

Series 208 Continuous Quality Improvement | Institutional Review Board

Quality Improvement of the HRPP

The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) is not a static entity. Leadership within the HRPP should always strive for improvements based on feedback from research participants, feedback from researchers, best practices in the field of human research protections, and best practices in the underlying disciplines commonly involved in human subjects research. To that end, the HRPP shall engage in the following efforts to understand where areas of improvement lie, and to implement changes aimed at improvement, where feasible and appropriate.

Annual Review of the HRPP

At least annually, the Institutional Official shall engage in an annual review of the entirety of the HRPP. The annual review should examine the three main areas of the HRPP at Utah State: the Organization, the IRB, and researchers' engagement and compliance.

To that end, the IO shall make available a contact portal for researchers to provide feedback regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and sufficiency of the HRPP. In the annual review of the HRPP, feedback submitted by researchers should be discussed and considered. The IO shall also make available a contact portal for research participants. This portal should be a means by which participants can receive information about the HRPP, and gain assistance from its representatives when necessary.

Workload, membership, and budget sufficiency of the HRP Office, as well as the IRB, shall also be examined in this annual meeting. In examination of the workload, membership, and budget, the IO should consider how closely the IRB review process' timelines are tracking to AAHRPP-released median times for review, protocol-to-staffing ratios, and member compensation schemes.

Annual Review of the IRB

The IRB Chair and Vice Chair shall, at least annually, engage in an annual review of the Institutional Review Board. The annual review should examine important factors related to IRB operations, such as whether membership is adequate for the research it oversees, whether improvements could be made to member training and education, and whether members are adhering to their role statements.

When appropriate, feedback should be delivered to IRB members regarding their service over the course of the last year. The IRB Chair and Vice Chair shall also engage in a self-assessment process, which helps to ensure the independence of the IRB while still permitting areas of improvement and goal-setting on behalf of the IRB to occur. Strengths should be identified as well, especially in terms of measuring the efficacy of the implementation of goals from the previous year.

Performance Reviews for Professional Staff

Human Research Protections staff are integral to the success of the HRPP, including the IRB. HRP staff should be a part of the annual review process for both the IRB and the HRPP, and that feedback should be delivered to the professional staff serving in those roles as a part of their annual performance appraisal process under USU Policy 329.