

## **Class Projects Involving Human Subjects Data Collection**

### **Best Practices for a Classroom Assignment-Based Research Project**

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Some student projects conducted to fulfill course requirements involve activities that, in a different context, might meet the definition of human subjects research. Classroom assignment-based research does not require IRB approval if the following conditions are met:

- **The risk level of the project is minimal.** “Minimal risk” is when “the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.”
- **The project does not involve interaction with vulnerable subjects** (e.g., pregnant women, children, prisoners, or individuals with impaired decision making).
- **The project does not target the specific subject population of Longwood student-athletes.** Inadvertent sampling of Longwood student-athletes is acceptable.
- **No identifiers are collected.**
- **The project is limited to surveys/questionnaires/interview procedures, observation of public behavior, or standard educational exercises directly related to the topic(s) being studied.**
  - Surveys/questionnaires/interviews, if used, that contain sensitive personal questions (e.g., questions about mental health, alcohol/drug use, sexual behavior/attitudes, criminal activity, medical history, grades/test scores) or other sensitive personal information should be submitted to the IRB for review.
- **The project collects only demographic questions that are required to directly answer the research question.**
- **The subjects are recruited in a voluntary manner.**
- **The project does not involve deception of any kind.** All subjects must be fully informed of the nature of the project and give voluntary consent to participate.
- **The project does not involve video recording of subjects.** Audio recording is allowed, but only if it is erased by the end of the semester. Projects using videorecording must be reviewed by the IRB.
- **The data are not archived or saved in any way to be used in the future.**
- **The data can NEVER be used for public dissemination** (e.g. Research Showcase, Prism, Symposium day), thesis/dissertation/honors research, independent research, or presentations outside of Longwood University or to any media outlet.

It is also understood that the end result of the research may be presented in the classroom to peers but may not be used for any publication or public presentation outside of the immediate classroom.

## Faculty Responsibilities

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Faculty who require students to do classroom-based research projects assume responsibility for the conduct of those projects. This means faculty and departments are responsible for ensuring that the students are adequately trained and that their planned research activities are designed with appropriate and adequate safeguards in place to ensure that the activities are within the scope of ethical conduct. Care should be taken to protect the rights and welfare of the individuals who act as participants. Standard research practices such as obtaining consent, ensuring confidentiality, conducting responsible fieldwork, and giving participants a contact name should be employed. Specific faculty responsibilities are:

- **Faculty should maintain access to all raw data.** Faculty are responsible for data security.
- **Faculty are responsible for destroying data at the end of the semester.** Hard copies should be shredded and electronic data should be deleted.
- **Electronic survey templates should be created in the faculty member's institutional Qualtrics account.** Students may create a free account on Qualtrics for the faculty member to share (collaborate) the template for the creation of survey questions. The faculty member retains control over data and editing permissions and sharing.
- **Faculty are responsible for ensuring that students receive appropriate training on research ethics.** It is recommended that students complete CITI training in Human Subjects Research (<http://www.citiprogram.org/>).
- **Faculty should review all methods and instruments used in each project.**
- **Faculty are responsible for ensuring that the methodological design prioritizes the safety and welfare of the student-researchers.**
- **The IRB strongly recommends the use of informed consent. The informed consent should:**
  - identify the student researcher and the class, and clearly state that the project is a class assignment.
  - provide a brief explanation of the research question.
  - specify who will have access to the individual data and/or summarized results and how the data will be used (e.g. a paper for the instructor only, a class presentation)
  - inform the respondent that their participation is completely voluntary and confidential, and they may stop at any time/decline to answer any questions.
  - provide the name and contact information for the supervising faculty member.

## Document Attributes

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Approved by IRB: 3/2024