

International Relations Department The Institutional Review Board

Background

Conducting research is a scholarly activity which is valued by our institution. Faculty members have a responsibility to make students aware of ethical concerns in research. Those who engage in research or supervise research projects must ensure that subject participation is voluntary and that the benefits for participation outweigh the risks.

The purpose of the IRB research review procedure is:

- To protect the subjects involved in research against foreseeable injury
- To protect the University, its faculty, staff, and students who conduct research from foreseeable liability
- To meet the U.S. Federal regulations regarding University research

All student-initiated research projects utilizing human subjects that are conducted outside the classroom **require** IRB review. In addition, all WVPU students must have a faculty mentor (not a committee) who will oversee the execution of the research project. Typically the faculty mentor is the same person as the thesis supervisor.

Faculty members are responsible for ensuring that students under their direction turn in complete applications. This typically involves several meetings between the faculty member and the student. What is submitted to the IRB should be a polished finished product - complete with signatures and any scripts, forms, and applications to be utilized in data collection. Incomplete or poorly prepared proposals will be returned unreviewed.

Submission

Following submission, the application is reviewed by the IRB Chair/Expediter based on the IRB guidelines. The Chair/Expediter then determines whether the IRB application is complete and appropriate for review. Proposals must be submitted using the most current forms. Proposals submitted on outdated forms will be returned unreviewed. Incomplete or poorly prepared proposals will be returned unreviewed.

Categories of Research

A reviewed application is assigned to one of the following categories:

- Level I – No risk to human subjects
- Level II – Minimal risk to human subjects
- Level III – Possible risk to human subjects, a sensitive topic is being researched, or subjects include special populations (including children under 8, mentally handicapped, or legally incompetent)

For complete details regarding IRB procedures and downloadable forms, please visit [the Webster University IRB Webpage \(www.webster.edu/irb\)](http://www.webster.edu/irb).