Common Questions Regarding the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

1. What is the Northern Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and what is its area of responsibility?

   The Institutional Review Board is the local administrative unit established to assure protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research conducted under the auspices of Northern Michigan University. Under University policy, the IRB has the authority to approve, require modification in, or disapprove all research activities that fall within its jurisdiction as specified by federal or local institutional policy. The IRB provides assurances to research subjects that every reasonable attempt has been made to protect their rights and safety as subjects.

2. Who serves on the IRB?

   The board is composed of individuals from the University's colleges and administration as well as community members. The IRB Administrator is the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

3. What does an IRB review consist of?

   This review process has two components: a review of the consent process and a risk/benefits analysis. The process serves to assure that research project is ethically designed and meets federal standards.

4. What is the IRB responsible for?

   All research involving human subjects conducted, supported, or subject to regulation by any federal department or agency. This statement indicates that any research involving human subjects must be reviewed by the NMU IRB when conducted by members of the university community or its representatives.

5. What questions does the IRB ask?

   A. Is the activity in question defined as research? Is the activity a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge?

   B. Does the activity include human subjects?

   C. What are the risks and benefits to subjects and/or to society in general if the research is completed?

D. How are the subjects informed of their rights regarding the research?

6. Are there projects that are exempted from IRB approval?

Yes; however, it generally best to contact the NMU IRB chair (dereande@nmu.edu; 227-1873) for clarification, or consult the IRB Policy Manual.

7. How long does it take to get my proposal approved from the IRB?

Approval review usually takes one week for Administrative Reviews, two weeks for Expedited Reviews, and three weeks for Full Reviews.

8. Where can I get more information about the IRB process at NMU?

The NMU Human Subjects in Research website contains numerous forms and documents to help you with the application process.

9. What is a consent form?

Consent is full disclosure of the nature of the research and the participant's involvement, and that participation is voluntary

10. What should the consent form include?

At the very least, consent should include:

1. Statement that the study involves research.
2. Description of risks and benefits to subject or others.
3. Description of the extent to which anonymity or confidentiality will be maintained.
4. Explanation of whom to contact if questions arise about the research, the subjects' rights or whom to contact if research-related injury occurs.
5. Statement that participation is voluntary, that refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits, and that subject may discontinue at any time without penalty

11. What are the most common omissions from IRB applications?

A. A statement to inform the subject that they may contact: Dr. Lisa Eckert, IRB Institutional Official, at leckert@nmu.edu or 906-227-2300, if they have any questions about research on human subjects, or

the primary investigator if they have questions relating to the actual study they are involved in.

B. A copy of their survey, questionnaire, or interview script.
C. A "complete" consent form.