

COVER LETTERS

Cover letters, rather than consent forms, may be used for some categories of exempt minimal-risk research with adults such as survey or questionnaire research on non-sensitive topics. The cover letter should state the purpose of the survey, the expected number of respondents, a description of the topic of the survey and the content of the questions on the survey, a statement about confidentiality or anonymity, and a statement about how the participant may obtain additional information about the study. The participant should be allowed to keep the cover letter for future reference. He or she need not sign and return a consent form because responding to the survey indicates a willingness to participate in the study. Provide contact information for the IRB should they have questions about the rights of research participants.

Example:

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Mary Smith, a graduate student in the Department of Counseling at The University of Akron. The purpose of this research is to find out how individuals decide on what type of counseling is appropriate for them.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous web-based survey. The survey should take no more than 30 minutes and I hope to recruit 100 participants.

The survey will not collect any identifiable information and no one will be able to connect your responses to you. Your anonymity is further protected by not asking you to sign and return a consent form. Your completion of the survey will serve as your consent. Please keep this cover letter for future reference.

If you have any questions about this study, you may call me at 330-972-1111 or my advisor, Dr. Jones, at 330-972-2222. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666.

Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your participation.