Yavapai College
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Submission Instructions

Please see the required questions you will be asked to address in the IRB Submission Form. Ensure you have all information and necessary documents ready prior to completing the form.

When ready to submit, please travel to the following link. Note: You must be prepared to enter your YC credentials to complete this form.

IRB Submission Form – Fill out form

Questions you will need to address:

1. **Principle Researcher Information:**
    - Name and additional names of all investigators, if applicable
    - Faculty Advisor (for student researchers)
    - Primary Yavapai College Campus (Online, Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, CTEC, Sedona, Verde Valley)
    - Division / Department / Discipline Area
    - Degree Level (Achieved for some / For Students – put the degree seeking)
    - Type of Project (survey, interview, archival data collection, etc.)
    - If the project is funded, be prepared to explain.

2. **Title of Your Project:**
    - **Keep it descriptive and specific.** A good title should give reviewers an immediate sense of what the study is about. Avoid titles that are so broad or vague that they could apply to countless studies. For example, "A Study of Student Behavior" is far less informative than "Academic Motivation and Study Habits Among First-Year Community College Students."
    - **Identify the key elements.** A strong title typically reflects one or more of the following: the population being studied, the central variable or construct of interest, the general method or design, and the setting or context. You don't need to include all of these, but the more precisely a title captures the essence of the study, the more useful it is.
    - **Avoid jargon and abbreviations.** Since IRB reviewers may come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, titles should be accessible to a general academic audience. Spell out any acronyms and avoid highly technical terminology that would only be familiar to specialists in your field.
    - **Be concise.** While a title should be descriptive, it does not need to tell the whole story. Aim for clarity over comprehensiveness and avoid unnecessary words or phrases like "An Investigation into..." or "A Study Examining..." which add length without adding meaning.

- **Avoid sensationalism.** The title of the project should be neutral and professional in tone. It should accurately represent the study without overstating its scope, significance, or findings.

3. **Purpose of the Study:** Provide a clear and concise overview of your proposed research in 150 – 300 words. Your response should give reviewers sufficient context to understand the rationale for conducting this study. Specifically, address the following:

   What to include:
   - **Purpose and objectives:** Clearly state the primary purpose of the research and its specific aims or objectives. What do you hope to learn, demonstrate, or achieve?
   - **Rationale:** Explain why this research is necessary and timely. Why is this question worth investigating, and why now?
   - **Relevance to human subjects:** Describe how and why human participants are necessary to achieve the research objectives, as opposed to alternative methodologies.

   Tips for a strong response:
   - Write for a multidisciplinary audience. Reviewers may not be specialists in your field, so avoid excessive jargon and define technical terms where necessary. Spell out acronyms the first time they are used.
   - Keep your response focused and proportionate to the complexity of your study. A brief pilot study does not require the same depth of background as a multi-year clinical trial.
   - Cite foundational or highly relevant sources where appropriate, but this section is not intended to be an exhaustive literature review.

4. **Time Required per Participant:** Provide an estimate of the total time each participant will be expected to commit to the study. Include the time required for all study-related activities, such as screening, consent procedures, interventions, assessments, and any follow-up. If participation occurs across multiple sessions or time points, describe the duration of each session and the overall study timeline from a participant's perspective. If time requirements vary across participant groups or study phases, explain those differences. If you require an Informed Consent document, the time must match what is outlined in that document.

5. **Design, Procedures, and Methods:** Provide a detailed description of how your study will be conducted from start to finish. Your response should give reviewers a clear understanding of what will happen during the course of the research and how data will be gathered.

   What to include:

- **Study design:** Identify the overall research design (e.g., randomized controlled trial, cross-sectional survey, ethnographic observation, case study) and explain why this design is appropriate for your research objectives.
- **Procedures:** Provide a step-by-step account of what participants will experience from initial contact through the conclusion of their involvement.
- **Data collection methods:** Describe the specific tools, instruments, or techniques that will be used to collect data (e.g., surveys, interviews, physiological measurements, observation, record review). If using validated instruments, identify them by name. If using researcher-developed instruments, describe how they were created or will be created.
    i. Be prepared to upload any / all instruments (surveys) as a file attachment.
- **Data recording and management:** Explain how data will be recorded, stored, and organized during the collection process.

Tips for a strong response:

- Be specific enough that a reviewer unfamiliar with your field could follow the sequence of events.
- If your study involves multiple arms, conditions, or participant groups, make clear how procedures differ across them.
- Avoid conflating this section with your data analysis plan, which should be addressed separately.

6. **Participant Population and Recruitment Procedures:** Describe the population you intend to study and explain how you will identify and enroll participants. Your response should give reviewers a clear picture of who will be included in your study and how they will be approached.

   What to Include:

   - **Target population:** Describe the characteristics of the population you intend to study, including any relevant demographic, clinical, or situational attributes that define your intended sample.
   - **Inclusion and exclusion criteria:** Clearly state the criteria that will determine eligibility for participation, if any. For any exclusion criteria, briefly explain the rationale.
   - **Sample size:** State the expected number of participants and provide a brief justification for that number (e.g., power analysis, feasibility, saturation, time constraints, etc.).
   - **Recruitment setting and methods:** Describe where and how participants will be identified and approached. Include the specific venues, platforms, or networks through which recruitment will occur (e.g., clinic referrals, social media, community organizations, institutional listservs).
   - **Recruitment materials:** Identify any materials that will be used in the recruitment process, such as flyers, emails, scripts, or advertisements. Note that copies of these materials should be submitted as attachments to this application.

Tips for a strong response:

- If your study involves any vulnerable populations : (Such as minors, pregnant individuals, prisoners, or those with diminished decision-making capacity) — identify them here and explain any additional protections that will be in place.
- If recruitment will be conducted by someone other than the principal investigator, clarify who will be responsible and what their relationship to potential participants is.

7. **Measures and Data to be Collected:** Describe all data that will be collected from or about participants over the course of the study. Your response should give reviewers a comprehensive understanding of what information is being gathered and why.

   What to Include:

   - **Demographic information:** Identify all demographic variables that will be collected (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, education level, socioeconomic status). Explain how demographic data will be gathered and why the specific variables chosen are relevant to your study.
   - **Study measures:** Describe all variables, outcomes, or constructs that will be measured or assessed for the purposes of analysis. For each measure, identify the instrument or method used to collect it, whether it is a primary or secondary outcome, and the rationale for its inclusion.
   - **Format and structure of data:** Indicate whether data will be collected in quantitative, qualitative, or mixed formats, and describe the form in which it will be recorded (e.g., numeric scores, written responses, audio recordings, images).
   - **Sensitive or private information:** If any data to be collected is particularly sensitive in nature — such as information about health conditions, financial status, sexual behavior, immigration status, or legal history — identify it here and explain what protections will be in place.

   Tips for a strong response:

   - Be comprehensive. Reviewers should be able to identify every category of data collected from this section alone.
   - If you are collecting data at multiple time points, clarify which measures are collected when.
   - Avoid duplicating information already provided in your Design, Procedure, and Method section, but ensure this section can stand on its own as a complete inventory of data collected.

8. **Risks and Benefits:** This section asks you to identify and describe any potential risks that participation in your study may pose to participants, as well as any anticipated benefits of the research. You will also be asked to disclose any compensation or incentives offered for participation, including extra credit. Reviewers use this information to assess whether the risks of your study are reasonable in relation to its expected benefits and whether adequate protections are in place for participants.

- **Potential Risks:** Describe any potential risks that participation in this study may pose to participants. Consider risks across all relevant dimensions, including physical, psychological, emotional, social, legal, economic, and privacy-related harms. Note that even studies considered minimal risk should address this question thoughtfully. If you believe your study poses no risks to participants, provide a clear justification for that determination.

  What to Include:

  i. **Nature and likelihood of risks:** Identify each potential risk, characterize its severity, and assess how likely it is to occur given your study procedures.
  ii. **Risk minimization:** Explain the steps you have taken or will take to minimize each identified risk.
  iii. **Risk relative to benefit:** Provide a brief assessment of whether the risks to participants are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits of the research.

- **Potential Benefits:** Describe any direct or indirect benefits that participants may experience as a result of their involvement in the study, as well as any compensation or incentives offered for participation.

  What to Include:

  i. **Direct benefits to participants:** Describe any benefits participants themselves may experience as a result of participating, such as access to an intervention, increased self-awareness, or receipt of individualized feedback. If there are no direct benefits to participants, state this explicitly.
  ii. **Indirect or societal benefits:** Describe the broader contributions this research may make to knowledge, practice, or policy in your field.
  iii. **Compensation and incentives:** If participants will receive any form of compensation or incentive for their participation, describe it in full. This includes monetary payment, gift cards, raffle entries, course extra credit, or any other benefit offered in exchange for participation. Specify the amount or nature of the compensation, when it will be provided, and whether it is prorated if a participant withdraws before completing the study.

Note that compensation should be reasonable and not so substantial as to constitute undue inducement to participate. If extra credit is offered, an alternative means of earning equivalent credit must be available to students who choose not to participate.

9. **Informed Consent Procedures:** Describe how and where informed consent will be obtained from participants prior to their involvement in the study. Your response should give reviewers a clear understanding of the consent process from start to finish.

   What to Include:

- **Consent process:** Describe how consent will be obtained, including who will be responsible for administering the consent process, where it will take place, and how participants will be given adequate time and opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- **Consent documentation:** Indicate whether participants will be asked to provide a written signature on a consent form. Note that studies conducted entirely via survey do not require a signed consent form; in these cases, an informed consent statement presented at the beginning of the survey, with continuation of the survey serving as implied consent, is acceptable (*See example below*). If your study is not survey-based and you are requesting a waiver of written consent, provide a justification.
- **Consent for vulnerable populations:** If your study involves minors or others who cannot provide consent on their own behalf, describe the process for obtaining permission from a parent or legally authorized representative, as well as any assent procedures for participants who are capable of providing assent but not full consent.
- **Confidentiality of consent records:** Describe how signed consent forms or records of consent will be stored and protected.

Tips for a strong response:

- The consent process should be described as a genuine opportunity for participants to make an informed and voluntary decision, not merely a formality. Reviewers will be attentive to any conditions that could compromise voluntariness, such as a power differential between the researcher and participants.
- Be prepared to attach any necessary Informed Consent documents that require participant signatures in this submission for review.

Example of Informed Consent to Proceed an Anonymous Survey:

NOTE: *Replace all bracketed information with your own.*

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by [Researcher Name], [Title/Department], at Yavapai College. The purpose of this study is [brief description of study purpose]. Your participation will involve completing a survey that is estimated to take approximately [X] minutes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or consequence. This survey is anonymous, meaning your responses will not be linked to your name or any other identifying information. Please do not include your name or any other personally identifying details in your responses.

The risks associated with participation are expected to be minimal and no greater than those encountered in everyday life. [Include if applicable: While there are no direct benefits to you for participating, your responses will contribute to a broader understanding of [topic].]

If you have questions about this study, you may contact [Researcher Name] at [contact information]. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Yavapai College Institutional Review Board at [IRB contact information].

By continuing past this page and completing the survey, you are indicating that you have read and understood the information above, that you are 18 years of age or older, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

10. **Confidentiality of Records, Data, and Privacy:** Describe the steps that will be taken to protect the privacy of participants and ensure the confidentiality of all data collected over the course of the study. Your response should give reviewers confidence that participant information will be handled responsibly and in accordance with applicable laws and institutional policies.

    What to Include:
    - **Anonymity vs. confidentiality:** Clarify whether your study is anonymous (meaning no identifying information is collected at any point) or confidential (meaning identifying information is collected but will be protected and not disclosed). If your study is anonymous, explain how anonymity will be maintained throughout data collection and storage.
    - **Identifiable information:** Identify any data that could directly or indirectly identify participants (e.g., names, contact information, IP addresses, demographic combinations, audio or video recordings). Describe how this information will be protected or, where possible, separated or removed from study data.
    - **Data storage and security:** Describe where and how data will be stored, who will have access to it, and what safeguards will be in place to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure. Specify whether data will be stored on encrypted devices, secured institutional servers, or password-protected platforms.
    - **Data retention and destruction:** Indicate how long data will be retained following the conclusion of the study and how it will be disposed of or destroyed at the end of the retention period.
    - **Reporting limitations:** If there are any circumstances under which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed — such as mandatory reporting obligations or the limits of online data security — disclose those limitations here.

    Tips for a strong response:
    - **Anonymity vs. confidentiality:** Clarify whether your study is anonymous (meaning no identifying information is collected at any point) or confidential (meaning identifying information is collected but will be protected and not disclosed). If your study is anonymous, explain how anonymity will be maintained throughout data collection and storage.
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- **Reporting limitations:** If there are any circumstances under which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed — such as mandatory reporting obligations or the limits of online data security — disclose those limitations here.

11. Recording: Will any aspect of the study be recorded (audio, visual, or both)?

- If yes, be prepared to explain why this is necessary for the completion of your study.
- If yes, be prepared to address how these recording files will be managed, stored, and destroyed upon completion of the study (or a set time period following the conclusion of the study).

12. Location: Specify the location of your study.

- If at an in-person location, be prepared to provide specific information about the location (city, building, organization, etc.).
- If in an online location, be prepared to provide specific information (only anonymous, virtual synchronous meet space, etc.)

13. Applicant Certification:

By submitting this application, you certify that:

- All information provided in this application is accurate, truthful, and complete to the best of your knowledge, and that any supporting documents submitted are genuine and representative of the research as it will be conducted.
- You agree to abide by all applicable federal and state regulations, as well as Yavapai College policies and procedures governing the protection of human participants in research.
- You will conduct the research as approved by the Yavapai College IRB and will not implement any changes to the approved protocol without prior review and approval from the IRB.
- You will promptly report to the Yavapai College IRB any unanticipated problems, adverse events, or other developments that may affect the safety, welfare, or rights of participants, or that may affect the continued appropriateness of IRB approval.
- You will obtain and document informed consent from participants in the manner approved by the IRB prior to their involvement in the research.
- You understand that failure to comply with IRB requirements may result in suspension or termination of research approval.