



IRB Annual Customer Service Survey Response 2010/2011

The Office of Research Compliance prides itself in being both approachable and receptive to the UNCG research community. It is our intention to continue to improve our processes to keep up with the ever-changing federal regulations and various research practices. Therefore, I would like to thank all of you that took the time out of your busy schedules to respond to our annual customer satisfaction survey, which has helped in the efforts to improve our processes.

Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 198 individuals responded to the survey. The largest group of respondents was graduate students (44%) followed by faculty (43%), staff (10%), undergraduate students (3%), administrators (3%), and others (3%). The survey respondents were also characterized based on volume of protocol submissions to our office. The respondents were categorized as follows: 33% of the survey respondents have submitted one research proposal; another 33% of the respondents have submitted 2-3 proposals; 15% have submitted 4-5 proposals; 9% have submitted 6-9 proposals; and 10% have submitted over ten proposals.

Clarity and Accessibility of Forms/Documents

An overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that the required IRB documents were easily accessible (91% agreed or strongly agreed; mean=4.13¹, sd=.73). Similarly, the majority, 75%, reported that the guidance documents (e.g., Fast Facts, FAQ's) were clearly written (e.g., 72%, mean=3.69, sd=.86). Sixty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that the forms were user friendly (mean=3.5, sd=1.02).

There were 97 responses to the question about how the forms could be improved. (X%) indicated no change is necessary. In considering those comments that did suggest changes to the forms, the responses seem to cluster around a two major themes: format (length, complexity, redundancy), and a need for more clarity/guidance. Taking this into consideration, the 2011-2012 IRB applications will have a newly organized format to reduce complexity, which results in a form that is shorter in page length. Also, these changes include removal of initialing boxes for investigators. In the future, online forms will be available, which will significantly reduce effort across the board. However, there is no definite date on when this will be available to the campus. In the meanwhile, we are continuing to work on the online form submission process. Next, the

¹ A 5-point Likert scale was used on all questions with "1" representing dissatisfaction or strong disagreement,, 3=neither agree/disagree, and 5=strongly agreement or satisfaction.

redundant material within the forms has been considered, and where possible, the redundant material has been removed. However, certain questions are necessary to address various federal and institutional requirements. The ORC has revamped the FAQ's and has identified IRB members by expertise that can be contacted to assist researchers, which will hopefully provide clarity and guidance to researchers along the way. The IRB member expertise information can be found on the IRB webpage.

Satisfaction with the IRB Process

The rest of the survey questions focused on the degree of satisfaction with aspects of the IRB process. Over 60% of respondents were satisfied with the response time and another 20% were somewhat satisfied (mean=4.23, sd=1.17). Only 13% of respondents indicated any dissatisfaction with response time. The overall satisfaction was reflected in the specific comments as well. Of the 83 comments that were received, 67% were positive noting quick response time, the helpfulness of ORC staff, and improvement over previous years. The small percentage that was dissatisfied included comments on the inconsistency in response time (sometimes fast and other times slower) and others noted missing proposals or email notifications. Similarly, the overall proficiency of the IRB process was rated positively by 88% of respondents, which rated the process as good to excellent. Also, 88% of respondents rated the quality of interaction with the initial reviewer as good to excellent. Next, the quality of service received from the ORC was rated positively. This included approximately 32% of respondents that indicated good quality of service from the ORC, 39% indicated very good quality of service, and 17% indicated excellent quality of service. Likewise, the overall review process was rated positively (32% selected good, 38% selected very good, and 13% selected excellent).

There were a few themes in the comments across this section. These ranged from total time of review, investigator ability to check protocol status, protocol review consistency, clarity in requirements, and options for communicating with the investigators. Although total protocol review time has decreased, there are certain protocols that take a little more time due to either protocol complexity/incompleteness, the availability of the investigator(s) for clarification, or routing issues. Since the ORC does not currently have an online system, we encourage investigators to feel free to contact our office to check the status of their protocol(s) whenever they desire. The IRB strives to consistently follow the same review process, which is streamlined and use series of checklists that meets both federal and institutional requirements. For review clarification, the ORC has posted its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which the IRB follows in protocol review and in decision-making on approval criteria. The SOPs and the related linked documents are the basis for protocol review. In some cases, research protocols include details that surface in uncharted waters and the IRB uses its best judgment along with research within the compliance arena to conduct ethical reviews. Currently, the IRB communicates to investigators primarily through email. Therefore, the ORC database receives

frequent updates from the HR Banner system to populate email address for communication. As no system is perfect, we encourage all investigators to contact our office if there has been no communication within two to three weeks of your submission.

In the upcoming year, please check our website and Facebook page periodically for updates, IRB education sessions, and helpful hints/tips. We appreciate your research efforts as you continue to expand your horizons and build on the body of knowledge in your respective fields. We look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year. In addition, we hope that we have or are in the process of making the changes that will ultimately make your research efforts easier and less burdensome.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eric Allen', written in a cursive style.

Eric Allen, Director
Office of Research Compliance