
APPENDIX 16: Research Review Guidelines:

(see 2002-156, 2002-173, 2004-101, 2005-062 and 2007-025)

Amended 25-Mar-2007

Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Mensa Members as Research Subjects

- I. **Scope.** These Guidelines and Procedures apply to all requests for access to information from the Mensa membership database for scholarly research and all requests to utilize Mensa members (in their capacity as Mensa members) as subjects in such research. Non-exhaustive examples of research to which these Guidelines and Procedures are applicable include requests for secondary analyses of the membership database, requests that all or particular subsets of members be sent surveys or materials designed to solicit their participation in a research study, requests to advertise in Mensa publications (including local group publications) for the purpose of recruiting research subjects, requests to conduct research or to recruit research subjects at local group meetings, regional gatherings, annual gatherings, or other Mensa activities.

These Guidelines and Procedures do not apply to media inquiries for simple facts from the database (for example, "how many Mensans live in Utah?", or "what percentage of Mensans report less than a high-school diploma?", which may be answered, or not, by officers or staff as provided elsewhere. These Guidelines and Procedures likewise do not apply for requests by commercial entities for access to Mensa members for product development (i.e. testing of games, puzzles, intelligence tests, other products) or for product marketing purposes (i.e. "94% of Mensans prefer Brand X"). These latter requests will be forwarding to the Development Officer, the Name and Logo Committee, or other officials or committees, as applicable.

- II. **Conditions for Eligibility.** Research projects are eligible for approval if they meet the criteria for approval and if they meet the eligibility conditions below:
1. The research must be conducted under the auspices of an institution that holds an approved *Federalwide Assurance for the Protection of Human Subjects*.
 2. The research must be approved by an Institutional Review Board named in the sponsoring institution's *Federalwide Assurance* or that institution must have determined that the research is exempt from such review.
 3. The research must have undergone review for scientific merit. Examples of acceptable evidence of scientific merit review include approval of thesis or dissertation proposal by supervising committee for student research at accredited higher education institutions, approval following peer-review of government or private foundation grant support for the research, approval by departmental or college level scientific merit review committees for faculty research at accredited higher education institutions or scientific research organizations. If no scientific merit review is available for a particular project, the Research Review Committee may deem a project to have fulfilled this requirement upon submission of the investigator's *curriculum vitae* and reprints of prior peer-reviewed research articles demonstrating substantial prior research by the investigator in areas related to the proposed research.
 4. The investigator must demonstrate sufficient financial and other necessary resources to complete the research project in the event of approval.
- III. **Criteria for Approval.** Requests to use the Mensa membership database for scholarly research or for access to Mensa members as research subjects may be approved if all conditions for eligibility are met and if the Research Review Committee determines that:
1. No information concerning any identified member is disclosed by Mensa to the researcher without the member's consent.
 2. Procedures for individual contact with Mensa members for recruitment are designed to minimize members' inconvenience and annoyance and are designed to maximize the privacy of the members.
 3. The nature of the research and the experience that Mensans will undergo as research subjects are not such that the Committee's approval of the project is likely to undermine any member's relationship with Mensa.
 4. The potential of the research for subjecting Mensa or its members to public ridicule or disrepute is minimal.
 5. The potential that Mensa's participation in the research could subject it to financial or other liability is minimal.
- IV. **Process.**
- A. Researchers may request approval by providing the following materials:
1. Documentation that all of the conditions of eligibility are met.
 2. A description of the particular cooperation and/or access that is requested (i.e. particularly analyses of membership data, mailing of recruitment materials to all or an identified subset of members, ability to recruit subjects in-person at a gathering, etc.).
 3. An explanation of why Mensa subjects are sought and a description of the role of Mensa members (i.e. all subjects are Mensans; Mensa is one source of subjects believed to share common attribute of intelligence and all subjects with this attribute will be grouped together for analysis; Mensans will be compared to other groups in the analysis, etc.)
 4. A clear statement of all research hypotheses, in directional form if possible.

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5. A description of the anticipated methods for disseminating the results of the research including, as applicable, the names of any publications to which submission of research results is anticipated and the names of any conferences at which presentation is anticipated. Any plans for popular dissemination of research results (i.e. newspaper articles, radio talk shows, etc.) must also be disclosed.
 6. A description of how the participation of Mensa members will be characterized during the dissemination of research (i.e. "subjects were members of Mensa", "subjects were all members of a group purporting to include only the most intelligent 2% of the population", "subjects with high IQ were recruited", etc.).
 7. A complete research protocol including background, literature review, research questions, hypotheses, study design, procedure and methods (including any instruments). The complete research protocol as approved by the supervising institutional review board must be submitted. In addition, any correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, subsequent to the protocol's initial approval, must also be submitted. If the project is grant-funded, a copy of the complete grant proposal, and any subsequent correspondence between the investigator and the funding agency must also be provided.
- B. Following initial determination by the Chairperson of the Research Review Committee that the request is within the scope of the Committee, materials will be distributed to all Committee members.
 - C. The Committee chairperson shall designate a period of time of no less than two weeks, during which Committee members may review and discuss the proposal. Committee review shall be with respect to the conditions of eligibility and the criteria for approval only.
 - D. Following the designated period, any Committee member may offer a motion to approve the request, to deny the request, or to require specified modifications in order to secure approval. Such motions shall be distributed to Committee members and voted upon via e-mail.
 - E. The Committee chairman shall announce the results of the vote to Committee members. In the event modifications are required to secure approval, the Chairperson shall notify the investigator. Modifications, when received, shall be distributed for review according to the same procedure.
 - F. Following approval of a research project, the investigator is required to apprise the Committee of progress at intervals specified by Committee, but no less than annually. During the conduct of the research, any changes to the research protocol must be submitted to the Committee prior to their implementation. The Chairperson may approve changes that, in his or her judgment, do not have an impact on the criteria for approval. During the conduct of the research, copies of all correspondence between the investigator and the supervising Institutional Review Board must be provided to the Committee.
- V. Conditional Approval. If a researcher is unable to fulfill the conditions of eligibility due to a "chicken or egg" problem – i.e. if a grant-making agency is unwilling to fund a project or if an IRB is unwilling to approve a project until Mensa's willingness to provide access to members is determined, the Committee is authorized to provide "conditional approval". Conditional approval may also be granted in circumstances in which the preparation of a complete proposal (i.e. of a dissertation proposal or grant application) would be impracticable without assurance of likelihood of eventual final approval. In such circumstance, the researcher should provide documentation of as many of the conditions of eligibility as are possible and should provide a description of the requested cooperation and a summary of the research proposal. These materials shall be considered as provided in Section IV. B., C., and D., above, and "Conditional Approval" may be granted by the Committee. Conditional Approval means only that the final project, if substantially similar to the project described in the initial submission, is likely to meet to criteria for approval and to be approved. Conditional Approval does not bind the Committee nor the AMC and no research activities may be undertaken until final approval is granted. The Chairperson is authorized to notify the investigator of Conditional Approval.