

Appendix O.  
Research Ethics Committee  
Policies and Procedures  
Department of Psychology

Committee Structure and Process. The Psychology Department will have at least one and up to two Research Ethics Committees each academic year. Each committee is comprised of two full-time, tenure-track faculty members, who are elected by the Department. Each research proposal submitted to the Department's Research Ethics Committee is reviewed by both members of the committee. Committee members review the research independently, and provide individual written feedback. Committee members may confer with one another as necessary.

Researchers receive written feedback from the committee regarding each member's assessment of the research proposal with regards to ethical issues. The committee members' primary responsibility is to ensure ethical treatment of human research participants. However, they are encouraged to provide feedback about other methodological, conceptual, grammatical, and statistical issues that may improve the quality of the research. The Psychology Department especially encourages members to provide this additional feedback to student researchers.

Research Review Policies. Review is required for any and all research projects, experiments, field studies, or data collection activities involving human and non-human animal participants. Researchers must not employ the name, resources, or student assistants of the Eastern Kentucky University Psychology Department without project-by-project approval by the Department's Ethics Committee and/or Policies & the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Department's Ethics Committee will be guided in its decisions by the ethical principles and standards published by the American Psychological Association, and the IRB's procedures.

Researcher Responsibility: Regardless of committee action, responsibility for ethical matters remains with each individual researcher. Researchers have a personal obligation to:

- Be fully aware of the APA ethical standards
- Evaluate the ethical implications of the research
- Actually carry out the ethical safeguards proposed (including debriefing procedures)

Submission and Review Process

1. Researcher determines if research is EXEMPT, EXPEDITED OR FULL REVIEW.  
*See below on how to determine the status.*
  - a. If research is *Exempt*, submit directly to the University IRB unless there are special circumstances that warrant a review from the Ethics Committee. Follow the guidelines on their forms. (<http://sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/institutional-review-board>).
  - b. If research is *Expedited or Full Review*, you must submit to the Psychology Department's Ethics Committee and receive approval before submitting to the University IRB.
2. Researcher submits the following materials to the Department Ethics Committee.
  - a. *Blue Card* used by the Department to record the submission.
    - i. *Blue Card* is used to record researcher's name, contact information, name of study, and Research Ethic Committee members' written feedback
    - ii. *Blue Card* is available in the Psychology Department Office.

- b. *IRB application form (Use appropriate form for Exempt/Expedited/Full Research).*
  - c. *CITI training certificate of all researchers (including faculty mentor)*
    - i. The certificate indicates that the researcher has completed the University's required on-line tutorial session regarding ethical treatment of human research participants
  - d. *Proposal/Description of the proposed research*
  - e. *Informed consent statement*
  - f. *Parental permission form and minor assent form if subjects are minor*
  - g. *Debriefing statement*
    - i. *All researchers using psychology students as subjects must provide subjects with a brief written description of the background, purpose, and design of the research as well as at least two empirical references).*
3. The Research Monitor (1) records proposal information in the Department's Ethics Record Book, and (2) sends proposal to one of the Department's Ethics Committee.
    - a. *Research Monitor* is a graduate student who is trained to process the research proposals, type feedback given by the committee members, and send appropriate letters to the researcher. When the research monitor is not available to process proposals in a timely manner, a faculty member who is submitting the proposal or supervising the project processes the proposals.
  4. The Department's Ethics Committee will reply to prospective researcher within 2 weeks after receipt of review requests.
  5. Feedback from the Research Ethics Committee is given to the researcher in the form of a letter. If the researcher is an undergraduate student, the letter is sent to the faculty mentor instead of the student.
  6. The Department's Ethics Committee member individually provides feedback on the Blue Card and recommends one of the following four options based on his/her assessment:
    - a. *Approved with no changes.* Proceed with data collection without making revisions to the proposal
    - b. *Approved after changes.* Make revisions to the proposal, show those revisions to the faculty mentor (if the researcher is an undergraduate student), and proceed with data collection after receiving the faculty mentor's approval
    - c. *Committee needs to see revisions before approving proposal.* Make revisions to the proposal, show those revisions to the committee member(s) who requested the changes, and to the faculty mentor (if the researcher is an undergraduate student), and proceed with data collection after receiving the committee member(s)' and faculty mentor's approval; or
    - d. *Not approved: Revise and resubmit.* Make revisions to the proposal and resubmit it to the entire Research Ethics Committee for reconsideration.
  7. The Department's Ethics Committee returns the proposal, the Research Monitor: (1) copies pages of the proposal that have any written comments from the committee members (for example, grammar errors may be circled on a page); (2) types comments from Research Ethics Committee members on appropriate letter template\*, and indicates which committee member made each comment; and (3) sends letter and copied pages to researcher or faculty mentor (for undergraduate students).
  8. The Research Monitor: (1) Records in Ethics Record Book, the **date** letter sent to researcher and the **status** of proposal; (2) Files in Department Files: the original proposal (attach Blue Card, Ethics Certificate and Expedited/Full IRB Form).
  9. Researcher must revise their proposals according to the feedback from the Department's Ethics Committee. Upon approval, the researcher must then submit to the University IRB. Data collection cannot begin until the researcher receives Final Approval from the Ethics Committee and the University IRB.

Does research require EXEMPT, EXPEDITED or FULL REVIEW?

EXPEDITED AND FULL REVIEW research proposals will be submitted to the Department Ethics Committee and the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). EXEMPT research proposals will only be submitted to the University IRB unless there are special circumstances that warrant feedback from the Ethics Committee.

1. IS RESEARCHER SEEKING FUNDING FOR RESEARCH FROM ANY FUNDING AGENCY (university, state, federal)?

**IF YES:** Check funding agency's guidelines: (a) If funding agency requires a EXPEDITED OR FULL review (not Exempt) by the University IRB, submit to Ethics Committee first; **(b)** If funding agency does not require EXPEDITED OR FULL review by University IRB, continue to #2

**IF NO: Continue to #2**

2. WILL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE CHILDREN UNDER 18?

**IF YES:** Research will be either Expedited or Full. Submit to the Ethics Committee first.

**IF NO: Continue to #3**

3. WILL INFORMATION FROM RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS BE RECORDED IN SUCH A MANNER THAT HUMAN SUBJECTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED, DIRECTLY OR THROUGH IDENTIFIERS LINKED TO THE SUBJECTS?

**IF YES: Continue to #4**

**IF NO: Continue to #5**

4. COULD ANY DISCLOSURE OF THE HUMAN SUBJECTS' RESPONSES OUTSIDE THE RESEARCH REASONABLY PLACE THE SUBJECTS AT RISK OF CRIMINAL OR CIVIL LIABILITY OR BE DAMAGING TO THE SUBJECTS' FINANCIAL STANDING, EMPLOYABILITY, OR REPUTATION?

**If Yes to #3 and Yes to #4: Submit to the Ethics Committee first**

**If Yes to #3 and No to #4: Continue to #5**

5. WILL RESEARCH EXPOSE PARTICIPANTS TO ONLY "MINIMAL RISK"?

Minimal Risk is defined as: "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests"

(Department of Health & Human Services)

**If No** (research is greater than minimal risk): **Submit to Ethics Committee First**

**If Yes** (*research is only minimal risk*): Submit to the University IRB unless there are special circumstances that warrant a review from the Ethics Committee.

## Requirements for Consent Forms: Human Participants

Proposals involving human participants should be accompanied by a clear and understandable informed consent forms.\* *All undergraduate and graduate students are required to prepare consent forms; However, when data will be collected anonymously, participants will not sign the consent forms.* Refer to the University IRB website for more information about what must be included in expedited and full consent forms, including assent and parental consent forms (<http://sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/institutional-review-board>)

*\*Sample Consent Forms are provided to all researchers*

## Requirements for Debriefing of Human Participants

Our research participants are doing us a favor by giving of their time to help us out. In return, we owe it to them to make their experience both interesting and educational -- we should give them a better sense of what psychological research is all about. Therefore, researchers are required to give every participant a debriefing form\* that follows these guidelines:

1. It should be easy for students to contact researchers about studies in which they have participated. You should provide subjects with a name and phone number. Also, if possible let subjects know when data will be analyzed, and invite them to come by if they are interested in the results.
2. Provide subjects with a written debriefing statement that describes the research in a truly informative way. **Name the independent and dependent variables, and/or other important variables, and the research predictions.** Mention the theory or past research from which the predictions are derived. Describe the rationale for the predictions. Use language that undergraduates can understand -- avoid jargon. Title this statement an "explanation" since students will not recognize the term "debriefing". See the attached sample debriefing.
3. Include references in the debriefing statement given to subjects. Give them two references that will be helpful to them if they are interested in pursuing the topic of your research. Try to locate references that are not overly sophisticated, and that the ECU library owns.
4. Ensure that the debriefing does not allow subjects to feel inadequate, insecure, deficient, ridiculous or bad in any other way as a result of their behavior. If you have given them false feedback about their performance, e.g., if you have led them to believe that they have failed, you must "undo" that in the debriefing. Let them know that everyone actually performed quite well, or that you won't know how well anyone actually performed. If you have given them a task on which they were bound to fail, or which is difficult, explain that to them and reassure them about their performance. If you are measuring personality traits, let them know that any pattern of traits/score may be quite appropriate or healthy for a given individual. Always treat participants gently and with respect.
5. We recommend that you give a more detailed verbal debriefing along with the written one. Also, participants in 419 projects should be reminded that they may read the 419 posters in the Cammack Lobby beginning finals week.
6. Sometimes awareness of the research hypothesis or method among future subjects may invalidate your results. In this case you may request permission to give a partial debriefing at the end of the session, and delay the detailed debriefing until the end of the semester. If the debriefing is delayed until the end of the semester you must inform the participants at the end of the study **exactly when and where the detailed debriefing will be held**, and should ask instructors to remind their classes of the time of the debriefing right before it occurs.

*\*Sample Debriefing forms are available to every researcher*

Blue Card to Record Submission

**Research Proposal  
Psychology Department**

Researcher Name:

Researcher Email Address:

Date sent to Psychology Department's Ethics Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the materials included in the submission:

- IRB application form
- CITI training certificate of all researchers (including faculty mentor)
- Proposal/Description of the proposed research
- Informed consent statement
- Parental permission form and minor assent form (if subjects are minor)
- Debriefing statement

<b>Committee Members:</b> Enter Initials here →		
<b>Committee Member:</b> Enter date reviewed →		
<b>Proposal approved with no changes.</b>		
<b>Proposal approved after changes.</b> Make revisions to the proposal, show those revisions to the faculty mentor (if the researcher is an undergraduate student), and proceed with data collection after receiving the faculty mentor's approval		
<b>Committee needs to see the changes before approving proposal.</b> Make revisions to the proposal, show those revisions to the committee member(s) who requested the changes, and to the faculty mentor (if the researcher is an undergraduate student), and proceed with data collection after receiving the committee member(s)' and faculty mentor's approval		
<b>Proposal not approved.</b> Make revisions to the proposal and resubmit it to the entire Research Ethics Committee for reconsideration.		

**REVISIONS REQUESTED (with initials):**