Human Research Protection Program
Institutional Review Board

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Institutional Review Board (IRB) Submission Basics

Where to go to get more information
What is the IRB?
“IRB” stands for Institutional Review Board.

What is the purpose of the IRB?
The mission of the IRB is to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of human participants in research conducted by Princeton University faculty, staff, and students.

What is human subjects research?
The IRB oversees human subjects research. Both components (“human subjects” and “research”) have to be met for the IRB to oversee it. Research means a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research: obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens OR obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.

Note that if your proposed research activity involves a drug, device, or biologic, other regulations and definitions may apply. Please contact the IRB for further clarification.

Can a student conduct human subjects research?
Yes, the regulations directly address that students can conduct human subjects research.

Can my activities done as part of an internship, summer work, junior project, or senior thesis constitute human subjects research?
Yes, the above activities may constitute human subjects research.

When do I obtain IRB approval for my human subjects research?
You must not do human subjects research before obtaining IRB approval.

How do I submit my IRB application materials?
Submission of new protocols is done through our online Human Studies Application System, eRIA IRB.

You can access the system at:
www.ria.princeton/eria

When should I expect a response from the IRB?
You should expect a response within five business days of submission. The most common decisions are: approve; approve pending revisions; or assignment to a full Board meeting. Note that the Board only meets once a month and not in the summer. Consequently, you should plan your human subjects research with these possible outcomes in mind.

I’m not sure whether my proposed activity is human subjects research. What should I do?
E-mail a synopsis of the proposed activity (3 paragraphs) to the IRB: irb@princeton.edu. Include the draft study measurements (survey, questionnaire, interview guide), if applicable.

Questions? Contact us!
www.ria.princeton/human-research

irb@princeton.edu