

Conducting Research at AFA

Action For Autism (AFA) actively participates and collaborates on research opportunities on autism in India with students (graduate, postgraduate, doctoral and post doctoral) and researchers affiliated to an institute or organization within India or outside. We strongly support the growth of research on autism in India. We also believe the conduct of such studies in India should meet a similar standard as in other countries. If this does not occur, the validity of all research conducted in India will be questioned. We welcome submissions from students at all levels as well as other researchers and we ask that you follow the procedures below.

1. Initial Letter of Interest

Submit a short letter of interest to AFA that briefly describes your interest in conducting research through AFA. If the researcher is affiliated with any institute or organization, this letter should be on the letterhead from the home institute or organization. The letter should be no more than 1 page and should include:

- a. Brief information about the researcher
- b. Brief overview of the research project
- c. Expected time period/timeline for the project

The purpose of this letter is to allow us to monitor the flow of research activities within the center. Once we have received and reviewed this letter, we will acknowledge receipt and will ask you to submit a full application.

2. Full Application

- a. Institutional Review Board Application (available on the AFA website)
- b. Project Description
Each submission should include a Project Description that provides enough detail to allow the IRB members to adequately assess the project. This description will include the following components:
 - i. Abstract of the proposal (an overview of no more than 200 words)
 - ii. Introduction
 - iii. Review of the *relevant* literature
 - iv. Aim(s) & objectives
 - v. Justification and rationale for study
 - vi. Ethical issues and how these will be addressed
 - vii. Methodology, including a description of the potential risks & benefits to participants
 - viii. Outcome measures
 - ix. Proposed analytic approach
 - x. Significance of the project to the autism community in India
 - xi. Plans for publication of results – positive or negative- while maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants.
 - xii. Any other information relevant to the study
- c. Supporting Documentation
As described on the AFA Initial IRB Application form, supporting documents are required. These include:
 - i. Curriculum vitae of investigators
 - ii. Copies of all proposed measures, if applicable
 - iii. Copy of informed consent form for participants
 - iv. Copies of text for flyers, websites, other advertisements

Submit one hard copy and one soft copy of the IRB application, project description, and supporting documentation to AFA.

IRB Review Process:

1. All documents will be reviewed by the AFA Institutional Review Board (AFA IRB) that approves and monitors all research projects being carried out by AFA or at AFA. Only complete applications will be reviewed by AFA IRB. All researches must adhere to the guidelines stated by AFA IRB.
2. Following review, the applicant may be asked to provide clarification or a request for modification to an aspect of the research protocol may be made. This information will be communicated in writing.
3. If revisions are required, a soft copy of the revised document must be submitted within a stipulated period of time as specified in the communication or before the next meeting.
4. After receiving approval from the AFA IRB, the researcher will meet or communicate with AFA staff to discuss the timeline and plans for data collection. Researchers will coordinate with the AFA staff to clarify the logistics involved in data collection (e.g. identification of the sample, sending out informed consent forms, and collection of the returned forms.)

Please Note:

- To protect the privacy of the parents seeking services at AFA, we will NOT release contact details, prior to obtaining their individual consent.
- Permission MUST be sought for all audio/video recordings.
- Permission may be sought to use the *Reading Room* to refer to books or academic journals. Additional opportunities are available to complete internship or volunteer with AFA.
- Any publications resulting from data collected through AFA will require authorship of a minimum of one AFA staff.
- AFA will review all publications prior to submission for publication.

Any questions?

Please contact Dr. Nidhi Singhal at dr.nidhisinghal@gmail.com.