UNIVERSITY of West Georgia

Office of Research & Sponsored Projects

Tips for Completing your IRB application

1. Read the IRB Cover Page and Application carefully and follow all instructions

2. Do not leave anything out, be complete

3. Check for spelling/grammatical errors

4. Ensure that your Study Title is the same on all forms you submit to the IRB (Cover Page, Application, Consent Forms, etc.)

5. Study Dates:
   a. **Start Date**: your project cannot begin until after you receive IRB approval. Do not submit application materials with a start date that is before your submission date or with a start date that does not allow adequate time for IRB approval (minimally 3 weeks). "ASAP" is not a date, dates must be in mm/dd/yyyy format.
   b. **End Date**: the end date of your project is not the last day you collect data; it is the date by which you expect your project to be completed. Dates must be in mm/dd/yyyy format.

6. Procedures: The procedures section should explain all of your interaction with human subjects.
   a. Include date, time, and place study is being held;
   b. Include how you have access to participants, how you will contact participants, everything participants will be asked to do, will there be follow up?, etc.
   c. The procedure needs to match the purpose of your study and should be written in future tense.

7. Number of subjects, the maximum number (not a range) of subjects should be the same on all forms you submit to the IRB (Cover Page, Application, approval letter from a cooperating organization).

8. Conflict of Interest can occur if one of the researchers is in a position of authority over research subjects (employer, teacher, counselor, etc.), if this is the case, you must explain how you will protect the participants. See IRB FAQ for further information

9. Study procedures must be complete and easy to understand by someone outside of the researcher's field, do not use jargon, include full name before using acronyms, etc.

10. If you are assigning subject codes rather than using names, the participants could still be identified, how will this information be protected?

11. Risks, you are aiming for minimal risk. There is no such thing as a NO risk study. Boredom, restlessness, participants may feel singled out. Possibilities of financial risk, social harm, etc.

12. Efforts to minimize risk, did you shorten the survey to alleviate possible boredom? How will privacy be protected? Etc.

13. Inclusion/Exclusion criteria: List major inclusion and exclusion criteria. Any proposed exclusion based on gender, age, or race must include justification for the exclusion.

14. Recruitment: Advertisements and recruitment material are considered a part of the informed consent process. Submit all scripts with the proposal; provide verbatim scripts of what you will tell subjects in a telephone recruitment call, email, poster, etc. IRB reviewers ask the question: "What information are the subjects getting (or not getting) that would help them decide to participate (or not) or to continue to participate, and is this information being given as soon as possible?"

15. To ensure confidentiality, you want to ensure that participants can not be identified by their behavior, responses, or demographic information (especially with a small subject pool).

16. Compensation; if compensation is offered, it must not be so large as to seem influential. Compensation amounts should be clearly identified in the application and the consent forms and should explain what must be done to earn the compensation.

17. Extra Credit, if extra credit is offered to students to participate, students not participating must be offered an opportunity to earn the same extra credit. The other activities must be of comparable duration and effort. See IRB FAQ for additional information.

18. Consent, in explaining how Consent will be obtained, "Informed Consent Form will be given to participants" is not a sufficient explanation. Describe how and when potential participants will have opportunity to answer questions. Who will distribute and collect the consent forms. Will there be a deadline for returning consent forms, etc.

19. DO proofread very carefully to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the application. We've seen applications that list conflicting numbers of subjects, ages of subjects, and numbers of sessions, for example.

20. All application materials (Cover Page, Application, Instruments (survey, interview questions, etc.), Consent Forms, recruitment scripts, etc., should be submitted to irb@westga.edu. If the PI is a student, the application material should be submitted by the Faculty Advisor for the project after the Faculty member has reviewed and approved all materials.