Before beginning your research, you may need to obtain IRB approval, undergo human subjects training, and fill out conflict of interest forms.

1. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval

Who needs IRB review?

Because your project is intended to partially fulfill the requirements for your graduate degree, it meets the definition of "research." You need to submit an IRB application if your research will use human participants. Examples of research requiring IRB approval include collecting data from humans in the form of language samples, survey responses, grammaticality judgments, or behavioral or neuroimaging experiments.

What forms do I fill out?

Depending on the type of review your application needs to undergo, you will fill out a form for exempt review, expedited review, or full review.

Exempt review: Your research involves no more than minimal risk to the human participants (risk includes not only direct harm, but also, for example, potential loss of privacy if they tell you their name, age, etc.) AND falls into one of the exempt categories. For linguists, the categories most likely to be relevant include: education research; surveys, interviews, educational tests, public observations (that do not involve children); and analysis of previously-collected, anonymous data. If you are collecting survey or judgment data and you are not collecting any identifying information about the participants, your research will likely fall into the exempt category.

Expedited review: Your research involves no more than minimal risk to the human participants AND falls into one of the expedited categories. For linguists, the categories most likely to be relevant include: collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes; and research on individual or group characteristics or behavior or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. Survey research that does collect identifying information, and research involving behavioral experiments, typically falls into this category.

Full board review: Your research does not qualify for exempt or expedited review and/or poses more than minimal risk to the human participants.

For more info on the differences between these review categories:
http://www.bu.edu/irb/guidance-and-faqs/submission-guidance/difference-between-exempt-expedited-and-full-board/

To find the forms: http://www.bu.edu/orc/forms/human-subjects/

How long will it take?

You should plan at least 2 months ahead. Keep in mind there may be multiple rounds in which the IRB analyst asks you for clarification, correction, or additional documentation. Check here for the latest statistics on how long approval takes.
http://www.bu.edu/irb/about-us/irb-facts-statistics/irb-submission-metrics/

What information do I need for the forms?

General info
You will be asked for descriptions of your research question, study procedures, and recruitment methods, as well as information about the locations where the research will take place and the personnel who will be involved.

Every change requires re-approval. If you submit a grammaticality judgment survey for approval, you cannot then change any aspect of the sentences without re-approval. This means that you should be very careful to think through your procedures ahead of time and include everything you anticipate needing.

Determining whether the research can proceed involves assessing its likely risks and benefits. Make sure to think about these before you are filling out the application. Risks include not only potential harm that might come from the research (e.g., if participants will be reading emotionally-charged words they may become uncomfortable) but also the potential loss of privacy that is inevitable if you are recording their names or any other identifying information about them. Benefits need not accrue to the individual participant; potential advances in scientific understanding count as benefits.

Section-specific notes
Section C: You and anyone working with you who is "responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research" must fill go to the link provided in the application and fill out a conflict of interest form.

Section G: Note the phrase "lay language". This section should be comprehensible to any educated person who has never taken a linguistics course. Do not use jargon. If you must use a technical term, define it. It's fine to keep this section relatively general.

Section J (exempt) or K (expedited/full): Templates for obtaining consent and assent are on the IRB website: http://www.bu.edu/orc/forms/human-subjects/. Be very careful when you read this over; keep everything that applies to your study and change things that do not. Every detail in the form must match up to what you said on the application form. If you will be testing speakers of languages other than English, and will be consenting them in languages other than English, you will need to obtain a translation of the form as well as a verification by someone else that the translation is accurate. Both the translator and the verifier must list their credentials—e.g., native speaker status, advanced degree in the language.

Section O: You must have a secure way to store your data; this can include a locked file cabinet or password-protected server space. If you are collecting identifiable information, in almost all cases this must be stored separately from the participant's data. This means that you cannot put the participant's name on their grammaticality judgment survey, or staple their signed consent form to their data sheet. You must create a coding system that provides each participant with a unique code (e.g., "CondA-001" for the first participant you test in Condition A). If you anticipate at any point needing to recover the identity of the participant—for example, if you may need to do a follow-up survey and want to link their follow-up data with their original data—you should keep a separate file on a secure server location that links the code with the participant's name or contact information or whatever other identifying information you need.

After initial approval

You will need to revisit the IRB page to download amendment forms when you (a) add or remove study staff (e.g., research assistants who might be involved in collecting data), (b) change any aspect of the study from what you described in your initial application, or (c) create new recruitment materials.

You will also have to report to the IRB if anything goes wrong, such as if you lose a consent form that a participant has signed.

Once a year you will be required to submit a "continuing review application" to be allowed to continue your research. Make sure you do this in time to get re-approved before your initial approval expires (again, 6-8 weeks), or you will have to stop all research activities in the interim.

When your project is complete you must submit a final report and request closure of the protocol. Do not submit this until all data collection is complete, analysis of identifiable data is complete, and all documentation that links participants' identifiers to their data are destroyed.

Need help?

The BU Charles River IRB has open office hours on **Mondays** and **Thursdays** from **11:30 am to 1:00 pm**. You can stop by then or call to make another appointment.

CRC IRB
25 Buick Street, Room 157
Boston, MA 02215
Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30
617-358-6115
www.bu.edu/IRB
irb@bu.edu

2. CITI training

If you have to fill out an IRB application, you also have to complete CITI training. This is an online course designed to inform you about the ethics of human subjects research.

Who needs to complete the training?

You, your advisor, and *anyone* who will be involved in consenting participants, data collection, or data analysis. This includes undergraduate research assistants.

When do I complete it?

You, and all other personnel, must finish the training before submitting your IRB application. On the IRB application you must indicate the completion dates for all personnel.

How do I complete it?

Go to: http://www.bu.edu/orc/training/human-subjects/citi-program/

You will (most likely) be completing the Social and Behavioral Focus program. You must complete all of the required modules. Also complete any of the optional modules that apply to your research (e.g., research with children, internet research).

How long will it take?

It generally takes less than two hours to complete all of the modules.

What do I do once I'm done?

Send a .pdf of your completion certificate, along with any other member of your study staff listed on the IRB application, with the application itself.

3. Conflict of Interest (COI)

If you have to fill out an IRB application, you also have to fill out a COI form. Your project is exempt if it is unfunded (i.e., there are no grant or departmental funds involved) AND if it does not involve human subjects.

Who needs to fill out COI forms?

Everyone who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research must fill out a COI form. This includes you and your advisor, at a minimum. It may also include other students who work with you on the project, depending on their role. If in doubt, have them fill it out.

If the project is funded by a grant, the Principal Investigator (PI) of the grant is the PI of the project.

When should these be completed?

You, and all other personnel, must complete the form before submitting your IRB application. On the IRB application you must indicate that all personnel have completed their COI forms.

Where are the forms?

http://www.bu.edu/orc/coi-online-module/

What information do I need?

Standard information about you, your project, and the other personnel involved. The "admin office" is BU-CRC (OSP) *BU*. You will also need a one or two sentence summary about the project. The financial interest disclosure form explains what, if anything you will need to disclose.

The simple fact of having financial disclosures does not jeopardize your project, so be honest!

If your project is unfunded, you will leave much of the form blank.