

Summary of Responsibility

EWU Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The IRB was established, in accordance with Federal regulations ([45 CFR 46](#)) and university policy¹, to ensure that research involving human subjects carried out under the auspices of Eastern Washington University conforms to established ethical standards. The Board is committed to carrying out this charge in a manner that will support and assist researchers rather than obstruct the research process. The information in this Summary of Policy is intended to provide the necessary guidance for researchers to complete the IRB review process from initial request to final approval.

IRB Responsibility and Jurisdiction

The university's IRB policy and procedures apply to any research activity which involves human subjects, whether such research is undertaken on a large or small scale, whether it is preliminary or fully designed, whether it is student or faculty research, whether it is funded or non-funded, and whether it involves minimal risk or more than minimal risk.

The main considerations and responsibilities of the IRB are

- a. to determine that potential risks to research subjects are adequately addressed and their anonymity assured when appropriate;
- b. to determine that adequate explanation of the potential risks and safeguards, as well as benefits, are given to the subjects and their consent to participate is validated; and
- c. to determine that the risk:benefit ratio to the subjects is clearly articulated.

Engaging in research with human subjects without IRB approval puts both the subjects and the researcher at risk and is a violation of university and federal policies. Regardless of investigator intent, unapproved research involving human subjects is an unacceptable risk.

"Research covered by this policy that has been approved by an IRB may be subject to further appropriate review and approval or disapproval by officials of the institution. However, those officials may not approve the research if it has not been approved by an IRB" ([45 CFR 46.112](#)).

In addition to compliance with federal and university procedures, projects involving human subjects whose protection is the responsibility of an agency other than Eastern Washington University, will also be subject to that agency's procedures.

Responsibility for Ethical Treatment of Research Participants

Ultimately, the responsibility for maintaining ethical standards and protecting human rights rests with the individual researcher (and in the case of university students their faculty research advisor). The IRB and, when available, Departmental Research Committees are an added measure of reassurance and each serves as a resource for the interpretation of ethical practice. Any student research involving human subjects must have associated with it a Responsible Project Investigator who is a qualified faculty member or a qualified staff member, and who will monitor and be responsible for the conduct of the research.

¹ Eastern Washington University's policy for protection of human subjects is located at <https://sites.ewu.edu/policies/policies-and-procedures/ewu-302-02-human-research/>.

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Approval to Proceed with Research

Written approval from the IRB must be received before initiation of subject recruitment or initiation of procedures that involve human subjects, regardless of whether that research has been declared exempt or not.