Research Ethics and IRB
Effective as of: 08.25.2026

American University of Armenia
Policy for Publication
Policy Number: ACAD20070001

Policy Statement/Purpose

Researchers have an obligation to carry out research with respect and concern for the dignity and welfare of the people who participate and with cognizance of applicable regulations and generally accepted professional standards governing the conduct of research involving individuals or groups of persons.The ethical conduct of research is essential to the integrity of scholarship, the protection of research participants, and the public trust in the University's academic mission.

All research involving human participants conducted by AUA faculty, staff, students, or affiliated researchers under the auspices of the American University of Armenia must adhere to relevant professional ethical guidelines governing research with human participants. For human subjects, this includes all forms of data collection, regardless of whether contact with participants occurs face-to-face, through surveys or questionnaires, through digital communication, or through third-party data collection.

AUA will maintain active Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) appointed by the President. The procedures used will be in accordance with the Institutional Review Board Guidebook and the policy guidance set forth by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under which the AUA IRB is registered. The IRBs are responsible for developing and overseeing research ethics procedures and for educating the AUA academic community regarding the ethical conduct of research and the IRB application process.

Structure of the Institutional Review Boards

To ensure appropriate oversight of the diverse forms of research conducted at the University, AUA may maintain multiple Institutional Review Boards responsible for the ethical review of research involving human participants in different disciplinary domains, including clinical or biomedical research and social and behavioral research.

Each IRB shall operate in accordance with applicable ethical standards and institutional procedures and shall report to the Vice President of Research, or other appropriate University authority designated by the President.

IRB Chair

Each Institutional Review Board shall be chaired by a qualified individual appointed through the procedures established by the University. In cases where a conflict of interest exists or may arise, the Chair will appoint a qualified designee.

The responsibilities of the IRB Chair include:

1. Overseeing the ethical review process for research involving human participants.
2. Determining the appropriate level of review (exempt, expedited, or full review).
3. Ensuring that research protocols comply with applicable ethical standards and regulatory requirements.
4. Providing guidance to investigators on ethical issues in research design and implementation.
5. When necessary, designating an appropriate reviewer to determine the level of review and conduct the review.

IRB Chair(s) should possess experience in academic research and must complete appropriate training in human subjects' protections (e.g., US NIH or CITI training programs).

Human Protections Administrator

Each IRBs may be supported by a Human Protections Administrator responsible for the administrative coordination of the IRB process.

Responsibilities include:

1. Conducting preliminary review of submitted applications to ensure completeness and compliance with submission requirements.
2. Providing investigators with feedback and requests for revision prior to formal review.
3. Maintaining records of submissions, approvals, and compliance documentation.
4. Coordinating communication between investigators and the IRB.
5. Assisting in the training of researchers regarding human subjects' protections.
6. Ensuring appropriate documentation, archiving, and reporting of IRB decisions.

Human Protections Administrators should possess experience in academic research and must complete appropriate training in human subjects' protections (e.g., NIH or CITI training programs).

Implementation

The Institutional Review Boards of AUA shall operate in accordance with the procedures described in the Institutional Review Board Guidebook and other related institutional policies governing research ethics and compliance.

Related Documents

AUA Institutional Review Board Guidebook

IRB Membership 2025

IRB#1: Non Clinical Application Form