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| **Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**  **Standard Operating Procedures** | | |
| **Oral History** | SOP # | RR-411 |
| Effective Date |  |
| Revision Date |  |
| Revision # |  |
| Approval IRB |  |

**1. POLICY**

Oklahoma State University policy 4-0115, Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, requires that, prior to initiation of any human subjects research related activities (i.e. prior to recruitment of subjects and data collection), all research involving human beings as subjects of research, including research with human material (e.g., pathological and diagnostic specimens) obtained from living individuals, be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Research activities in which the only involvement of participants is in an oral history project may not be considered “human subjects research” and thus be excluded from IRB review. Determination of exclusion from IRB review is based on the scholar’s intention. To clarify, if the intention is to interview informants who have a unique perspective on a particular historical event or way of life, and the scholar also intends to let the informant’s stories stand on their own as a “testimonio”, with no generalizable analysis, or in an archive, the study most likely qualifies as oral history and is not considered to be human subjects research.

If the surveys or interviews are conducted with the intention of comparing, contrasting, or establishing commonalities between different segments or among members of the same segment, then the activity qualifies as human subjects research and the study will require IRB review and approval.

Historians explain or highlight a particular past; they do not create general explanations about all that has happened in the past, nor do they predict the future. Moreover, oral history narrators are not anonymous individuals, selected as part of a random sample for the purposes of a survey. Interviewees are selected because of their personal relationship or connection to the topic under investigation. An oral history interview provides a person’s unique perspective. A series of oral history interviews offers up a number of particular, individual perspectives on the topic, not information that may be generalized to all persons who were involved in an event or living at the time under investigation.

Oral history interviews are customarily not generated with an expectation that they will be analyzed as qualitative human subjects data. They are instead created as primary-source historical documents which reflect the experiences of specific people, and they stand alone as unique viewpoints. As a methodology, oral history focuses on the individualized perspective rather than on comparative or cumulative analyses that are seen as generalizable to a broader population.

It is primarily on the grounds that oral history interviews, in general, are not designed to contribute to “generalizable knowledge” that they are not subject to the requirements of 45 CFR 46 (i.e., they are not considered to be human subjects research).

Oral history interviews that are intended to contribute to generalizable knowledge or include vulnerable populations cannot be excluded from IRB review.

## Specific Procedures

## 1.1 Definitions

1.1.1 Generalizable knowledge: Knowledge that contributes to a theoretical framework of an established body of knowledge, where results are expected to be generalized to a larger population beyond the site of data collection or specific persons studied, or results are intended to be replicated in other settings.

1.1.2 Vulnerable populations: children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons. (OSU IRB policy RR-402 1.1.3)

## 1.2 Guidelines

1.2.1 Scholarly Research Projects:

1. Is the researcher conducting oral history interview(s) to gather first-hand information to test a generalized hypothesis?
2. Does the researcher plan to publish generalizable conclusions in a scholarly thesis (undergraduate, Masters, or Ph.D. dissertation), journal, book, or peer-reviewed, publicly-available publication?

If Yes to 1 or 2 the project is a systematic investigation designed to develop and contribute to generalizable knowledge and requires IRB review.

1.2.2 Archival Collection and Preservation:

1. Is the researcher conducting oral history interview(s) to create or contribute to an archival collection of first-hand narratives about the past?
2. If the researcher plans to analyze or interpret oral history deposited in an archival setting to construct a generalizable narrative about the past, is there a clearly stated record allowing public access to the archived material?

If Yes to #1 and/or yes to #2, either the project is not a systematic investigation designed to develop and contribute to generalizable knowledge or it has the required participants’ consent for public use of contributed content and thus does not constitute research as defined by OHRP guidelines. No IRB review is needed. Although the project will not undergo formal IRB review, investigators must be familiar with Principles and Best Practices for Oral History and ensure that project protocols adhere to these standards: <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>

If No to #2, the project is a systematic investigation designed to develop and contribute to generalizable knowledge and requires IRB review.

## 1.3. Exception to this policy:

1.3.1 If the project will involve participants that are defined as “vulnerable populations” and/or will place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants’ financial standing, employability, or reputation, then IRB review is required.

# 2. SCOPE

Applies to all oral history studies conducted by representatives of Oklahoma State University.

**3. RESPONSIBILITY**

Investigators involved with oral history projects that are not considered human subjects research are responsible for making the determination that their study does not require IRB review, or for consulting the IRB office for assistance with the determination. If the IRB Manager and/or IRB Chair determine that a particular oral history project does constitute human subject research or otherwise requires IRB review, then the investigator is responsible for seeking IRB review and approval prior to initiating the project.

The IRB Coordinator is responsible for receiving applications from investigators who are requesting IRB review, tracking the application review in the URC tracking system, reviewing and documenting review status, reviewing and approving revisions, and generating correspondence.

The IRB Manager is responsible for reviewing and documenting review status as needed, changing review level if appropriate, and reviewing and approving revisions.

The IRB Chair is responsible for reviewing and documenting review status as needed, changing review level if appropriate, reviewing and approving revisions and providing consultation in the review of claims regarding exempt status.

# 4. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

# 45 CFR 46

# 5. REFERENCES TO OTHER APPLICABLE SOPs

RR402

# 6. Implementation of Procedures

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| *IRB Coordinator* | Receive submissions, review for sufficient information, complete tracking database entry, assess for review (exempt, expedited, full board) status, perform exempt status review, document exempt status, change review designation of applications categorized as exempt that do not meet exempt criteria, send expedited status study to reviewer. |
| *IRB Manager* | Assess for and document review status, change review designation of applications categorized as exempt that do not meet exempt criteria, review exempt applications and route them to the IRB Coordinator for proper processing, send expedited status study to reviewer. |
| *IRB Chair* | Provide guidance to IRB Manager and IRB Coordinator as needed and requested. Change review designation of applications not meeting exempt or expedited criteria. Perform review of applications as needed. |

Oral History Project Compliance Checklist

Initial each item before signing this form and submitting to the OSU IRB.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the aforementioned definition of Oral History and have determined that my project conforms to it.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the ethics guidelines established by the Oral History Association located at <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>. I agree to comply with these ethical guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will supply participants with informed consent/release. Debriefing forms (if applicable) will be supplied.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if an oral history interview is recorded, the paperwork must state that the interview will be recorded and that the participant has the right to stop the recording at any time. I will become informed about and will obey the laws of the State of Oklahoma regarding recording.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the participant has the right to restrict access to the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will abide by the aforementioned conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I take responsibility for any future repercussions which my research might generate. Oklahoma State University will in no way be held liable or responsible for my actions.

Investigator (type/clearly print name)

Signature Date

Project title

Project start date-end date