IRB (Institutional Review Board)

(Information obtained from Human Subjects Office:
http://hso.research.uiowa.edu/irb-overview)

IRB Overview

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is charged with the protection of human subjects in research, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulation and regardless of sponsorship. Each board consists of University of Iowa faculty and staff, and representatives from the Iowa City community. The IRB reviews research that : (1) is sponsored by the institution, (2) is conducted by or under the direction of any employee or agent of this institution in connection with his or his institutional responsibilities, (3) is conducted by or under the direction of any employee or agent of this institution using any property or facility of this institution, or (4) involves the use of this institution's non-public information to identify or contact human subjects.

There are three IRBs at the University of Iowa. All IRBs consider the risks to the subjects, the anticipated benefits to the subjects and/or others, the importance of the knowledge that may gained, and the informed consent process to be employed.

Application materials are pre-reviewed by the Human Subjects Office staff for completeness and are then forwarded to the appropriate IRB chair for review. The IRB chair determines whether a protocol is eligible for expedited review or is exempt from the regulations. Most minimal risk studies can be classified as expedited or exempt. If the study can be classified as expedited or exempt, the chair communicates directly with the prinicpal investigator, generally via e-mail, regarding any issues or revsions that are required prior to approval. Notice of approval is sent to the principal investigator via HawkIRB.

Applications requiring full board review (those that are greater than minimal risk) are placed on the agenda of the next available full board meeting and the Human Subjects Office notifies the principal investigator of the meeting date. Application materials are distributed to IRB members at least one week before the meeting. This lead time gives members a chance to review the materials and to develop their concerns or recommendations. The principal investigator is notified of the results of the meeting via HawkIRB or e-mail. After the principal investigator responds to the issues or revisions required by the full board, he or she is notified of approval via HawkIRB or campus mail.

For a complete description of IRB procedures, please refer to the UI Investigator's Guide.