FAQs

Introduction

We have posted our IRB process related FAQs in a searchable PDF format. You may search by using the CTRL/F key combination. Just type the search word in the box that appears. You may also scroll through the Table of Contents and click on the topic or question of interest.

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Student Information

1. If I am doing data analysis only that does not involve contact with human subjects, do I have to submit to the IRB?

All student-initiated research projects that include information collected from or about humans must be submitted to the IRB for a formal determination as to whether the project is or is not human subjects research.

2. Do I need IRB approval if the results of my project are not going to be published, presented at an academic conference, or otherwise disseminated beyond the classroom?

Federal regulations do not require IRB approval for activities that fall under the "practice" rather than "research" designation. But the distinction between "public health practice" and "public health research" is very difficult to define. You should submit your proposed project to the IRB for a formal determination.

3. Do I need IRB approval if my project involves key informant interviews?

Yes, your proposed research requires IRB review.

4. Do I have to submit my entire research proposal for IRB review if I have received IRB approval at another institution?

No, the submission of a new application is not required. If you are listed on a pre-existing IRB-approved study at another institution that involves human subjects research, the PI of that protocol and the approving IRB of that institution are responsible for your involvement as a student researcher in the research, and you do not have to submit a research application for IRB review at JHSPH. However, copies of the IRB approval letter, research plan, and any documentation of your participation as a student researcher should be submitted to the MPH Program Office (for MPH students) or the JHSPH Graduate Education and Research Office (for other masters and doctoral students).

5. Do I need to include researchers as co-investigators on my IRB application if they will not be involved in the data analysis?

If your project involves only existing data, and no further prospective data collection, you do not have to list the researchers who originally collected the data. You should explain the source of the data in your research plan

6. Can I tell people about the research if my application is pending IRB approval?

Yes, you can tell people about the study, but no recruitment, consenting, or data collection may take place.

7. Can I be added to an active, ongoing IRB-approved study?

Yes, if the PI has agreed to add you as a student investigator on an active, ongoing IRB-approved study, the submission of an Amendment Application signed by the PI is required.

8. Do I have to submit a new application if my capstone project involves data analysis of pre-existing data with no identifiers or linkage?

Yes, all student projects that involve information collected from, or about humans, require IRB review.

9. Do I need a research plan for my dissertation research using secondary data analysis?

Yes, a research plan is required and must be uploaded into the PHIRST system when creating a new application. This should not be your proposal. Instead, make it clear that the data have already been collected, their source, whether you have access to identifiers if they exist, and so on. Include only a brief description of your rationale and analysis plans.

10. If I am listed as a student researcher on a study that was closed, can I still write manuscripts and make dissertation presentations?

Yes. However, the study would have to remain open is if the data were still able to be linked to identifiers. If the study has been terminated and you wish to do additional data analysis/dissemination then the PI can submit a new proposal for a secondary data analysis.

11. Do I need JHSPH IRB approval to submit a manuscript for publication for research conducted at another institution?

No. Because the research itself did not occur under the jurisdiction of the JHSPH IRB, you do not need JHSPH approval to publish the data. However, you should list your affiliation for the publication as the other institution because the convention is to link affiliation to the site of the work. You may list JHSPH as your affiliation in the publication if the data were used for your JHPSH thesis or dissertation.