Institutional Review Board FAQs

All research that involves human subjects, whether funded or not, that is undertaken by a WIU faculty member, academic staff or student or supported by Western Illinois University, must be reviewed by the WIU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Approval must be granted by the IRB prior to collecting data from any human subjects for research purposes or soliciting subjects for a research study.

Helpful Tips for Conducting Human Subjects Research

1. Protocols for review need to be fully completed with all supporting documentation, material, consent, and/or cover letter needed to complete the study. Failure to turn in complete a protocol may delay approval. Exempt and expedited reviews normally take 7-10 days for review, while the full review process may take up to 30 days.

2. Avoid discipline specific jargon in the IRB protocol and informed consent. Documents and materials should be written so that an individual with limited education in the field can easily read and understand your research purpose.

3. A faculty or staff member must serve as the Primary Investigator (PI) on any research project conducted by a student. This includes all graduate and undergraduate projects, theses, or dissertations.

4. Informed consent documents need to include contact information for the PI (e-mail, office phone) and Jacqueline Tharpe, Compliance Specialist (309-298-1191 or IRB@wiu.edu). In addition, a statement describing the amount of risk involved must be included. If risk is minimal the following statement should be used:

   "Risk is no greater than that experienced in normal daily activities."

   Additional information to be included in the consent document can be found at: http://www.wiu.edu/sponsored_projects/compliance/hs_informed_consent.php

5. IRB approval, copies of completed informed consents, and data from the study should be organized and stored in such a manner that the confidentiality of the participants is protected. In the event of an audit, it is the Primary Investigator's responsibility to be able to produce this material and demonstrate how it is stored for confidentiality. This includes student research.

6. Complete the National Institute of Health (http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php) or the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI; http://www.citiprogram.org/) online training for conducting research with human subjects. Send the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) a copy of your completion certificate. The training must be completed for those that are serving in any capacity on a research project. Both training options are accepted by OSP. The difference between the two is the amount of time to complete the training. On average, it takes more time to complete the CITI training.

If you have questions about human subjects research or the IRB process at WIU, or are interested in discussing the topic in a class, at a faculty meeting, or departmental colloquium, contact the Jacqueline Tharpe, Compliance Specialist at 309-298-1191 or IRB@wiu.edu. Additional information can be found at: http://www.wiu.edu/sponsored_projects/compliance/index.php