XI. Tips for Better IREC Submissions

The following is an overview of issues that frequently arise from submissions to the IREC. Nazarbayev University research varies greatly, and thus not all issues apply to every study, but it is useful to note commonly identified IREC concerns. Using these tips to avoid common problems can speed up the IREC review process.

Anticipating Questions from the IREC:

The questions below reflect items the IREC will evaluate in reviewing the research application.
Careful consideration of these questions, when applicable, will help expedite the submission process and can prevent IREC requests for clarification or additional information.

- *Are you using vulnerable subjects?*
- *Are you collecting identifiable data?*
- *How will you protect confidentiality of data?*
- *Do you need informed consent? What type?*
- *Have you minimized risk to subjects and maximized benefits?*
- *How have you determined the level of review?*
- *Are you doing international research?*
- *Are you collecting data you don't need?*

Justify Data Collection Methods:

When designing a project, investigators should use only those procedures necessary for answering the hypothesis and avoid implementing unnecessary procedures or obtaining data that will not be used.

Removing unnecessary procedures can save investigators considerable amounts of time in gaining IREC approval. The following procedures should be used only when required to answer the hypothesis or fulfill scientific goals:

- **Audio-taping of interviews**
- **Collecting identifiers when recording data**
- **Retaining identifiable material once the study is completed**
- **Quoting subjects by name in reports**
- **Interacting or intervening with vulnerable populations (children, pregnant women, prisoners)**
- **Collecting sensitive information/data**
- **Video-taping or photographing human subjects in field observations**
- **Using experimental techniques**
- **Employing deception as part of study design**
- **Physical or psychological intervention or treatments**

Avoiding Pitfalls:

The following section lists common errors students encounter when submitting an application to the IREC.

- Not allowing enough time for IREC review and approval

- Failure to provide complete answers to questions on the protocol form

- Submitting inconsistent information between the protocol form and informed consent document, and/or debriefing document

- Lack of clarity regarding the sequence and timing of procedures within the study

- Failure to obtain letters of support/permission when conducting research at non-Nazarbayev University sites

- Failure to provide enough detail regarding participant recruitment procedures

- Failure to define inclusion/exclusion criteria for the study

- Submitting consent and/or assent documents containing language too complex for participants

- Failure to fully describe risks for all procedures