirements.
9. **CONTACT INFORMATION:** Don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or if you get confused! A quick question prior to completing the application can save all of us a lot of time! That's what we're here for!

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