Grand Valley State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Title*: Review of Scientific Validity and Scholarly Merit*	
Section: 130.	This policy and procedure supersedes those previously drafted
Approved by HRRC: 04/12/2011 Revised: 09/10/2013 Reviewed: 10/28/2014 Revised by HRRPPC: 11/28/2017 Administrative update: 03/13/2020 Revised by IRBPPC: 09/09/2024	Approved by IO: 05/12/2011 Revisions approved by IO: 09/10/2013 Revisions approved by IO: 4/16/2018 Revisions approved by IO: 3/13/2020 Revisions approved by IO: 10/25/2024
Effective Date: 10/25/2024	
Related documents: *IRB Policy 010: IRB Composition and Member Responsibilities* *IRB Policy 330: Authorization to Conduct Human Subjects Research*	

Policy

The determination of minimally adequate pedagogical or scientific merit and validity of proposed research projects is initially made at the level of the unit in which the lead researcher is administratively located for purposes of leading or supervising the research. The signature of the Authorizing Official (AO) for the research (usually the unit head or their designee) indicates that the study design and procedures meet the unit's disciplinary standards for scholarly or scientific merit and validity. However, because the IRB is ultimately responsible for assessing both the potential benefits of proposed research and the adequacy of minimization of its associated risks, final decisions regarding the validity and merit of the research as it pertains to the minimization of risk to research participants, are the responsibility of the IRB.

Procedures

The Office of Research Compliance and Integrity staff will verify that an appropriate AO has signed the protocol application prior to sending the study out for review by the IRB. No protocol will be approved unless and until the AO authorization has been confirmed. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the IRB Chair.

1. Electronic Signatures

    a. Pursuant to Section 11.100 of Title 21 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Grand Valley State University intends that all electronic signatures executed by our employees, agents, or representatives, located anywhere in the world, for purposes of authorizing human subjects research activities, are the legally binding equivalent of traditional handwritten signatures.

- *Note:* Federal Register / Vol. 62, No. 54 / Thursday, March 20, 1997 / Rules and Regulations / 13457.