College Research Review Committee (CRRC) Human Subjects Review

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the IRB?

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects recruited to participate in a research study conducted under the auspices of the institution with which it is affiliated. The role of the IRB is to insure the protection of human participants in a research study. Any institution that receives federal funding to conduct research with human participants is required to establish an IRB and to review and approve studies prior to collection of research data.

What is the CRRC?

The CRRC is the College Research Review Committee. The Committee oversees human subjects research conducted by undergraduate and masters' students (including MA theses and projects) in the College of Education. The Committee approves research that qualifies as Exempt under the Federal Regulations for Protection of Human Research Subjects (45 CFR 46).

How do I know if I need approval for my research or project?

If your research involves human subjects and will be published (even as a thesis or project) or given as a presentation outside of a CSUS classroom, you will need IRB approval for your research. *Research done for a class presentation, unless it is to be published or presented elsewhere, does not require an IRB approval.*

If I need to complete an IRB protocol for my research, where do I begin?

Begin with your advisor. They can help you get started. Once your research methods are finalized, you can start the IRB approval process. You must submit your IRB protocol to the College Research Review Committee. At any time, you can contact the Committee Chairs. See this page for the names and email addresses of the College Committee chairs. Do not be

afraid to ask questions. It is better to ask ahead of time than find out later that you left something out.

When do I need to obtain IRB approval?

IRB approval is required BEFORE starting any data collection. If you begin your research and start collecting data without prior IRB approval you risk losing all your data and must begin again with the collection process.

How do I know if my human subject research is "Exempt"?

Exempt research is based on risk to the human subjects. Research that is low risk undergoes an exempt review by the College Research Review Committee. It must be approved by the Committee before you can begin data collection. Turn-around time is generally one week once it is reviewed by the Committee.

Research involving vulnerable populations is not eligible for Exempt review. An example of Exempt research is an anonymous survey, either online or on paper, with no identifying data.

What else is required if my research is Exempt?

Exempt research requires participant informed consent (Click here to access the informed consent template). You must use the template to write your consent form. A copy of your informed consent form should accompany your submission.

You must also include a copy of your copies of any surveys or instruments you will use, a support letter from organizations you will work with, and any other materials that you will be using with your research participants. Your support letter should be signed and on letterhead sent from the approving party's email address.

If my research is not Exempt, what do I do?

If your research does not qualify as Exempt, the Committee will refer you to the University IRB where it will undergo "Expedited" or "Full-board" review. If the research is considered to have "minimal risk" to the human subject, it may qualify as "Expedited." Research that is more than minimal risk to the subject will require Full-board approval. Typically, the most substantial risk in behavioral and social science research at involves loss of confidentiality.

If I choose to use audio or video tapes or digital recordings in my research how long must I maintain the originals?

The original recordings should be destroyed when they are transcribed. If your research requires that you keep the recording for a longer period of time you must state where they will be stored, who will have access to them while stored, and when they will be destroyed.

How long must I store my research data?

Storage of the signed consent forms for three (3) years past completion of the study is required. Transcripts can be maintained indefinitely as long as there is no identifying information.

How must I store my research data?

Data must be stored on a secure university drive (e.g., University OneDrive).

If I want to do research at a local school, what is the procedure for consent?

You must obtain the consent from the following individuals:

- The Principal of the school where the research is to be performed (on letterhead).
- The Teacher(s)
- The Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) – "Informed Consent" – written at a 6th grade reading level
- The child – "Assent" – written to the child's level of understanding

What is the procedure if I am a schoolteacher, and I wish to test instructional materials or procedures in my own classroom?

You need to get approval from the Committee. You do not need participant parental consent or child assent to try new instructional materials or procedures in your classroom. However, you need consent and assent to use data you collect in the process. If a parent and/or child do not consent, the child will still participate in the activities, but you cannot use any data for that child.

What if I merely want to observe children in a classroom setting?

You must still get parental "Informed Consent" and each child's "Assent." For any child who does not obtain parental consent, that child may not be included in the research even if that child assents to participate in the research.

What if my research includes observation in a public-access facility such as a coffee shop?

No letter is required for public-access facilities such as coffee shops.

What if I want to have a "focus group" for my research?

Each person in the focus group must sign an informed consent form that has information that states confidentiality may not be guaranteed once the group disbands.

How long does my IRB approval last?

IRB approval is for a 12-month period from time of original approval. A renewal notice will be sent prior to your expiration date of your study.

What if I have an "adverse event" occur during my data collection?

Adverse events ***must be reported immediately*** to your advisor, and your advisor will help you report to the University IRB.