INTRODUCTION

Federal regulations require that Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) have written policies and procedures governing human participant research and that activities at the institution are carried out as described in the written policies and procedures document. These IRB Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are written to enable the IRBs of the University of Oklahoma (University) to maintain a system of human participant research compliance. The SOPs of the IRBs reflect not only the laws and regulations governing human participant research but also the underlying ethical principles that are the basis of the IRBs’ mandate. Finally, these policies also reflect the overarching commitment of the University to provide protection for all human participants involved in research conducted by its faculty, staff, and students or otherwise conducted under its oversight.

The ethically responsible researcher is expected to carry the dual burden to advance knowledge that can improve the human condition or generate new knowledge and, at the same time, to recognize the absolute imperative to treat human research participants with the utmost care and respect.

It is not unreasonable to ask others to share this responsibility. Indeed, the institutions that expect to benefit from the research are expected to share in the responsibility of conducting ethical research.

This responsibility also falls, then, to those who sit on the University IRBs. These individuals are expected to share the responsibility of protecting human participants in research conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma.

The Office of Human Research Participation Protection (HRPP) SOPs are based on current regulations, ethical principles, and guidelines for the protection of human research participants. The policies describe what the University requires for the ethical conduct of research. The procedures detail how these policies are carried out.

The SOPs are not an end unto themselves. They are the framework upon which human participant research activities are conducted. Therefore, all members of the research enterprise who are working within the University or under its oversight are expected to read, understand, and comply with them. This way, the responsibility of conducting sound, effective and ethical research can be shared.

About these SOPs

These SOPs apply to the day-to-day operations of the IRB. The SOPs apply to all persons employed by the IRB, all IRB members who serve, and all research team members and their support staff.

The documents described in the SOPs are referenced in order to assure that the procedures are integrated into the daily activities of not only IRB members and staff, but also the investigative site.

These SOPs are reviewed periodically to ensure that they are up-to-date and that new legislation or regulations or research practices are reflected in the policies.