SRC/IRB Overview

What is an SRC (Scientific Review Committee)?

- A group of individuals responsible for evaluating student research, certifications, and research plans for compliance with the rules, applicable state and federal laws and regulations at each level of science fair competition. Local SRCs are formed at the school or district level, the regional, state, and at the Intel ISEF level. Each level reviews the SRC forms of the students as they advance to each level before competition.
- Research projects involving vertebrate animals and/or potentially hazardous biological agents (PHBA) MUST BE reviewed and approved BEFORE experimentation.
- Projects conducted at a Regulated Research Institution and approved by its institutional board before experimentation, MUST ALSO BE approved by the regional and state SRC.

Scientific Review Committee Members (Must have a minimum of three persons)

- Operation and composition must comply with the Intel ISEF Rules.
  1. Include a biomedical scientist (Doctoral degree, such as Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M., D.D.S., Pharm.D, or D.O.)
  2. Include an educator (teacher, professor, etc.)
  3. Include at least one additional member
- Additional expertise may be added to assist or if the SRC needs an expert for example: At least one member should be familiar with proper animal care procedures for animal studies.
- Additional members are recommended for diversity and to increase the expertise of the SRC.
- The SRC Chair can be any one of the members. There can be more than one SRC chair to help with approvals. The local fair director can also serve as the chair.

Who cannot be on the SRC?

- The Adult Sponsor, parent or relative of the student(s), the Qualified Scientist, or the Designated Supervisor WHO oversees the project may NOT SERVE on the SRC reviewing THAT project.

What do SRC members look for when reviewing a student research?

1. Evidence of literature, attribution, and evidence of proper supervision
2. Use of accepted and appropriate research techniques
3. Completed forms, signatures and dates showing maximum of one year duration of research and appropriate pre approval dates (where required)
4. Evidence of search for alternatives to animal use
5. Humane treatment of vertebrate animals
6. Compliance with local, state and federal rules and laws governing research involving human and/or vertebrate animals, potentially hazardous biological agents, hazardous chemicals, activities, and devices.
7. Prohibit introduction/disposal of non-native and/or invasive species (insects, plants, invertebrates, vertebrates) pathogens, toxic chemicals or foreign substances into the environment
8. Documentation of substantial expansion for continuation projects
9. Compliance with the Intel ISEF ethics statement

What is an IRB (Institutional Review Board)?

- A committee that, according to federal regulations (45-CFR-46) evaluates the potential physical and/or psychological risk of research involving humans.
- All human research MUST BE reviewed and approved by an IRB BEFORE experimentation. ▪

Surveys and questionnaires to be used MUST BE reviewed and approved by the IRB

Institutional Review Board Members

- Must include a minimum of three members

1. An educator
2. A school administrator (Preferably a principal or vice-principal) or anyone who has the position of administrator
3. An individual who is knowledgeable about and capable of evaluating the physical and/or psychological risk involved in the study. This may be a medical doctor, psychologist, physician, registered nurse, licensed social worker or licensed clinical professional counselor
   - The committee reviewing projects should align with the research being conducted by the student(s)

- An SRC and IRB can be combined provided the required qualifications are met by members.
- If a member is needed and one is not in the immediate area, then documented contact with an external expert is appropriate and encouraged. A copy of the correspondence (e.g. email, fax, etc.) should be submitted as the signature of that expert.

Who cannot be on the IRB?

- The student's Adult Sponsor, parent or other relative, the Qualified Scientist, nor the Designated Supervisor WHO oversees the project may NOT SERVE on the IRB reviewing THAT project.

What do IRB members look for when reviewing a student's research?

1. Evidence that the project/study:
   a. Design protects the human participant's rights and welfare
   b. Design protects the student researcher
   c. Is in compliance with ALL privacy and HIPPAA laws when they apply to the project (e.g. medical information)
2. Level of risk: Minimal Risk OR More than Minimal Risk involved
3. Identifiers are not used (name, age, address, etc.
4. Human participant(s) are volunteers with Adult INFORMED CONSENT or minors with ASSENT. Assent (agreement) by the minor is needed with parental permission.

Note on Human Participants Rules and Risk Assessment:

- Go to www.societyforscience.org. Click on the *"What We Do"* link and on *"Intel International Science and Engineering Fair"*. On the next page, click again on the "*Intel International Science and Engineering Fair*". Scroll down to *"Rules, Forms, and Resources"*. Go to the center of the page to *"All Projects".*
- Review the applicable rules for *"Human Participant Rules"* Section *pp. 7-9* especially, the "*Human Participation Risk Assessment" p.9.*
- Also review the following sections:
  a. "Example of projects…" d. *"Human Participant-Student Invention" b. Rules 1-12* e.

"Exempt Studies"
c. "IRB Waiver of Written Consent" f. *"Human Participant Risk Assessment"*

What happens if the IRB finds some problems?

- Students resubmit research plans with clarifications, completed forms, and correct dates for review.

Important Note:

- An SRC can override an IRB decision if it feels the human subject's safety is in jeopardy.