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News from the Cornell University IRB Office
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Contents

Revised Decision Tree: Does your research project need review by the IRB office?

In response to your feedback from the IRB Satisfaction Survey last summer, we have revised the IRB Decision Tree to provide what we hope is better guidance on the types of projects that require review by the IRB office. This revised version includes examples. We encourage you to refer to the Decision Tree before sending us an application for review, and we welcome your feedback on how we can make it better.

New IRB Guidance

- *Guidance on Research Involving Existing or Secondary Data, Documents or Records*. This guidance is intended to help determine whether projects involving only use of existing or secondary data, documents, or records need IRB review and, if so, what type of review may be appropriate.

- *Guidance on IRB Review of International Research*. This document provides guidance on requirements and considerations when conducting research with human participants outside the U.S., and outlines additional information that may be required as part of an application for IRB review.

- *New IRB Guidance on Oral and Life Histories, Case Studies and Journalism*. This guidance helps explain what constitutes "generalizable knowledge" for research involving oral and life histories, case studies, or journalism. It also describes the type of research projects involving such topics that require review by the IRB office.

Please contact the IRB office (irbhp@cornell.edu) with any questions about these guidance documents or how they apply to your particular research project.

IRB Protocol Help Sessions

The IRB staff holds Help Sessions twice a month at various campus locations to provide one-on-one consultation and assistance in applying for IRB review. We invite you to come and meet the IRB staff at one of these sessions and get hands on help with writing your application or addressing requests for revisions or clarification from the IRB. The IRB staff can help you determine the kind of information and detail that IRB members will need to determine if your protocol can be approved. Check out the schedule of Help Sessions at the IRB website (www.irb.cornell.edu/helpsessions/). All workshop locations have wireless Internet connections and we encourage you to bring your own laptops.

How long will it take for your project to be approved by the IRB Office?

Ordinarily, researchers should expect a minimum turnaround time of 10 business days for Exempt applications, 15 business days for Expedited applications, and 5 business days for Amendments. Applications requiring Full Board review will take a minimum of 4 weeks.

We recently analyzed about 120 applications submitted to the IRB office in 2012 and found that the most common issues that led to delays in protocol approvals, and those that investigators can directly control, were:

(1) **incomplete applications** – unanswered questions or missing documents like recruitment scripts, consent forms, debriefing scripts, survey or interview questions, faculty attestations, letters of support; and
(2) **insufficient consent forms** – missing elements of consent, unclear or "jargon" laden language, overstating of benefits, insufficient attention to confidentiality and data protection, missing or out of date contact information for the IRB.

We want to direct you to a few resources, available on the IRB website that will help you to avoid these common issues:

- Start with our Frequently Asked Questions page.
- Download the current application forms, which are available on the forms page of the IRB website.
- Use the Informed Consent templates (also on the forms page of the IRB website) to prepare your consent materials.
- Take the online training for research with human participants – the CITI Training. Make sure all research personnel on your project have completed this training.
- Check out the IRB Policies and Guidance pages to see if there are any special requirements for your particular type of research and incorporate them in your application design and materials (e.g., Internet research, international research, research with secondary data, research using biomedical procedures, research with Cornell students, children or other vulnerable populations, etc.).
- Attend a Help Session to get hands on assistance or schedule an appointment with an IRB staff member.

New – Check completion status of IRB Training

All research personnel assisting with human participant research are required to complete the online training from CITI before a protocol can be granted IRB approval. You can now check if your training, and that of the other research personnel, is current. This training dashboard is accessible by your Cornell NetID and password and is updated every 30 minutes. The training dashboard is available at http://www.irb.cornell.edu/lookup/.

Having trouble downloading IRB PDF forms?
Some researchers have reported difficulty downloading forms. It appears that Web browsers may not open fillable pdf forms within the browser window. The work around to this issue is to adjust your Web browser settings to open pdf files in Adobe rather than the Web browser.

You can also right-click (PC) or Ctrl-click (Mac) on the link that opens the pdf form and save the form to your desktop.

If you continue to have issues opening the IRB forms after trying these steps, please contact the IRB office at irbhp@cornell.edu.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these or any other topics relevant to the IRB, please contact the IRB office at irbhp@cornell.edu, or call Matthew Aldridge (255-6182), Denise Payne (255-5138), or Myles Gideon (254-5162) for assistance irbhp@cornell.edu).