Recruiting for Human Subjects Research: Ohio University IRB Guidance for Researchers

Purpose: To assist researchers in answering the question in LEO: “Description of how they will identify and recruit prospective participants.” There are specific details that the IRB needs in the response to this question to ensure that recruitment is ethical and in compliance with federal regulations. Reviewing this guidance in advance of submitting your IRB application will improve the quality of your submission.

Scope: This guidance applies to all human subjects research studies to be conducted at OU.

This document contains general guidance and examples. The IRB may ask for additional information on a study-by-study basis.

Minimum Information Required: Should be limited to minimum necessary for potential subjects to determine their interest and eligibility; must include appropriate researcher contact info, purpose of study, basic procedures that subjects would participate in (survey, interview, in-person assessment, blood draw, etc.), key eligibility criteria (gender, age range, specific medical condition, etc.), subjects’ expected time commitment, and location of research. Include the IRB# on all recruitment communications and identify yourself as an Ohio University researcher.

Be sure to include the clean final draft of flyers, emails, verbal scripts, etc. as part of your LEO submission. The IRB needs to review these.

	Flyers	**Emails/ UCM**	**Online/ Social Media**	**Verbal (in-person)**	**Telephone or Mail**	**ResearchMatch Qualtrics Prolific, etc.**
Is the mode of communication clearly stated and explained in LEO application?						
Where will recruitment materials be disseminated? Is prior permission needed? How many times will potential subjects be contacted for recruitment?	Include locations where flyers will be posted.	How many rounds of email reminders or follow-ups? (In general, the IRB will approve one follow-up for initial recruitment – additional follow-ups must be justified in the protocol)	Where on social media? Personal pages? Public or private groups? (Note – private groups are not considered “public” and require prior permission from group admins and considerations for confidentiality). Any follow-up reminder posts?	Where will this occur? (In non-public settings, prior permission may be required and documentation may be needed)	Who is being targeted and how? How many rounds of reminders or follow-ups? (In general, the IRB will approve one follow-up for initial recruitment – additional follow-ups must be justified in the protocol)	Ensure that your study design and research question is appropriate for the recruitment site.

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How will you obtain the contact info?	N/A	Who will send the emails? Are you using a listserv? Using contact info for previous subjects who agreed to be contacted? Will someone send on your behalf?	N/A	N/A	Who will make the calls/send the mailings? Are you obtaining a list or using a marketing service/ survey center? Using contact info for previous subjects who agreed to be contacted?	N/A
Method of contact (how will interested parties learn more?)	For all recruitment methods: Include PI contact info. For non-exempt studies, indicate if PI is a student researcher and if so, include the advisor's contact info as well. For some research (such as online surveys), no direct contact may be required, but in addition to any survey links, appropriate contact info for PI and advisor (if applicable) must be included in the email. For social media/online recruitment, discourage public communication - for example, if subjects have questions, they should contact you via your OU email, rather than ask in the comment section (use of OU email is preferred, but alternative forms of electronic communication may be acceptable when intended to protect subject confidentiality). This is to ensure confidentiality of participation. If someone who is not listed on the IRB protocol posts on your behalf (e.g., a group admin), they should not attempt to answer any questions about research participation. All questions must be directed to the study team.					
Benefits and compensation	Information in the recruitment material must be consistent with LEO and Informed Consent Form (ICF); should not state "free" treatment or benefit when it's more accurate to say subjects will not be charged; compensation should not be overly emphasized (e.g., large print relative to other information).					
FDA-regulated studies	Recruitment materials cannot make safety or efficacy claims; cannot draw comparisons to other drugs/devices; must state if test article is investigational.					