

## FAQ's

Wheaton College Institutional Review Board

<http://www.wheaton.edu/Disclosures/Institutional-Review-Board>

### QUESTION:

How do I apply to conduct research at Wheaton College? Other than complete the IRB application, is there anything else that I need to do to submit the IRB application to conduct research?

### ANSWER:

In order to be approved by the IRB as an investigator, you will need to go through online training for human subjects protection through the CITI program (<https://www.citiprogram.org/Default.asp?>). This training will provide information about important human subjects information that you will want to consider in designing your study. After you design your study with a careful consideration of human subjects protection, complete the IRB application (available on the Wheaton IRB website) in a way that demonstrates that you have considered all of the relevant human subject protection issues related to your study. You will want to include copies of informed consent, recruiting materials (flyers, scripts, letters, email templates, etc.), surveys, interview protocols, protocols for follow up procedures if an adverse event were to occur, etc. If you have questions about the application process after you review all information on the website and the CITI training modules, you should contact Brian Hunt for more information.

### QUESTION:

How do I submit my IRB application?

### ANSWER:

The site through which you submit applications and through which our IRB posts forms and information, such as determinations about your application is [www.IRBnet.org](http://www.IRBnet.org). You will need to register with this site and be familiar with how this site is organized before the submission deadline. If you have any questions about navigating this site, you should contact Brian Hunt.

### QUESTION:

When is the deadline to submit an IRB application?

### ANSWER:

The deadline for submission is currently the 1st day of the month. For example, for any applications that are currently being prepared for March submission, the due date will be March 1. However, the submission deadline only applies to full reviews; exempt and expedited studies are reviewed on a rolling basis (including through the summer).

**QUESTION:**

What can I expect after I submit my IRB application? How long does a proposal take to go through the review process? How long does it take to review revisions, etc.

**ANSWER:**

The application feedback process should take no more than a month; if you submit your application by the deadline (as of 3/2015, the deadline is the first of the month), you can expect that your application will be reviewed during that month's meeting (as of 3/2015, the meetings are scheduled on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed of the month). You can expect a response to your application within a week of the meeting. If modifications to your application are requested, this will lengthen the process. The factors that determine how long it takes to go through the review revision process and ultimately get approval depends on how long it takes for the researcher to make requested changes/resubmit, as well as whether the modifications need to go to full committee or not. If modifications are substantive (e.g., your research design did not adequately consider some important human subjects protection issue), it is likely that revisions will need to go to full committee, and the resubmission will need to meet the standard deadlines for review at monthly meetings. If modifications do not need to go to full committee (e.g., minor wording changes on consent form, need for research design modification that does not involve potential for harm to research participant), it is possible that a committee member will be assigned this to review outside of committee, and a determination could be made before the next committee meeting.

**QUESTION:**

When should I start working on my IRB application?

**ANSWER:**

Once you consider how long an application takes to go through the review process, this question is more a personal work style decision. In general, you may want to start preparing an IRB application up to 6 months before your anticipated data collection. This will allow time for a careful consideration of human subjects protection issues relevant to your study/preparation of study materials, and completion of the application in plenty of time (factoring in one or two revisions). You will want to keep in mind that you need IRB approval before you begin any part of the research process, including recruiting agencies/organizations who will help with participant recruitment, so consider the time you will need to recruit for your study when planning your anticipated start date.

**QUESTION:**

How do I know if my research can be exempt from the IRB review process?

**ANSWER:**

Please read through the "Exempt Checklist" on the Wheaton IRB website, and consult with Brian Hunt if you have any questions about the checklist.

QUESTION:

How do I know if my application can be considered for expedited review?

ANSWER:

Please read through the “Expedited Review Checklist” on the Wheaton IRB website, and consult with Brian Hunt if you have any questions about the checklist. According to Brian, if in doubt about expedited review, it is safer to submit as a full review because if it seems it can be expedited, it will be, but if you submit as expedited and it requires full committee, you run the risk of missing the deadline for review during that current month. However, please consider that submitting proposals for full review by default, can create a lot of unnecessary work for the committee in the case of projects that could actually have been reviewed on an exempt or expedited basis, so please look thoroughly at the guidelines for each type of review available on the checklist before making this decision.

QUESTION:

What do I do if I want to change something to an approved IRB project?

ANSWER:

For amendments that do not substantially change your study (e.g., add SES to parental consent, adding additional measures, changing your recruitment pool), one option would be to submit an amendment/modification to the original project by writing a cover letter describing change and rationale for change, and revising your application to include this change, with any new text highlighted in some way (e.g., highlighted in yellow). If you are not sure if changes are different enough to be considered a new application, you can email or call Brian to ask what the best way to go about making a particular change.

QUESTION:

Is there someone who can pre-review my application before submission to ensure I am submitting a strong application?

ANSWER:

If you are a faculty member, the best people to ask are colleagues who have submitted successful application for **similar** studies. If you are a student, you can also talk to other students who have submitted successful applications, but the best person to ask is your faculty advisor. Students should be working closely with their dissertation advisor (or research supervisor) on any IRB application.

QUESTION:

Are there any special considerations for students submitting an application for their dissertation/independent study?

**ANSWER:**

In preparing the application, the student should work closely with their faculty advisor, and include the faculty member on the application as well on the consent form as a contact person. In addition, in submitting the application, the student should grant the faculty member "Full Access" rather than "Signature Only" to approve it... this way, the faculty will receive all email communications, and can go in and make any changes on behalf of the student if needed, such as if the student was not readily available to handle a matter. For dissertations, it is acceptable for a student to submit an application before proposing a dissertation as long as a faculty advisor approves it.

**QUESTION:**

Does the IRB committee meet over the summer?

**ANSWER:**

While exempt and expedited studies are reviewed on a rolling basis, including through the summer, the IRB committee currently does not meet over the summer for full reviews, so the last meeting for the school year is in May. The committee resumes in Sept. This may be challenging for our students who are defending their dissertations with a June deadline, and we are working on how we might provide IRB reviews throughout the summer, but for now, it would be best to have students work on their IRB applications while also working on their proposals if they are hoping to collect data at the beginning of the school year.