



# UNION UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

### 10 Tips for Collaborating with the IRB

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for the protection of the rights, privacy and welfare of all participants in human subjects research. It is guided by federal regulatory requirements and has the authority to review, approve, modify, or disapprove research protocols. Some individuals believe it is difficult to get IRB approval for studies that involve human subjects, but your IRB application and approval process can go smoothly if you follow these tips. Each tip introduces critical elements of IRB review and components of the IRB operations and review processes; however, this list is not exhaustive. We hope you find it useful.

- 1. Know the rules - Be informed.** Complete Union University's IRB training for interacting with human participants located at <http://www.uu.edu/research/irb/tutorial/>. Successful completion of the training is required before your application can be considered. It is also important to closely read our IRB guidelines, requirements, and application process located on the IRB website (<http://www.uu.edu/research/irb>).
- 2. Be considerate and patient.** All IRBs have compliance officers who process applications they receive from researchers. Union University's IRB Compliance Officer is Mrs. Suzanne Barham. It is critical that you establish a considerate and patient relationship with her because she can help you navigate through the requirements and intricacies of the IRB process.
- 3. Be very detailed.** Your protocol must provide detailed descriptions of all aspects of your proposed project. For example, in describing your prospective participants, you must explain the characteristics of who you intend to recruit, how you will recruit them, why you are recruiting this particular group, and when you will recruit them. Read and respond in depth to all directions. Remember, an IRB member outside your discipline may review your protocol. He or she probably does not have vast knowledge of your discipline.
- 4. Complete all required forms.** Investigators conducting research that include human subjects are required to complete certain human participant protection forms. In addition to the initial review protocol, these documents may include informed consent forms, assent forms, and HIPAA waiver. Completing these forms will demonstrate that you are dedicated to the care of the participants of your study.
- 5. Know and work with your IRB schedule.** Applications that involve very little intrusiveness and low risk to human subjects can be processed relatively quickly, but those that involve more moderate participant intrusiveness and moderate to high risk could take much longer to process. If your protocol requires full board approval, knowing when and how often the IRB committee meets could determine how long your IRB application process will take.
- 6. Pay attention to details (see #3).** If your professor repeats something, it must be very important. Same here. The IRB has specific instructions for submitting protocols and supporting materials. Make sure you pay attention to these details - submit ALL documents according to specifications to avoid delays.
- 7. Respond promptly.** When you receive your IRB submission review back from the IRB, you may be asked to provide clarifying information. If so, respond to the IRB committee as quickly as possible. It is better to get the protocol back as soon as possible while your project is still fresh in the minds of members of the committee.
- 8. Be thankful.** When you receive feedback from the IRB (and especially when your submission is approved), it is good practice to thank Mrs. Barham and ask her to please thank other members of the committee on your behalf.
- 9. Comply with gratitude (see #7 & #8).** With a grateful heart, promptly address all requests from the IRB. Ask questions if you are confused by any aspect of the process. The IRB wants to help you succeed in your academic journey!
- 10. Appreciate your advisor.** Consult with your research advisor about all aspects of your project and IRB submission. Frequent and consistent communication is vital to your success.