Suggested Outline for a Project Summary

1. Explain the purpose of your project. What are you trying to find out?
2. Describe how you plan to select individuals for your sample.
   a. Demographic characteristics
   b. Selection criteria
   c. Number of subjects
   d. Time frame
3. Describe your procedure for obtaining informed consent, if applicable.
4. Describe where the data will be collected. If necessary, obtain permission to collect data at that location.
5. Describe the research procedures. What will the subjects be asked to do?
6. Describe the specific data that will be recorded.
7. Explain how the data will be recorded.
8. Explain how anonymity will be assured (e.g., by not recording any identifying information) or why the subjects would not be at risk if their data were accidentally disclosed.

Helpful Hints

✓ Your project summary should make it clear that you meet all the requirements for exemption:
  1. Minimal risk.
  2. No prisoners, no minors involved, and not targeted at pregnant women. (See guidelines for exceptions).
  3. Data are recorded anonymously OR would not put the subjects at risk if disclosed.
  4. Falls into one of the categories eligible for exemption.

✓ Keep in mind that the committee members know nothing about your project except what you write in the project summary.

✓ Read your project summary as if you are a committee member and think about the concerns or questions that you would have. Then revise the summary to address those concerns.

✓ Make sure you are consistent. For example, don’t state in one place that your data are anonymous and in another place that your data are confidential. (Anonymous means the researcher does not record any identifying information. Confidential means identifying information is recorded but it is kept secure).

✓ Proofread your summary to make sure it is written clearly and is grammatically correct. Ask someone else to proofread your summary as well.