

## 25.7 Student Research

### 25.7.1 Human Subject Research and Course Projects

Learning how to conduct ethical human subject research is an important part of a student's educational experience. Research activities that are designed as part of a course requirement for purposes of learning experience only and are **not** "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" **may** not require IRB review and approval if all of the following conditions are true:

- Results of the research are viewed only by the course instructor for teaching purposes and discussed within the classroom for teaching and learning purposes.
- Results of the research are not made public through presentation (outside of the classroom) and are not published in paper or electronic format (e.g., cannot be made available on the internet, cannot be published in a journal, etc.).
- Research procedures are no more than minimal risk.
- Vulnerable populations are not targeted (e.g., children under age 18, prisoners, persons who are cognitively impaired, etc.).
- Data collected are recorded in such a manner that the subjects are not identifiable (images in videotapes and photographs and voices on audiotape are identifiable).
- When appropriate, an informed consent process is in place.

#### 25.7.1.1 Responsibility of the Course Instructor

The course instructor is responsible for communicating to the students the ethics of human subject research, for ensuring the protection of human subjects (including a process is in place for obtaining voluntary informed consent from research subjects when appropriate), and for monitoring the students' progress.

When designing a project, students should be instructed on the ethical conduct of research and on the preparation of the IRB application when such is required. In particular, instructors and students should:

- Understand the elements of informed consent;
- Develop appropriate consent documents or processes;
- Plan appropriate strategies for recruiting subjects;
- Identify and minimize potential risks to subjects;
- Assess the risk-benefit ratio for the project;
- Establish and maintain strict guidelines for protecting privacy and confidentiality, and
- Allow sufficient time for IRB review (if necessary) and completion of the project.

In making a determination of whether or not a class research project requires IRB review, the instructor is encouraged to contact the IRB office for assistance.

### **25.7.1.2 Individual Research Projects Conducted by Students**

Independent study projects, senior theses, undergraduate research projects, Masters and advanced degree research, and similar exercises must be independently submitted for IRB review. It is important to keep in mind that any human subject research activity that will ultimately contribute to part or all of a thesis, dissertation, or other type of publication or presentation must go through the IRB review process prior to enrolling subjects and collecting data. IRB review/approval cannot occur after a study has begun.

Students and advisors should contact the IRB Office with any questions.

### **25.7.2 Independent Study, Theses and Dissertations**

These research activities are considered to meet the federal definition of human subject research and must be independently submitted to the IRB by the student-investigator. However, when students conduct research as part of a course of study, a faculty member ultimately is responsible for the protection of the subjects, even if the student is the primary investigator and actually directs the project. The faculty adviser assumes the responsibility for students engaged in independent research, and instructors are responsible for research that is conducted as part of a course. Students may serve as the principal investigator for social, behavioral or education research as long as they are able to secure a faculty advisor with expertise in their area of study.