Completing the Intuitional Review Board (IRB) Request for Review

If you want to see what University of Portland as a whole says about all of this go to www.up.edu/irb.

First some important definitions.

IRB review is mandatory for studies done in any organization or institution that is receiving federal funds. That includes UP. IRB approval must be granted before data collection can begin. The fundamental reason for IRB review is to prevent any harm of any kind coming to participants in any study sponsored by us.

An exempt study—For teachers this usually means analyzing data that you would have gathered as a normal part of your job as a teacher. The federal guidelines talk about analyzing data related to curriculum and standardized assessment. We are generally liberal in our definition of what this means. Review of an exempt study is done by an IRB School of Education representative and if approved as exempt the review process is usually very short.

An expedited study—If you are gathering data that would not normally be available as part of your work as a teacher BUT it is clear that there is little chance that any harm could come to participants then the study may be reviewed by two members of the IRB. These reviews are generally done rapidly (not always) but they could take a couple of weeks to complete. A clue that you are doing an expedited study and not an exempt study is that you need a consent form (see II.7 and the section on Consent Forms below).

A study requiring a full review—Note the list below. If you are doing any of these then the IRB will do a full review. All of the members of the committee review the proposal. Usually comment and suggestions are made to the researcher. Full reviews often have to be submitted more than once. It is not uncommon for a full review to take a month or more. Numbers 3 and 4 are the ones most likely to give you trouble. Admittedly many of these are unlikely to apply to teachers doing research.

1. support from non-university sources (e.g., government agencies) that require full IRB approval before they will release funds.
2. the likelihood of risk or substantial stress or discomfort to the subject.
3. personality tests, inventories or questionnaires of a personal and sensitive nature where subjects' identities will not be anonymous to the researcher.
4. sensitive aspects of a subject's behavior that could reasonably place a subject at risk of criminal / civil liability or be damaging to a subject's financial standing or employability.
5. sensitive aspects of a subject's behavior such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.
6. health care procedures that are not conducted for the primary benefit of the subject.

7. diagnostic or therapeutic assessments, interventions, or measures that are not standard, generally acceptable, or common practice.
8. deception or procedures that are not known to the subject (e.g., the subject will not be fully informed about study objectives).
9. special populations (e.g., children, prisoners, pregnant women, or individuals who are mentally or psychologically ill, or incompetent).
10. greater than minimal risk to subjects.
11. collection of blood samples or other body fluids in any amount.

FILLING OUT THE FORM

Download the Request for Review from or from my website
teaching.up.edu/edresearch/apa.html

Some of the responses required in the form are obvious and I'm not going to talk about them.

Research Proposal—Toward the bottom of the front signature page it says attach your research proposal. This will not be necessary if you have an exempt study. If you are doing anything other than examining curricula, you will need to attach any instruments, questionnaires or surveys you are using.

I. Write your problem statement here. If you don't think it is immediately obvious what you are studying write a clarifying sentence.

II. 2—If you are using your own students you would say something like: An intact class of 4^{th} grade students for whom I am the classroom teacher. If you are working with other teachers you would indicate that you have requested volunteers from the school faculty where you are employed. If you have to use respondents from outside of the school this is unlikely to be an exempt study.

II.7. If you are doing anything that is not exempt then it is likely you will need a consent form. The consent form will need to be attached to the IRB form. Please see the outline for consent forms below. Discuss this with me (or your research project mentor) before you write a consent form.

II.9. Write that all data will only be reported in the aggregate. Or if you are doing a qualitative study you say that locations and respondents will only be identify by pseudonym.

III.1. This is the most important block. Explain what data you will gather and how you will gather it. This explanation needs to be clear enough that someone who doesn't know what you are doing will be able to make judgments about potential harm to participants. You don't get to make that judgment so you need to be clear enough that someone on the IRB can. This is a summary of chapter three of your paper.

III.8. Write that all materials related to the study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in your office.

IF YOU ARE USING THE PDF FORM FROM THE UNIVERSITY IRB SITE DO NOT CLICK ON THE EMAIL FORM BUTTON. The form should be sent to your advisor (me) and I send it forward.

Signatures. I am not sure what we are doing about this yet. I would prefer that you do not fax the form to me (do everything as an email attachment). If we decide we need signed forms I'll get back to you.

CONSENT FORMS

In almost all cases of non-exempt studies you will need a consent form. This is especially true if you are gathering data from children (that means under 18). The consent form needs to be signed by the parent or guardian, not the child.

There are only a few elements that must be in consent forms. They are:

1. A clear (but very short) description of the study.
2. Who you are. Under what auspices are you doing a study?
3. Some statement that all responses are either confidential or anonymous. If you are using a consent form then the responses will probably be confidential. Then briefly describe how you will ensure confidentiality.
4. Participation is voluntary. Sometimes you also need to write that participants can stop participating whenever they want.
5. Who will see the results.

Sample Consent Form

I am completing a research project on [describe the project]. I am asking that you respond to a few questions related to the project. Your responses will be kept confidential and, if you wish, you may choose not to participate. All references to participants will be kept anonymous in the study report. The report will be seen by my faculty advisor at the University of Portland and may be disseminated to [list anyone else you think might see this] as well.

Please sign this form to establish that you are willing to participate. Thank you for your assistance.

[Your address block]

_____

(signature)