In *italics* below you’ll find some specific instructions for completing the final revision of your project proposals.

II.5. Pretest & Revise Questions, Final proposals *(Tue Mar 17)*

Based on feedback to II.4, update parts K-M. For part M, you should choose an MOE that gives a feasible sample size - as we’ve talked about in class, even if you’re doing an email survey you can’t send emails to the entire campus. Something on the order of 500-700 is typically reasonable for email surveys. Remember, if you’re interested in subgroups and you are not planning to (or cannot) stratify, you might need to increase your sample size.

In addition, add the following sections to your proposal:

N. Pretest of a revised version of your questionnaire (or observation protocol) on a group of possible respondents/units. At a minimum you should be conducting cognitive interviews for key questions, like we discussed in class. Even if each member of your group only conducts a few (say 3-5) of these cognitive interviews you will learn a lot about what works and what doesn’t. If possible you should test your entire instrument, especially those of you who are handing out surveys or conducting interviews.

O. Report on the specification of and results from the pretest, and any redesign of the questionnaire (or observation protocol) that may be required. I’m looking for (at least!) 3-4 paragraphs about your pretests. Who were your test subjects? How did you recruit them? What questions did you test, and why? Did you test the whole instrument? What did you learn from pretesting? What changes did the results lead you to make to your questions/questionnaires/observation protocols? The length of this section may vary greatly, depending on how extensive your testing was.

P. Add a section to your proposal describing how you plan to protect the privacy and assure the confidentiality of respondents. Talk about data collection, protection, and disclosure. I want to see a plan for how you will securely collect and store data. This is a key part of ensuring the confidentiality you promised your respondents. This should include:

- How you plan to securely store data files or paper records, including periods when they are not in use (best is in an encrypted file a la VeraCrypt, or in a locked cabinet)
- When and how you plan to separate identifying information (like Andrew IDs) from survey responses. Services like SurveyMonkey allow you to set up your survey so that email addresses are separated from actual responses for the duration of the survey; only records of who has responded are kept. This is a good option if you’re asking sensitive questions.
- Exactly how you plan to use any identifying information (like Andrew IDs) that you collect or are provided (acceptable uses are initial contact, nonresponse followup, deduplication, and providing incentives, e.g. contacting the winners of a prize drawing.)
- When and how you will destroy personally identifiable information (including the list of Andrew IDs) at the end of your projects.

Q. Submit a final revised version of (A) through (M), ready to go to the IRB. Complete the IRB form. Submit to me, not CM’s IRB. You should complete the relevant portions of the “CMU IRB Application Exempt Form (b)(2)”, linked from the course website, and return it to me (you don’t need to include any attachments - I should already have them all). This should be largely
a matter of transcribing information from your existing proposal. **If you did not complete your CITI training, you MUST do so before you can proceed with implementation!**

R. Develop and report on your schedule for implementing the survey, including plans for nonresponse followup, data analysis, and preparation of a final report.  You should expect these to change over time, but I’m looking for:

- Tentative dates/times for beginning and ending data collection. For groups running email surveys, these are the dates and times you’ll send initial invitations and reminders, and the period for which your survey will be “live”. For those of you conducting in-person interviews, be specific about where and when you will conduct interviews. You are not required to tell me who will be conducting interviews when, but I highly suggest that you make tentative plans to allocate the work so that expectations are clear within your group.
- When and how will you conduct nonresponse followup (reminders, revisits, etc.)?
- Analysis and final report plans. What estimands will you compute? What regression models? What software will you use? When will you start writing the final report? Again, you are not required to tell me who will work on what, but I highly suggest that you make tentative plans to allocate the work so that expectations are clear within your group.

S. Draft your initial contact emails (or your “approach” for those of you doing interviews) and consent forms. **We looked at a sample consent form in class some weeks ago. A good consent form will cover all the relevant aspects of informed consent, which include at minimum:**

- A statement that the study (survey) involves research, and an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject’s participation.
- A description of any benefits to the subject or others that may be expected
- A statement describing the extent to which confidentiality of the records identifying the subject will be maintained.
- Contact information for the researchers – i.e., you – and, for this class, a statement that this project is part of your work in this course as well as my contact information.
- A statement that participation is voluntary and may be discontinued at any time.

A good initial contact email should describe the purpose of the survey and any benefits, and indicate how long it will take to complete. It should be succinct and personalized as much as possible (think about your own experiences receiving unsolicited emails).

Once this final version of the survey plan is approved you will be able to begin implementation.

**Important dates for the remainder of the semester:**

- March 17: Final proposals due
- March 24-26: Midterm Presentations (5% of your final grade)
- April 1: Last day to sign up for Meeting of the Minds (mandatory!). Register to present a **poster**.
- April 9: Exam 2
- April 23, 28, 30: Final presentations
- May 6: Meeting of the Minds
- May 8: Final project reports due