**Southwestern Community College Institutional Review Board**

**FAQs for Honors Project Students**

*What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB)?*

The IRB is a committee of SCC administrators, faculty, and staff who make sure that any academic research projects involving studying human beings meet acceptable practices for ensuring safety and confidentiality.

*When do I need to get approval from the IRB?*

If your honors project involves research with human beings (including interviews, surveys, or observations), then you need approval.

*Why do I need approval from the IRB?*

Federal, state, and college regulations protect the privacy and safety of human beings.

*What do I need to do to get approval from the IRB?*

Complete [this form](https://www.southwesterncc.edu/sites/default/files/ExpeditedReviewForm_0%20%281%29.pdf) and attach to your Honors project proposal.

*What do I do if I have questions while completing the IRB form?*

Contact Barb Putman, Dean of Arts and Sciences and IRB chair, Oaks Hall G-1, [bputman@southwesterncc.edu](mailto:bputman@southwesterncc.edu), 828-339-4496.

*What do I need to do to get approval to conduct interviews as part of my honors project?*

a. You need to provide a list of the interview questions you plan to ask. It is o.k. if, during the interview, your conversation leads you in additional areas, but the initial set of questions needs to be approved.

b. You need to share the approximate number of people you plan to interview and how you plan to identify the interview subjects. There is a big difference in the college approving you to interview 3 people or 30 people. If you get approved to interview 3 and then an opportunity arises to add an additional person or two, that is fine. If you suddenly decide to interview 30 people, then you would need to seek approval again because this would be significantly different from the project that had been approved. That doesn’t mean it wouldn’t be approved at the new level, just that you would need to resubmit.

c. You need to provide the informed consent statement that you will provide to the interview subjects. Informed consent means that the participants understand the project they are participating in, how their information will be used, how you will maintain confidentiality of their responses, and that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time with no negative consequences. You will need a separate informed consent form for participants who are under 18 because the consent must come from the under-18-year-old’s parent or guardian. People under 18 should also sign the form indicating that they understand the project and that they would like to participate (legally, this is called “assent”), but only the parent/guardian can provide the consent which is required for research project approval.

*What do I need to plan and get approval for in order to conduct surveys as part of my honors project?*

a. You need to provide a copy of the survey.

b. You need to share the approximate number of people you plan to survey and where you plan to conduct the survey (online, in a class, in a certain public place, etc). There is a big difference in the college approving you to survey 5 people or 50 people. If you get approved to survey 5 and then an opportunity arises to add an additional person or two, that is fine. If you suddenly decide to survey 50 people, then you would need to seek approval again because this would be significantly different from the project that had been approved. That doesn’t mean it wouldn’t be approved at the new level, just that you would need to resubmit.

c. You need to provide the informed consent statement that you will provide to the survey participants. Informed consent means that the participants understand the project they are participating in, how their information will be used, how you will maintain confidentiality of their responses, and that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time with no negative consequences. You will need a separate informed consent form for participants who are under 18 because the consent must come from the under-18-year-old’s parent or guardian. People under 18 should also sign the form indicating that they understand the project and that they would like to participate (legally, this is called “assent”), but only the parent/guardian can provide the consent which is required for research project approval.

*How will I know whether my request is approved and how long will it take?*

Once you submit your materials (expedited review form and supporting documents such as interview questions or survey) to the IRB chair, you should receive a response by email within 3 business days. You are not allowed to start any research involving human subjects until you have this approval in writing (email) from the IRB chair.

*Who do I contact for questions about my honors project content?*

Your instructor

*Who do I contact with questions about the honors project process or approval?*

Bethany Emory, Dean of Learning Support and Honors Program Director

*Who do I contact with questions about research with human subjects?*

Barb Putman, Dean of Arts and Sciences and IRB chair