Timeline for Successful Student Research involving Human Participants

The IRB recommends not rushing human participant research whenever possible. Students can often underestimate the amount of time it takes to secure IRB approval. It is very important to follow these recommended timelines since failure to do so can leave the student without adequate time to collect and analyze data. Note that these timelines can vary depending on the nature of the research. Contact compliance@cofc.edu for more specific guidance.

The faculty sponsor should be aware of these timelines and help provide alternative methodologies that do not require IRB approval if a student falls behind this schedule. This is especially imperative if the student must complete the research to graduate on time. Additional time should be added if the research

Be aware of these items that can add extra time:

- Completing the CITI training.
- Obtaining permission from another organization or school to recruit participants from their population.
    - This can take days to months, depending on procedures of the site providing permission.
- Creating the attachments. Be sure to use the correct consent template to reduce the amount of time.
- Multiple rounds of revisions. It is important that revised applications only be resubmitted for review after **all** requested revisions have been made.
    - IRB approval is not guaranteed. Time to approval is influenced by a number of factors, including the type of review (exempt, expedited, full board) and the comprehensiveness of the application. Some reviews may take two months or more.
- Getting enough participants for analysis.

Example 1- Recommended Timeline Student Independent Research, May Graduation deadline

- April- August:
    - Student identifies faculty sponsor and tentative research topic. We strongly advise you approach a faculty advisor at least one semester before the project is scheduled to begin.
    - Student and faculty sponsor begin developing the research question and defining the participant population.
    - Student and faculty sponsor complete the appropriate CITI training (Basic is fine for most, but additional courses are recommended for certain types of research).
    - Student conducts background research on the topic. Student begins developing rationale of why their proposed research is needed, stating what it would add to the existing research. This literature review should be under the guidance and consultation of the faculty sponsor.
- September:

- Student and faculty sponsor develop the research methodologies and survey instrument(s) to best answer the research question. Be as detailed as possible, such as: include details of how the survey will be distributed, where interviews will be conducted, how the data will be recorded and transcribed.
  - Student and faculty sponsor should refine the participant population and determine how they will be recruited. Be mindful of outside approvals required to reach the targeted population.
  - Create the informed consent and recruitment documents.
  - Create a final copy of the survey instrument.
  - Obtain outside approvals (if needed)
- September-October:
  - Complete and submit the IRB application prior to October meeting deadline <link to meeting schedule/deadlines> in case full board review is required.
    - Faculty sponsor will start the protocol, student can contribute as co-PI with edit access (if provided by faculty.
    - Faculty sponsor will review the completed application and faculty sponsor or student can submit.
  - Wait for review. Can take up to 5 business days.
  - Student makes all requested revisions, faculty sponsor reviews and resubmits to the IRB.
  - Obtain approval.
- November-February
  - Data collection by student, under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
- March
  - Data analysis by student, under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
- April:
  - Final product reviewed by faculty sponsor, published/disseminated by student.
- May:
  - Student or faculty sponsor submits final report to close the protocol.

Example 2- Recommended Timeline for Classroom Research that Requires IRB approval- Spring Semester

Whenever possible, IRB approval should be secured in the semester prior to data collection. Otherwise, we recommend submitting the IRB protocol in advance of the January meeting deadline. The IRB meeting schedule is available here:

- Prior to semester start:
  - Faculty sponsor identifies tentative research topic(s) relevant to the course materials.
  - Faculty sponsor begins developing the research question and defining the participant population. Once population is determined, IRB determination can be made.
  - Faculty completes the appropriate CITI training (Basic is fine for most, but additional courses are recommended for certain types of research).
  - Faculty conducts background research on the topic and begins developing rationale of why their proposed research is needed, how students can be involved with the research, stating what it would add to the existing research.
- January:

- o Students complete the CITI training
- o Students conduct background research on potential research topic.
- o Student(s) and faculty sponsor develop the research methodologies and survey instrument(s) to best answer the research question. Be as detailed as possible, such as: include details of how the survey will be distributed, where interviews will be conducted, how the data will be recorded and transcribed.
- o Student(s) and faculty sponsor should refine the participant population and determine how they will be recruited. Be mindful of outside approvals required to reach the targeted population.
- o Students create the informed consent and recruitment documents.
- o Create a final copy of the survey instrument.
- o Obtain outside approvals (if needed)
- Early February:
  - o Faculty completes and submits the IRB application.
    - ▪ Faculty sponsor will start the protocol, student can contribute as co-PI with edit access (if provided by faculty.
    - ▪ Faculty sponsor will review the completed application and faculty sponsor or student can submit.
  - o Wait for review. Can take up to 5 business days.
  - o Student makes all requested revisions, faculty sponsor reviews and resubmits to the IRB.
  - o Obtain approval.
- Late February-late March:
  - o Data collection by student, under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
- April:
  - o Data analysis by student(s), under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
  - o Final product reviewed by faculty sponsor, published/disseminated by student.
- May:
  - o Student or faculty sponsor submits final report to close the protocol.

Example 3- Student Independent Research, one semester only:

- Prior to semester start:
  - o Student identifies tentative research topic(s) relevant to the course/independent study
  - o Student identifies faculty sponsor and begins developing the research question and defining the participant population. Once population is determined, human subjects research determination can be made.
  - o Student and faculty sponsor completes the appropriate CITI training (Basic is fine for most, but additional courses are recommended for certain types of research). Student conducts background research on the topic and begins developing rationale of why their proposed research is needed, how students can be involved with the research, stating what it would add to the existing research.
- January:
  - o Students conduct background research on potential research topic.
  - o Student and faculty sponsor develop the research methodologies and survey instrument(s) to best answer the research question. Be as detailed as possible, such as:

include details of how the survey will be distributed, where interviews will be conducted, how the data will be recorded and transcribed.
- o Student and faculty sponsor should refine the participant population and determine how they will be recruited. Be mindful of outside approvals required to reach the targeted population.
- o Student creates the informed consent and recruitment documents.
- o Create a final copy of the survey instrument.
- o Obtain outside approvals (if needed)
- Early February:
  - o Faculty sponsor completes and submits the IRB application.
    - ▪ Faculty sponsor will start the protocol, student can contribute as co-PI with edit access (if provided by faculty.
    - ▪ Faculty sponsor will review the completed application with the student and faculty sponsor or student can submit.
  - o Wait for review. Can take up to 5 business days for each round of review.
  - o Student makes all requested revisions, faculty sponsor reviews and resubmits to the IRB.
  - o Obtain approval.
- Late February-late March:
  - o Data collection by student, under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
- April:
  - o Data analysis by student(s), under supervision of the faculty sponsor.
  - o Final product reviewed by faculty sponsor, published/disseminated by student.
- May:
  - o Student or faculty sponsor submits final report to close the protocol.