**GUIDANCE FOR FACULTY ADVISORS OVERSEEING STUDENT RESEARCH**

Serving as a Faculty Advisor (FA) in the context of faculty-mentored student research is an activity that can provide many benefits and opportunities to both the faculty mentor and the student mentee.

It should be acknowledged, however, that such mentorship is often uncompensated in terms of either direct monetary payments or the equivalent in such things as reassigned time, WTUs, or research supply funds. As such, assuming the role of a Faculty Advisor should always be seen as voluntary, unless there is a specific expectation stated by a faculty member’s department or college. This document is offered only as guidance for FA who seek an overview of what faculty advising typically entails; this is not meant to convey an expectation that faculty are expected or required to engage in uncompensated research with student Principal Investigators (PIs).

**What is the Faculty Advisor’s role in overseeing research conducted by a student PI?**

The Faculty Advisor (FA) is expected to be an active mentor to a student Principal Investigator (PI) and share the responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research with the student PI. The FA is expected to discuss the general principles of research ethics with the student prior to development and initiation of any research project involving human subjects, help the student PI determine whether their research requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) review, and guide the student PI through the IRB application process.

The FA should continue to support the student PI in the conduct of the research project after IRB approval is attained. The FA is expected to make adequate time to consult with the student PI on a regular basis to monitor research progress.

First time student PIs will on occasion have unrealistic expectations for their proposed research given their time constraints and experience. Ideally, the FA can guide the student PI to develop a research project that better fits the parameters of time constraints and experience and is more likely to be completed in a timely manner. Complicated research proposed by a student PI can slow the IRB review process and require numerous modifications before the IRB will approve the application. Thus, FA guidance is essential in this process.

**Does a student PI’s research project always require IRB review?**

Yes, all research proposed by a student PI that involves human subjects will need review by the IRB, however, the type of IRB review is decided on the level of risk of the proposed research activities to human subjects, sensitivity of the proposed research topic and whether it is involving a vulnerable population (children, prisoners, pregnant women, or decisionally impaired individuals). While research involving unidentifiable/de-identified or coded private information or biological specimens is not considered human subjects research the student PI should submit an [IRB Application for Existing and Secondary Data Form](https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/2024/documents/IRB%20Application%20for%20Existing%20and%20Secondary%20Data%20Form%2003.25.24.docx).

**What are the FA’s responsibilities for the student PI?**

***1. FAs must have an unexpired CITI Course Completion (Basic or Refresher) for either the CITI Social & Behavioral Research or the Biomedical Research. Otherwise Faculty Advisors/Mentors can complete the*** [**CITI**](https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/2023/documents/Instructions%20on%20Navigating%20CITI%20Program%2012.04.23.pdf) ***course for FAs/Mentors***

All CSULB researchers (including FAs) are required to have an active (unexpired) CITI course completion. Additionally, FAs are expected to be familiar with the ethical and regulatory requirements for the conduct of human subjects research and to discuss research ethics with the student PI, including the professional ethics of the discipline.

**2. *FAs should assist the student PI in designing and planning their research project***

Student research projects must be appropriate to their level of training and experience. IRB policy requires student researchers to design projects that pose no more than minimal risk to human subjects. Students must allocate sufficient time for the IRB review and approval in their planning, especially for projects conducted in international settings, involving non‐CSULB collaborators, or involving sponsorship. FAs should advise the student PI that IRB approval must be in place before they can begin their research activities.

**3. *FAs should oversee preparation of the student PI’s IRB application and submission via IRBNet***

A clear, complete, consistent application will move more quickly through the IRB review process. It is important that the student PI organizes the IRB application materials for submission in IRBNet as outlined below:

• IRB Application Form, upload as a single file;

• Informed Consent, upload as a single file; and

• Appendices, upload all other submission materials to a single Appendices file and label, (e.g., Appendix A – Recruitment, Appendix B – Faculty Advisor Letter, Appendix C – Survey, etc.)

Additionally, in IRBNet, under “Project Administration” the student PI must “Share this Project” with the FA and give the FA “Full” access. This will allow the FA to receive the same IRB communications through IRBNet as the student PI.

**4.** ***FAs should support students conducting research in field settings; international research.***

FAs should advise student PIs of local customs and regulations for the safety of their subjects and for the student PI. FAs are encouraged to provide the student PI assistance with establishing local contacts or sponsorship and assist the student PI in developing an effective plan for data security.

**5**. ***FAs should monitor student research and responsible handling of data***

FAs are encouraged to periodically check in with the student PI to ensure the research is being conducted as approved by the IRB, that no problems have been encountered, that all study changes are submitted for IRB review and approval before implementation, and that data are handled in accordance with federal requirements and standard practice in the discipline. FAs are expected to be knowledgeable about the student PIs research, ensuring that the student PI shares any adverse event or other research‐related problems with the FA and reports the problem to the IRB as soon as possible.

**What are the possible outcomes for an IRB review of student PI research?**

The possible outcomes of an IRB review for an application submitted by a student PI are the same as the outcomes for a submission of any CSULB PI.

**There are primarily six IRB review outcomes.**

An IRB review outcome of Acknowledged, Approved, Exempt or Not HSR is considered final and the research can be initiated.

An IRB review outcome of Information Required, Approved with Conditions, or Modifications Required is a request to the PI for information or a modification of some part of the application to continue the IRB review.

**Acknowledged** – This is the same as approved although typically is a review decision by IRB staff.

**Approved** – A review decision by a single IRB member or by the Full Board.

**Approved with Conditions** – A review decision by a single IRB member that the application is approved with conditions that the PI must make before initiating the research. The IRB needs the PI to submit confirmation of the changes.

**Approved with Conditions** – A review decision by a single IRB member that the application is approvedwith conditions the PI must make. The research, however, may begin except for the conditional activities. The PI does not need to send confirmation of changes to the IRB.

**Exempt** – A determination by a single IRB member or an IRB staff member.

**Research Not Human Subject Research (NHSR)** – A determination that the proposed research does NOT involve human subjects or data with identifiers.

**Information Required** – Following a pre-review by IRB staff a notice of Information Required is sent to the PI requesting additional information or a revision of some part of the application that is needed to continue review of the submission.

**Modifications Required** – Following a review by an IRB member or at a convened IRB meeting a notice of Modifications Required is sent to the PI requesting additional information or revision of some part of the application which is needed for IRB approval of the submission. The response to a Modifications Required notice is submitted in IRBNet.

**Resources:**

For any questions or to request information contact the IRB at IRB@csulb.edu

[CSULB IRB](https://www.csulb.edu/office-of-research-and-economic-development/institutional-review-board-irb) website

[Instructions on Navigating CITI](https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/2023/documents/Instructions%20on%20Navigating%20CITI%20Program%2012.04.23.pdf)