

University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (IRB) Helpful Hints for Graduate Students and Faculty Advisors

1. **Start early!**

IRB Protocols can take at least 2-3 weeks from the date of submission to approval, assuming no revisions are needed. During particularly busy times of the semester (the beginning and end of semesters are always busy times for IRB submissions) or during campus breaks, it may take longer for an approval to come through, so plan ahead and be sure to get your protocol in as soon as possible.

Master's Students: It's best to submit your protocol and get IRB approval at least the semester before you intend to graduate to give yourself enough time to write the IRB protocol, receive IRB approval, conduct your research, analyze results, and write your thesis/independent study. E.g., if you're graduating spring semester, you should obtain IRB approval as soon as possible during the fall semester.

Doctoral Students: Your protocol should be submitted as soon as possible after your dissertation committee has approves your research topic proposal. You will need to give yourself enough time to write the IRB protocol, receive IRB approval, conduct your research, analyze results, write your dissertation, and defend your dissertation. We recommend that the IRB protocol be submitted and approved at least two semesters before your planned graduation. E.g., if you're graduating spring semester, you should obtain IRB approval during the preceding spring semester.

2. **Make sure you've completed the human subjects research education course.**

Go to the 'Required Education' section of the IRB website for printable instructions to register for the online course. This is the best way to ensure you register for the correct course and will help you avoid doing extra and unnecessary work. When registering for the online course, be sure to use your UND email address (@UND.edu) to ensure the online protocol submission system captures your training completion report.

3. **Use the online protocol submissions system for all new submissions.**

All new submissions must be completed online at <https://erac.und.edu>. There is a training video on the IRB homepage to assist new users in becoming acclimated to the system.

4. **Avoid the most common IRB protocol mistakes.**

- Students cannot serve as Principal Investigators for their research. In the online submission system, the faculty advisor should be listed as the PI and the student researcher listed as co-PI.
- Answer all the questions on the form and **provide complete, consistent, and detailed information.**
- If you'll be conducting research with students or staff at K-12 schools (even if it's in your own classroom/school), you will need to obtain permission from the district or principal.
 - Some districts (Grand Forks, Fargo, & Bismarck, for example) require permission at the district level.
 - Other districts (East Grand Forks is an example) require permission from the principal of the school where the research will be conducted.
- Permission from the district/school should be submitted on letterhead along with your IRB protocol.
- If you're working with an outside entity that has its own IRB (e.g., Sanford, other Universities), approval from that IRB may be required in addition to UND IRB approval. Contact an outside IRB as soon as possible – there is no need to wait for UND's IRB approval to make an initial inquiry about another institution's research requirements.
- If you're going to be making any recordings during the research – audio, video, digital, or image – the study does not qualify in an exemption category.
- If you'll be surveying or interviewing children under age 18, the study does not qualify in an exemption category.
- The online protocol submission system was designed to be intuitive. Questions/panels will appear/disappear based on your responses to questions. Reading the protocol questions carefully and using the help text for assistance will help you avoid delays.

5. The IRB protocol must include anything being used to gather data from participants, such as:

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Assessments
- Assignments
- Interview questions
- Focus group questions
- Anything else that the researcher will use to obtain information from participants

6. The IRB protocol must include all recruitment materials, such as:

- Advertisements
- Flyers
- Email invitations
- Letter invitations
- Anything else that the researcher will use to recruit participants for the research

7. Don't begin your research until you receive approval from the IRB office.

Submitting your protocol in the system is just the first step. Your faculty advisor will need to certify the protocol as the PI; the department chair will then need to provide approval before it's routed to the IRB office. You'll hear from the IRB if any revisions to your protocol are necessary and when you've received approval to start your research.

8. Contact the IRB office! Contact us if:

- You're not sure if you even need IRB approval.
- You know you need IRB approval, but you don't know where to begin.
- You're not sure which human subjects education course you should take.
- You think you may have already taken a human subjects education course and want to check.
- You're not sure which level of review your study falls under.
- You're not sure if you need letters of support/permission from any outside agencies or organizations.
- You're receiving conflicting advice on IRB policies and procedures and aren't sure what to do.
- You want to talk about anything else IRB-related.

We strive to make sure every researcher has a good experience with the IRB. We want your protocol to be successful from the start and are here to help you anytime during the process!

Contact Information:

IRB Office Location: Tech Accelerator, Suite 2050
Phone Number: 701-777-4279
Fax Number: 701-777-2193
Website: <http://UND.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/>
Email: UND.irb@UND.edu

IRB Research Compliance Coordinator:
Renee Carlson
Email: renee.carlson@UND.edu

Director of Research Assurance & Ethics:
Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP
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