

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

- **What is IRB?**

The Institutional Review Board was created to protect human subjects participating in research. At Jackson State University, the IRB's intention is to:

- Minimize risk to research participants;
- Ensure participants have given their consent after being fully informed of research procedures and risks;
- Promote equity in who is asked to participate.

- **When should I submit an IRB application?**

One should submit an IRB application when they are interested in conducting research that involves human subjects, including utilizing/analyzing human subjects' data whether it is human tissue, cells, etc. Students

Examples of such methods include:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Interaction/interventions with individuals
- Using data that has been collected from the aforementioned methods, i.e., census or NHANES

- **Who should apply?**

Faculty, staff and students (undergraduate and graduate) who are engaged in the following:

- Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation;
- Research for a publication or presentation;
- A class project that may be used outside of the class for:
  - A future publication;
  - A presentation, poster presentation, etc.

- **Where can I find the IRB application and documents?**

An applicant can find the application by going to the official JSU website- [www.jsums.edu](http://www.jsums.edu). Click on the [Employees](#) tab, then click on [Research](#) and finally, [Forms and Apps](#). The application and forms can be found there.

- **How do I communicate with the IRB?**

Applicants are to communicate with the IRB using their **official JSU emails**, as this will be the only email that will be used by the IRB to send any correspondence, inclusive of application feedback, approvals, etc.

- **How do I determine if my research will be exempt, expedited or full?**

This determination is not deemed by the applicant, but rather the IRB office. However, exempt status is given to research where there is minimum to no risk for research subjects, expedited review is given to research where there is a higher level of risk to the subjects and full board status is given when research subjects are vulnerable populations, i.e., children 17 and under, prisoners, mentally disabled, etc. Again, the applicant does not make this determination.

- **Are there any deadlines for submitting IRB applications?**

According to the Graduate School's policy, students who will be graduating need to submit their IRB applications one semester prior to their graduation time. Therefore, the deadlines that have been agreed to by the IRB office and the Graduate School are March 31<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>. ***These are hard deadlines, meaning that if the dates fall on weekends or holidays, the applicant should get the applications in on or before these dates.*** The March 31<sup>st</sup> date is also very important for **ALL applicants** who will be conducting research that involves vulnerable populations, because full board review will be necessary. **Please note that full board reviews are not conducted during the summer, as board members are not available and/or accessible.** IRB applications that are received and reviewed year round, if they are not full board applications received prior to summer break.

- **How long does it take for my application to be reviewed and/or approved?**

The applicant should receive some type of communication from the IRB office within five (5) business days. This includes a "Dear Applicant" email about the receipt of the application, modifications to the application and/or approval or denial of the application. This does not mean that the application will be approved in five (5) business days, but rather communication about the application. Approvals are given ongoing. There is no specific time that an approval will be received, as it is dependent on the complexity of the research and the timeliness of the applicants' response/reply to application modifications.

- **What happens when my approval expires and my research is not complete?**

IRB approvals are good for one year. Therefore, prior to the expiration, preferably 30 days in advance, the applicant will need to complete a **continuing review form (CRF)** to extend their research. The CRF can be found online on the same page as the application (the link can be found in question 4). When submitting the CRF, the applicant needs to include a copy of the latest approval letter for the research and a copy of their CITI certificate.

- **What happens when research is done with other institutions?**

When applicants want to work with other institutions beyond Jackson State University, they will need to contact these institutions beforehand to inquire about what their requirements are, as they will need approval from these institutions to get IRB approval

from Jackson State University. The applicant should include these institutions in their application in the “site(s) of research” section. For school districts, the applicant should contact them to get permission to work with their school districts. For colleges and universities, the applicant should contact these institutions’ IRB offices to inquire about their requirements, as sometimes the applicant may need to go through their IRB process as well. In most cases, the JSU IRB will provide a provisional letter to the applicant as documentation that their application has been submitted to the JSU IRB. Applicants can also receive use the SMART IRB portal, if deemed necessary.

- **How does a student request a change of title for their research after IRB approval is received?**

The applicant will send an email to the IRB letting the IRB know what the old title was and what the new title will be. Along with the email, the applicant should include the approval letter for the protocol. The applicant will then receive a modification letter with the new title change. A copy of the letter will be sent to the graduate school for their records.

- **What online tools are acceptable to use to send links to surveys to participants?**

Qualtrics is the only tool that can be used to reach participants online. Jackson State University students, staff and faculty can get free accounts. The account will be set up after approval is received. In the IRB application, the applicant must identify that Qualtrics will be used-not survey monkey.