

IRB Annual Survey 2015: Health Sciences Campus Highlights

Each year OPRS hosts a survey for the USC research community and responses are used to improve the Human Subjects Protection Program (IRB, IRB submission system, and Office for the Protection of Research Subjects).

Health Sciences IRB

- Clinical trial contracting process is barrier to research
- IRB reviews can be nit-picky and inconsistent

Need:

- More direct communication (phone, in-person, IRB-dept liaison)
- ISTAR guidance
- Advance notice of ISTAR changes
- Flowchart for entire research process
- The biggest barrier to research is contingencies... which can often be avoided by adequate communication between the PI and IRB staff/reviewers during the review process.
- Phone calls are rarely answered; timeliness and accountability suffer as a result.
- Inconsistency between reviewers. One reviewer/chair/vice-chair says one thing and another could say the exact opposite.
- Sometimes the length of turn around is dependent on the person assigned to review it.
- Should give more attention to risk, not detailed descriptions of protocols.
- Tedious requirements for extremely low risk research (survey administration).
- Review takes an unpredictably long time, phone calls are ignored, questions are dismissed and technicalities preoccupy the reviewers. A lot seems to depend on the reviewer.
- Positive comments about IRB Administrators: Marie, Lori, and Erik.

ISTAR

- Some of the questions are vague. "Eg. Location for example can refer to where a procedure, recruiting, or data entry is done".
- The questions regarding privacy are also tricky. PI can say they will keep data per the institutional policy yet PI has no idea what that is.

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- The application will let you click 2 boxes that are conflicting. It would be nice if a box greyed out once you select another conflicting answer.
- ISTAR training materials are appalling in their indirectness, repetitiveness, and poor final effect regarding instruction.
- Advanced notifications of upcoming changes to iStar might be helpful

Highlights: IRB Performance

For each of the following statements, responses rate from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.”
‘IRB’ refers to members and staff.

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Rating Average	Response Count
1. The IRB is knowledgeable about my discipline.	59	110	18	6	33	1.85	226
2. When I contact the IRB by email, I am satisfied with the speed of response.	65	99	10	7	46	1.77	227
3. When I contact the IRB by phone, I am satisfied with the speed of response.	59	79	18	10	61	1.87	227
4. I am aware of IRB office hours when I can drop in for an in-person appointment.	25	48	45	23	86	2.47	227
5. I often contact the IRB before submitting to ask questions so my application will be clear and thorough.	39	82	44	11	49	2.15	225
6. I am sometimes confused about what review category is appropriate to submit under.	20	78	61	26	42	2.50	227
7. The IRB is professional and respectful.	102	93	3	5	23	1.56	226
8. The IRB overestimates the magnitude and probability of risk.	22	43	96	15	49	2.59	225
9. The IRB reviews applications in a timely fashion.	50	119	19	10	25	1.94	223
10. I have worked with other IRBs and have found my experience with the USC IRB to be better.	20	49	25	11	119	2.26	224
<i>answered question</i>							227
<i>skipped question</i>							66

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Highlights: ISTAR

For each of the following statements, please rate your response from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.”

Answer Options	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Rating Average	Response Count
1. The ISTAR system is easy to navigate and use.	128	30	6	12	1.96	226
2. I have trouble finding approved documents in ISTAR.	45	121	35	17	2.88	225
3. I find the ISTAR application questions to be intuitive and easy to understand.	126	44	7	21	2.16	224
<i>answered question</i>						226
<i>skipped question</i>						67