

Institutional Review Board

Overview & Quick Tips for Students

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required by law to review all research involving human participants in order to ensure that the participants' rights and safety are protected. Because this may be your first experience with the IRB, we have put together this reference page about the IRB. This is only a synopsis, so please consult your research advisor for questions you may have about the review process. All students and faculty are responsible for knowing IRB policies and meeting the ethical standards of research.

- Please consult the IRB Policies and Procedures Manual for detailed information (www.ric.edu/irb).
- All researchers (faculty, staff, and students) are required to complete the CITI online research ethics training program before submitting an application to the IRB. The training must be renewed every 5 years. The link with the current address is on the IRB website.
- The basic ethical principles of research are:
 - Respect for persons: people have the right to choose whether to participate in research
 - Beneficence: efforts are made to secure participants' well-being
 - Justice: the burden of research is not placed on any one group of people
- When reviewing proposals, the reviewers evaluate:
 - Informed consent: participants are given sufficient information about the study to make an informed decision about whether to participate
 - Assessment of risks/benefits: the benefits of the research outweigh the risks to participants
 - Selection of participants: the recruitment of participants is equitable and non-coercive
- All research projects, including student research and pilot studies, must meet the same standards and must undergo the same review process.
- The IRB meets from September through May, and once each summer (typically mid-June) to review projects.
- Projects that are determined by the IRB to pose no more than “minimal risk” to participants may undergo expedited review; otherwise, full review is required. Only the IRB can determine whether a project qualifies for expedited review. Many applications require revisions, which will extend the review times listed below:
 - Expedited reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis, including in the summer. You should allow 2-4 weeks for these projects to be reviewed.
 - Full committee reviews are conducted once a month, typically on the 3rd Friday of the month (see the IRB webpage for meeting dates). You should allow 4-6 weeks for these projects to be approved. Applications for full review are due by the 1st of each month to be reviewed that same month.
- Because students typically have to complete a research project within one semester, you should discuss with your advisor ways to minimize the risk in the study to facilitate the review process. Alternatively, you may wish to discuss with your advisor whether to conduct a research project that is exempt from IRB review.
- Communications regarding students' projects are sent to the advisor only, who communicates with the student.
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