

The IRB is not well informed about federal guidelines. It makes up rules about imagined possible abuses. It creates work for itself and bother for investigators. It is driven by concern about all manner of possible abuses and possible lawsuits to the university, rather than by concerns to apply the federal guidelines. In this preoccupation with the possible (but remotely unlikely), it does less to protect subjects than if it simply applied federal guidelines and in the process creates huge frustration and work for investigators.

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IRB needs to provide mentoring services for graduate students, especially those who will not be career researchers but need to perform one or more studies to complete their degree. The EdD program is a good example. A trained experienced mentor should be available. The website needs to be kept current. I downloaded forms and then two months later I had to redo them because the ROOM NUMBER had changed and that area of the form was not modifiable. The mistake was on the part of IRB and I should have been permitted to turn in the forms with the old room number. Making me redo the forms seemed petty and not an example of taking responsibility. This may have been a flaw in the intermediary rather than the committee itself.

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I am a qualitative social scientist and i think most of the IRB procedures border on the ridiculous. the program was clearly geared for medicine and imposes an unnecessary burden on those engaged in, for example, ethnographic or archival work. i have found their comments largely useless and unnecessary and avoid the IRB whenever possible.

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The IRB as currently embodied endangers the research enterprise at USC, makes it exceedingly difficult to recruit top researchers, and places such a high priority on the avoidance of lawsuits and trivial risks to human subjects that it stifles important research needed to advance human understanding and enhance human life.

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I feel that consistency is lacking in the IRB actions and decisions--in part, this may arise because of turnover of personnel. Also, jurisdiction seems to be understood well beyond protection of human subjects to include what is "sound science." There is a popular, widely-held perception that IRB at USC is more about protecting university liability than human subjects, and IRB needs to work to erode that perception in order to gain the respect and confidence of researchers.

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I'd like to note that many of the issues I've run into don't have to do with full board review. Rather, the IRB staff seems to take on the task of determining 1) whether a study is valid, 2) whether a methodology is

acceptable, and 3) which groups are "at risk," despite federal guidelines that seem to indicate otherwise.

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The IRB here only cares about covering its ass and avoiding litigation. Most members seem to think that research is something that you do in the library. Other universities have IRBs that meet WEEKLY, not MONTHLY, so people can actually get work done. Members have the audacity to comment on design and statistical issues that are WAY beyond their expertise. This IRB has wasted more hours of my life than I care to consider.

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Consent documents are far too long for easy subject comprehension. Six or seven page consent letters, with multiple subheadings, are not appropriate for school-based research, for example.