

Title: New Tools to Support IRB Submissions and Strengthen Research Success

Navigating the Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission process just got easier! The UAB Office of the Institutional Review Board (OIRB) has launched a new Guidebook and Self-Determination Tools to support researchers submitting clear, well-prepared applications. These resources are designed to simplify the process, minimize uncertainty, and equip the research community with the essential knowledge for successful submissions.

Whether you are an experienced researcher or new to the IRB process, these tools offer step-by-step guidance, best practices, and decision-making support to ensure compliance and efficiency. By utilizing them, researchers can avoid common mistakes and confidently submit their applications.

Explore the tools here: [UAB IRB Training & Resources](https://www.uab.edu/research/home/irap-training/irb) (<https://www.uab.edu/research/home/irap-training/irb>). Navigate to the "**Before You Submit**" section to find the Guidebook and Self-Determination Tools.

The IRB Guidebook

Created by the UAB OIRB, the IRB Guidebook serves as a thorough resource detailing ethical compliance, regulatory requirements, and best practices for formulating research protocols involving human subjects. It streamlines the submission process by providing clear, practical guidance on:

- Understanding IRB requirements to prevent delays.
- Preparing well-structured applications with complete documentation.
- Navigating evolving federal regulations with better ease.

The guidebook is regularly updated as a living document to reflect current procedures and expectations.

Decision Support Tools

To assist researchers in accurately categorizing their studies, The OIRB offers several decision support tools that guide applicants through essential decision points before submission.

- **Quality Improvement (QI) Self-Determination Tool** – Helps researchers determine whether a project qualifies as quality improvement (QI) or program evaluation rather than human subjects research under 45 CFR 46. If a project is deemed QI or program evaluation using this tool, **no further action or submission to the IRB is required.**
- **Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) Tool** – Some studies may qualify as Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) if they do not meet the federal definition of research or human subjects involvement. This tool is intended to help researchers make informed decisions, but it does not constitute official IRB NHSR determinations. Researchers **must still submit an application to the IRB for an official determination before** proceeding with their study.
- **IRB Review Category Self-Determination Tool** – A Microsoft Form that walks researchers through key questions to identify the correct IRB review category and directs them to the

necessary fact sheet for application completion. This tool is intended to help researchers make informed decisions for their research application, but it does not constitute official IRB review determination—***final decision will be made by the OIRB.***

Why These Tools Matter

While these resources do not replace formal IRB reviews, they serve as valuable aids in helping researchers prepare accurate and complete applications. By using these tools, researchers can better understand submission requirements, identify the correct review category, and ensure their applications align with policies and regulations. This proactive approach helps minimize errors, avoid unnecessary revisions, and prevent delays, ultimately increasing the likelihood of a smooth and efficient IRB approval process.

Explore the resources today: [UAB IRB Training & Resources](https://www.uab.edu/research/home/irap-training/irb)
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