

**List of the following documents:
(revised 9/28/09)**

- Guide to Students for Obtaining Ethics Approval for Research
- Ethics Committee Request Form
- Checklist for a Proposal to the Ethics Committee
- Consent Form Sample
- The Elements of Informed Consent
- Addendum to an Approved Ethics Committee Request Form

GUIDE TO STUDENTS FOR OBTAINING ETHICS APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH

Department of Psychology
Updated 09/18/09

If you are planning to conduct research at Wesleyan through the Department of Psychology, you need ethics approval prior to initiating data collection for your research. Research studies conducted in research methods classes, faculty research labs, and for theses/independent projects all require ethics approval. There are two committees that review research proposals to assess them for ethical treatment of participants: the *Department of Psychology Ethics Committee* and the *University Institutional Review Board*. You should get approval from *one* of these bodies, using the below guide to determine which body is charged with overseeing your particular research.

Department of Psychology Ethics Committee

You should submit your research proposal to the Department of Psychology Ethics Committee if the proposed research is of minimal risk to participants, does not involve collection of sensitive data, *and* does not involve vulnerable populations (see definitions at bottom). Submission forms and instructions are available on the first floor of Judd Hall. The contact person is the Administrative Assistant in Psychology, Cathy Race (crace@wesleyan.edu).

University Institutional Review Board

You should submit your research proposal to the University Institutional Review Board if the proposed research is of greater than minimal risk to participants, involves collection of sensitive data, *and/or* involves vulnerable populations. Submission forms and instructions are available at www.wesleyan.edu/irb. The contact person is the Administrative Assistant to the Academic Deans, Lisa Sacks (lsacks@wesleyan.edu).

Your research proposal is waived from requiring any ethics approval if *all* of the following conditions are met: it is of minimal risk to participants, it does not involve collection of sensitive data, it does not involve vulnerable populations, it is being conducted as a learning activity in a Psychology course, and the results will *not* be presented to the public beyond the classroom (e.g., such as in student journals, poster sessions, other publications). If it meets all conditions, you do not need to submit it to either committee.

Definitions

Minimal risk. Minimal risk is the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort ordinarily encountered in daily life or during a routine physical or psychological examination or test.

Vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations include children, prisoners, pregnant women, fetuses, the seriously ill, and mentally or cognitively compromised adults.

Sensitive data. Sensitive data include behaviors that are typically sensitive to individuals, such as drug or alcohol use, illegal conduct, or sexual behavior, as well as information that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation.

ETHICS COMMITTEE REQUEST FORM 2009 - 2010

(1) Principal Investigator

- Student Name: _____ Box: _____
- (print clearly) E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

(circle one) • Faculty Supervisor or Researcher: _____

(2) Title of Project: _____

(3) *Research submitted to the Psychology Department Ethics Committee must be of minimal risk, must not involve vulnerable populations (e.g., children, prisoners), and must not elicit sensitive data from participants. Research that does not meet these criteria should instead be submitted to the University Institutional Review Board (IRB); forms and submission procedures are at: www.wesleyan.edu/irb*

(4) *Please check off and attach the necessary information, and submit the completed packet to Cathy Race, Room 108. Packets without (a)-(e) checked will be returned. Students must also check (f), and interview studies must also check (g) and (h), otherwise, packets will be returned.*

_____ (a) I have closely followed the sample consent form, listing all information regarding data storage and access, risks and benefits to subjects and contact information for both the departmental chair and research supervisor.

_____ (b) My proposal section contains all of the following: A brief description of the objectives and design of the study; a description of the study procedure; a specific description of where the data collected will be stored (specific room #s) and under what conditions (locked cabinets); an explicit statement (identifying persons by name) about whom will have access to the data; an explicit statement about when the data will be destroyed; an explicit statement about how the data will be coded to protect subject identity.

_____ (c) I have enclosed a debriefing script written in jargon-free, easy-to-understand English. The script is at least two paragraphs long, and it educates participants about both the research area and the study. When feasible, it also contains references or resource information for participants who would like to learn more about the topic.

_____ (d) I have carefully proofread all documents and checked for spelling.

_____ (e) My proposal and consent form do not claim that the research involves zero risk to participants (a "minimal risk" study is not risk-free; it simply presents no greater risk than that found in daily life).

_____ (f) *For student applications:* My research supervisor has closely examined a final draft of the enclosed proposal and has indicated approval by signing below.

_____ (g) *For interview studies:* I state whether the interviews will be recorded on audio tape, and if they will be, I discuss how the recordings will be stored securely.

_____ (h) *For interview studies:* I have attached sample questions to indicate the nature of the interview.

(5) For student applications: Faculty Sponsor Statement of Approval
I have read this application for conformity to the guidelines and approved it.

Signed _____
(signature of Faculty Sponsor)

(Do not write in this section. This will be completed by Cathy Race.)

Draft # _____ Date submitted to committee: _____ Date returned to PI: _____
Draft # _____ Date submitted to committee: _____ Date returned to PI: _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Barbara Juhasz
Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera
Steve Stemler

RECOMMENDATION:

_____ Date Approved _____ Rejected
_____ Contingent approval _____ Contact committee
_____ Revision requested to discuss (comments)

COMPLETION:

_____ copy for Tina

CHECKLIST FOR A PROPOSAL TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

At a minimum, a proposal to the Ethics Committee must include the following. A proposal that does not contain all of this information will be returned for completion without review and therefore will incur significant delay. Please submit your completed packet to Cathy Race for distribution to the Committee.

- (1) A brief description of the objectives and design of the study.
- (2) A description of the **study procedure**, including a description of who the participants will be and how many will be involved.
- (3) In addition, **the proposal** must include all of the following:
 - a. a specific description of where the data collected will be stored (e.g., specific room numbers) and under what conditions (locked cabinets).
 - b. an explicit statement (identifying persons by name) about whom will have access to the data.
 - c. an explicit statement about when the data will be destroyed.
 - d. an explicit statement about how the data will be coded to protect subject identity.
- (4) A description of how and when the **debriefing** will be conducted (e.g., in person immediately after the study).
- (5) A copy of the **debriefing script** that will be used. This must be written in nontechnical language easily understood by the general public.
- (6) A copy of the **consent form**, or an explanation of why a consent form will not be used (e.g., research involving a telephone survey). See the next 2 pages for a Sample Consent Form and guidelines for The Elements of Informed Consent.
- (7) In the consent form, a description of any **potential risks to participants** beyond “minimal risk” (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life) and of any potential benefits.
- (8) **If the study entails more than minimal risk** (e.g., a deceptive cover story), an explanation of:
 - (a) Why the risk is unavoidable.
 - (b) Why the benefits of the study outweigh the risks.
 - (c) What steps are being taken to safeguard the welfare of participants.

CONSENT FORM SAMPLE

I state that I am over 18 years of age and agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Professor [X] of the Wesleyan University Psychology Department. The focus of this research is on [describe research topic and procedures. Also describe any expected benefits and risks. Note: all studies involve some risk; if minimal only, state that the risk is no greater than that found in everyday life].

I understand that all of my responses will be held in strict confidence and will not be identified in any publication of the results. Specifically, I understand that the data collected from this research will be stored in [list specific room #s and buildings] in locked cabinets and that only [identify persons by name] will have access to the data. The data will be coded so as not to identify me by name and will be destroyed by [list specific time period].

I understand that in return for serving in this experiment, I will receive one hour of credit toward the Research Participation requirement in Psychology 105 [or monetary compensation, list amount here]. I further understand that participation in this research is voluntary, that I may ask questions, and that I am free to withdraw from the experiment at any time. I understand that if I choose to withdraw during the experiment, I will still receive full credit [or full monetary compensation]. I further understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for my own records. Finally, I understand that if I have any comments, questions, or concerns following the experiment, I may contact Dr. [X] by telephone (860-685-XXXX) or in person (Room XXX of Judd Hall). I may also bring complaints about the experiment to Dr. Lisa Dierker, Chair of the Wesleyan Psychology Department (860-685-2369).

Name of participant (print clearly): _____

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

(Participant Copy)

THE ELEMENTS OF INFORMED CONSENT

According to the U.S. Office of Protection from Research Risks, federal regulations require that certain information be provided to each research participant, including:

- (1) A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the participant's participation, and a description of the procedures to be followed.
- (2) A description of any reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participant.
- (3) A description of any benefits to the participant or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.
- (4) A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the participant.
- (5) A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the participant will be maintained.
- (6) For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether there are any treatments or compensation if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained (Note: A risk is considered "minimal" when the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed 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).
- (7) An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research participants' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the participant.
- (8) A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.

Note: It is essential that consent forms be written in plain language that research participants can understand. In addition, the consent form should not contain any exculpatory language. That is, participants should not be asked to waive (or appear to waive) any of their legal rights, nor should they be asked to release the investigator, sponsor, or institution (or its agents) from liability for negligence.

**ADDENDUM TO AN APPROVED
ETHICS COMMITTEE REQUEST FORM
2009 - 2010**

Use this form if you would like to request approval of a minimal change to an already approved request for research participants. Minimal changes include change of the names of student members of the research team, change in how participants will be recruited or compensated, the addition of a few survey questions, and so forth. If in doubt, submit a full Ethics Committee Request Form application rather than using this form.

(1) Principal Investigator

• Student Name: _____ Box: _____
 (print clearly) E-mail: _____ Phone: _____
 Faculty Supervisor: _____
 -OR-
 • Faculty Researcher: _____

(2) Title of Project (as it appeared on approved request):

(3) For student application: Faculty Sponsor Statement of Approval

I have read this application for conformity to the guidelines and approved it.

Signed _____
 (signature of Faculty Sponsor)

(4) Instructions:

Please attach a written statement indicating exactly how you wish to alter the previously approved procedure. If you are changing the consent form, study stimuli, or debriefing sheet, please also attach a copy of the new one. Submit this to Cathy Race, Judd Hall Room 108.

(Do not write in this section. This will be completed by Cathy Race.)

Draft # _____ Date submitted to committee: _____ Date returned to PI: _____
 Draft # _____ Date submitted to committee: _____ Date returned to PI: _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Barbara Juhasz
 Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera
 Steve Stemler

RECOMMENDATION:

_____ Date Approved
 _____ Contingent approval
 _____ Revision requested to discuss (comments)
 _____ Rejected
 _____ Contact committee

COMPLETION

_____ Tina