UNF IRB Planning Guide

The UNF IRB gets a lot of questions about how long a project will take for review. In response, the UNF IRB has created this guide to help researchers plan for the review and approval process. Please note that the information below is meant to be used for planning purposes and should not be misconstrued as a guarantee.

1. Is your project package complete? Please see the [Documents Checklist for Expedited or Full Board Projects](#) or [Documents Checklist for Exempt Projects](#) (see in Guidelines section of website) for more information.

2. Is the information in your submission package internally consistent? For example, is the information in Attachment A (or Attachment B) consistent with the information in the North Florida – IRB Protocol application, the recruitment, the consent documents, and other supplementary information? All documents must be consistent (occasionally this will create some redundancy).

3. Did you include enough information to answer each question in the application? In general, it is better to err on the side of providing too much detail than too little. It may be helpful to think of your responses in terms of answering the following (see next page):

   - As long as your package is complete enough for review, it will be processed and routed for review. However, if your package contains inconsistencies, the review memo might be quite long. Please allow at least 2-3 weeks before expecting a request for information or a determination. However, if your project is particularly inconsistent or if there is a large volume of other submissions, initial review may take longer than 3 weeks (although this is rare).

   - If not, your package will be unlocked for revisions rather than being routed for review. In most cases projects will receive an acknowledgment memo 1-5 business days after submission. This memo will either confirm that your package is complete or will identify missing or incomplete documents. If package is complete, review will commence. Please allow at least 2-3 weeks before expecting a review memo from your reviewer.

   - As long as your package is complete enough for review, it will be processed and routed for review. However, if your information is not detailed enough, the review memo might be quite long. Please allow at least 2-3 weeks before expecting a request for information or a determination. However, if your project is particularly incomplete or if there is a large volume of other submissions, initial review may take longer than 3 weeks (although this is rare).
- **Who**? Examples: If you’re discussing procedure, please consider outlining which personnel will be responsible for conducting that procedure. If you are utilizing multiple study populations or phases, please be sure to outline which population or phase you are referring to when you describe procedures.

- **What**? Examples: Describe what will happen in your study. We recommend thinking of study activities from the participant’s perspective whenever possible.

- **Where**? Examples: Describe where certain procedures will occur. If you do not know the exact location, please outline the basics of the location (e.g., will the consent and data collection take place in a private setting? Will all activities take place online?)

- **When**? Examples: Describe activities temporally in relation to other activities. If there will be time pressures for participation, please outline that information.

- **How**? How will you achieve your goals in the research? For example, it may not be enough to describe the data as anonymous if you do not also describe how you will accomplish that and ensure that no identifiers will be collected. For Qualtrics surveys to be anonymous, the “anonymize response” option must be selected in survey options. If you intend to send the link via the email distribution feature in Qualtrics, please also use the “Anonymous Link” function from the advanced options in Qualtrics. Qualtrics is generally preferred over SurveyMonkey but if you intend to use SurveyMonkey, please refer to the SurveyMonkey directions on how to turn off identifiers.

- **Why**? This question is important if you are justifying a procedure. For example, why is your consent procedure appropriate for your study? If your study is more than minimal risk, this question becomes increasingly important.
Steps in Review Process for Expedited and Full Board Review

One of the best things you can do to reduce the timeline for review and approval is to meet with a research integrity administrator prior to submission. Although research integrity administrators are not IRB members, they have a strong understanding of the regulations and often know what reviewers look for during review. By filling in the information gaps prior to submission, researchers often have substantially fewer review items to address during the formal review process. We also suggest that researchers consider having a third party read their IRB documents prior to submission to ensure there are no inconsistencies or incomplete explanations.

To contact a research integrity administrator, please email irb@unf.edu or call (904) 620-2455.
One of the best things you can do to reduce the timeline for a Declaration of Exemption is to meet with a research integrity administrator prior to submission. Although research integrity administrators are not IRB members, they have a strong understanding of the regulations and often know what reviewers look for during review. By filling in the information gaps prior to submission, researchers often have substantially fewer review items to address during the formal review process. We also suggest that researchers consider having a third party read their IRB documents prior to submission to ensure there are no inconsistencies or incomplete explanations.

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