

## HOW TO AVOID GLITCHES IN THE UHRSC REVIEW PROCESS

### Application Form (and throughout other materials)

- Use the most up-to-date forms and follow current policies by checking <http://www.ord.emich.edu/downloads> for accurate information.
- Remember that your reviewers may not be very familiar with your area of research. The more you can explain your reasoning and choice of methodology, the less clarification they will seek, and fewer questions will be asked.
- Acknowledge whatever risks can be foreseen and clearly explain how you will manage them. Don't gloss over risks – it is more important that you realize what they are and have a plan for how to handle them. Even seemingly innocent survey research projects have the slight potential to aggravate, distress, or inconvenience people.
- Pay special attention to risks when working with vulnerable populations (i.e., children, pregnant women, human fetuses, neonates, prisoners, suicidal or cognitively impaired individuals). Most commonly at EMU, this glitch arises when researchers are not aware of special considerations involved in working with children. Even if children are not in Special Education, they are still “special” with respect to Federal Research Protections for human subjects.
- Know the criteria for Exemption and request this status if appropriate, with a citation of the Exemption criterion that you believe your study meets.
- Be clear in your use of the terms “anonymous” versus “confidential”
- Address any potential for coercion – real, potential, or perceived
- Explain how you will keep data secure, how you will de-identify the database, password-protect, or whatever is appropriate, given the nature of the data. You don't have to “destroy” your data after you are done with the study, but you do need to explain how you will keep it secure.

### Protocol/Study Summary

- Be clear about study aims and/or hypotheses (need to justify why the study is worth doing, so we can evaluate risk-benefit ratio).
- It is OK if there are some risks; what is not OK is if you do not seem to realize that there are risks and/or do not have a plan for minimizing their potential impact or addressing them effectively after the fact.

### Appendices

- Include all measures you plan to use and justify their purpose.

### Consent form

- Make sure you include ALL elements of informed consent or have good reason (explained) why not. Use the Checklist as a guide, and ask for templates from UHSRC if you don't have any examples to guide you.
- Check readability. Consent forms for most “general population” studies should be at 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.
- Avoid jargon and technical language.
- Don't overstate benefits.
- Be clear about risks, procedures, and duration of involvement.
- Ask for waiver of signed consent if/when appropriate and explain how you meet criteria for this provision.