



CCN Fact Sheet: Institutional Review Board (IRB)

What is an IRB?

An Institutional Review Board is a panel of at least 5 members who oversee research at an institution. The purpose of the IRB is to make sure that all research conducted by members of the institution is ethical and beneficial to society. The IRB is made up of both men and women and must have at least one scientist, one non-scientist, and one person from outside the institution on the panel. All research conducted with UNC funds must be approved by the UNC IRB, and therefore any research projects conducted through CCN must be approved by the IRB.

What counts as research?

Research is an *organized* way to gather *information* that is useful to *as many people as possible* in the future. Any research that uses people as research subjects in any way must get IRB approval. Research subjects are anyone who is being observed, interviewed or tested as part of a research project.

Why do I need IRB approval?

IRBs are designed to protect research subjects and make sure that they understand what they will be doing as part of the project so that they can give their consent to participate in the project. For many studies, such as focus groups or short interviews, obtaining IRB approval is not difficult.

How to I get IRB approval?

Projects funded by CCN will receive assistance from CCN staff on completing the IRB application. The application is available online at: <http://ohre.unc.edu/forms.php>. The application asks you to give information about your study, including your research goals and reasons for using human subjects. You will also need to submit any interview guides or surveys with the IRB application. Your entire research team will also need to complete IRB training before you submit the application. Training can be done online and takes about 1 hour. More information about the training can be found at: <http://ohre.unc.edu/educ.php>. CCN staff will help you turn the forms in to the UNC IRB and guide you with every step of the process, and there is no reason to start the process until after your project has been accepted.

For more information:

- UNC's Guide to the IRB Process: http://ohre.unc.edu/guide_to_irb.php
- Required Ethics Training for All Members of the Research Team: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>