✓ Is your research exempt?
Most social/behavioral/educational research can be determined exempt from IRB review. Review Exempt Categories online and, if eligible, submit an Exemption Request Form.

✓ Spell check, spell check, spell check
Proof read to ensure correct spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation marks.

✓ Checkboxes
To respond to checkbox questions, either mark the checkbox (in Word: right click, choose Properties, and click “checked” under Default Value) or type an X to indicate your response.

✓ Thoroughness
Read the questions carefully and respond to all elements. Attach consent forms, recruitment scripts, or flyers/ads, and interview/survey questions.Incomplete applications take longer to review.

✓ Signature/affirmation
For PI and Co-PI signatures, ORCA can accept either a) a full-page scan of a wet signature, OR b) an email affirmation that each, respectively, accepts responsibility for compliance with regulations and protection of human subjects, and that all researchers have read the Financial Interest Disclosure attachment and reported any disclosable interests.

✓ Recruitment
Recruitment messages, scripts, flyers, etc. should include the following elements:
• The recommended wording is "You are invited" or "Participants invited"
• Study title and UCSC IRB study number
• The word "research"
• Identify UCSC
• Contact name with phone or e-mail

• Brief eligibility criteria list
• Purpose of the study
• What will be expected of the participant
• Time commitment
• Location where research will take place

✓ Screening
Screening means only allowing some subjects to participate based on certain criteria, such as age. One simple method is to advertise your eligibility criteria during recruitment and allow subjects to “self-screen”. If anyone at all can participate, or you are only recruiting to people you know are eligible (e.g. 4th graders), you do not need to describe screening.

✓ Risks
Unless subject participation is anonymous (see below), there is always a risk of accidental disclosure of subjects’ identifiable information. The IRB will look for this to be stated in the Risks question of the application and in the consent form(s).

✓ Benefits
It is uncommon for subjects to receive direct benefit in social-behavioral research. In most cases, clearly state, “there is no direct benefit to subjects” under the Benefits question and in the consent form(s). Please also list societal benefit based on your literature review.
✓ “Anonymous”
For the IRB’s purposes, “anonymous” means it is not possible for anyone, including the researcher, to link study data to any individual subject. If data can be linked to identifiers by a code or pseudonym, it is not considered anonymous.

✓ Audio, Video, Photos
All of these are considered “identifiable” by the IRB even without names attached. If you are collecting audio, video or photos, participation in your study is not “anonymous.”

✓ Data security
The IRB recommends storing identifiable subject data on either a USCS secure server, UCSC Google platform (NOT synced to local devices), or UCSC-supported Qualtrics product. Paper documents should be in a locked cabinet/desk in a locked room. Storing data in any other way, including online survey platforms, requires approval from your ITS Divisional Liaison.

✓ Audio recordings and transcription
When possible, the IRB recommends transcribing audio recordings, removing identifying information from transcripts, and then destroying audio recordings within a year. The IRB will want to see how soon audio will be destroyed in the protocol and consent form(s).

✓ Data coding
For the IRB’s purposes, this means a system of replacing identifiers with a number or false name and maintaining a master list of linked identifiers and numbers/false names. If you are coding data in this way, explain if/when you plan on destroying the master list (“code key”) in application and in the consent form(s).

✓ Consent form
The consent form should be concise and easy to read, while also including all required elements. Please use the IRB’s recommended consent template.

✓ Electronic or verbal consent
To conduct consent verbally or over the internet, you will need a waiver of the requirement to document consent. Subjects must still be presented with all elements of consent and click or respond verbally to indicate agreement. Request this waiver under the Informed Consent question by:

1. Checking box (b) for "You are requesting a waiver of the requirement for a signed consent form”;
2. Checking box corresponding to your justification – in most cases, (ii): “The research presents no more than minimal risk and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside the research context”; and
3. Providing a brief explanation of why you need the waiver and, if applicable, how your research meets the stated criteria.