What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Georgia State College (EGSC)?

The Institutional Review Board is a group of faculty, staff, and external reviewers from EGSC and the surrounding community that provide oversight of research involving human subjects. Their goals are:

- to protect human subjects by ensuring the ethics and legality of research conducted with human subjects
- to minimize risks and maximize the potential for benefit from human subjects' participation in research
- to assure that human subjects participate in research only after having been provided effective, fully informed consent when consent as required by law

What authority and action steps does the IRB possess?

Typical functions of the IRB include the following:

- to approve research through an initial review, require modifications to research protocols in order to approve research, or disapprove research
- to require progress reports or other information from investigators in order to oversee the conduct of the research and the informed consent process
- to place restrictions on, suspend, or terminate the approval of research that is not being conducted in accordance with IRB requirements or that has been associated with unexpected serious harm to subjects
- to report its decisions, in writing, to researchers and the institution
- to require that any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others be promptly reported to the IRB

What researchers must work through the IRB?

- Faculty and staff of EGSC conducting research
- Research done by outside entities using EGSC facilities and personnel
- Research conducted by students within the scope of a course at EGSC

Who are the IRB members?

- Three full-time faculty, one from each division
- The Director of Institutional Research, who also functions as the committee chair
- Two external reviewers

What are the step-by-step procedures for researchers to apply for IRB approval?

By federal regulation, IRBs have three levels of review, which are defined by levels of risk to subjects and others, and whether federally defined vulnerable populations (e.g. children, prisoners) are involved. The three levels are **Administrative** (Exempt), **Expedited**, and **Full Board Review**. In an Administrative review, typically the IRB chair makes the decision on

whether the research can proceed. In an Expedited review, at least three members of the board confer on the research. A Full Board Review requires examination and voting by all members of the IRB. The IRB may confer with subject matter experts in making its decisions, such as specialists in a certain academic field or medical professionals.

What materials should a researcher provide to the IRB for approval to conduct research?

The more in-depth the research and the greater risk to the subject, the greater the need for rigorous training in conducting research. A survey collecting aggregate anonymous data, for example, will require a much less training than a medical study.

- Proof of certification or training in conducting research with human subjects (i.e. a letter of support from the student's professor, a transcript showing research courses taken, etc)
- An application, signed by the researcher's department/division chair or academic project director
- A project description, including facts about the impact on and risks to the human subjects
- A copy of the consent form to be used
- A copy of the survey instrument or research protocol
- A copy of the instructions given to participants

How long does the review process take?

Researchers should allow at least 30 days for their proposal to be reviewed and should plan their research accordingly.