



Western Oregon UNIVERSITY

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD POLICY

Policy Name:	IRB Membership Policy				
Policy #:	001	Policy Section:	Membership Policies		
Approval Authority:	Chief Academic Officer	Adopted:	12/15/17	Reviewed:	December 2017
Responsible Party:	Chair, IRB	Revised:			
Responsible Office:	Academic Affairs / IRB	Contact:	Ethan A. McMahan; mcmahane@wou.edu		

1. Policy Statement

This policy exists to guide the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and explain to the community how members of the IRB join the committee, how long they serve, and how they may be replaced. The IRB shall be composed of representatives from the faculty, staff, student body, and community. This policy describes how IRB members are selected to serve and the length of their terms. The committee shall have no fewer than five members and no more than fifteen including the committee chair.

2. Reason for Policy

WOU is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and public service. Additionally, WOU seeks to protect the welfare of every person who may be involved in research and training projects. The University gives assurance that it will comply with Federal regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (see 45 CFR §46).

3. Who Should Read this Policy

This policy should be read by:

- a. Administration at Western Oregon University, including the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Division Chairs, and Department Heads;

Note. All policies are subject to amendment.

- b. Faculty, students, and community members interested in or concerned about how the IRB membership is determined;
- c. Any individual interested considering serving on the IRB;
- d. IRB members.

4. Resources

- a. The WOU IRB Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects
- b. The Final Rule: Code of Federal Regulations - <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/finalized-revisions-common-rule/index.html>
- c. IRB website - <http://www.wou.edu/irb/>
- d. List of board members - <http://www.wou.edu/irb/people/>
- e. Belmont Report link - <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html>
- g. CITI Training link - <https://www.citiprogram.org/index.cfm?pageID=14&languagePreference=English®ion=1>

5. Definitions

- a. *The Final Rule*
- b. *Belmont Report: summarizes ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human subjects. Three core principles are identified: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.*
- c. *Membership: members of the committee serve on the IRB and help review applications for research. Members are elected to the IRB committee by vote by the IRB committee once per academic year in the Spring.*

6. The Policy

I. Membership Procedure

Each Spring, IRB members indicate to the Chair if they will be able to continue their term of service. The Chair shares this information with the IRB and notifies the Board of how many absences there will be in the coming year. At that point, the Board and the Chair notify the university community about the number of fillable vacancies on the IRB. The Chair will solicit applications for board membership. The application period will be no shorter than ten calendar days and no longer than fourteen calendar days.

Interested applicants will submit appropriate and relevant documentation to support their application. Once the Chair has collected all application materials, he/she will share these with the IRB for selection of new members.

Members are selected by the committee through a voting process. The core goal is to gain diverse representation of perspectives, experiences, research methodologies, epistemologies, special populations served, and other important concerns.

Membership is not based or intended solely to represent individual departments or divisions. Thus, when existing IRB members leave, reviewing applications is not just a matter of having someone nominated from that department--a call needs to be made to the university in general.

Members are not appointed by division or department chairs or deans. Individuals are nominated or self-nominated. They then apply for the position and the IRB committee reviews through a standardized review process.

II. Term Limits

Once members are elected to the IRB, their term of service is a 3-year term. If they choose to, they may renew for a second term of three years without going through the application and election process. Individuals opting for a second term must notify the Chair of their intent at the start of Spring term of their third year. Should the person want to serve for a third term, they will officially step down and reapply. No individual may serve for more than three consecutive terms. However, individuals may serve additional terms after a period of no less than three years of non-membership on the IRB.

III. No Proxies

If members are absent, they may not send proxies to vote in their place. However, all efforts will be made so that all votes and decision making can be as accommodating as possible, such as using electronic voting mechanisms, etc.

IV. Board member removal

Board members can resign at any time. If Board members resign, their place is left empty until annual application/selection cycle each Spring. In the case that IRB membership drops below five, an immediate recruiting cycle must take place. If the community Board member leaves or is removed, then an immediate search for the community member must be initiated in order to be in compliance with Federal regulations. Additionally, Board members can be removed for (1) failure to complete assigned tasks or (2) three non-professionally related absences from Board meetings; Board members are encouraged to attend meetings virtually, if at all possible. A majority in-person vote of the IRB is required to remove Board members. Board member removal cannot be proposed and acted on at the same meeting; instead, removal must be proposed at one meeting and then voted on the next month. This provides the member being removed time to prepare for the discussion and vote the following month.