



Guidance for Research and Class Projects Involving Human Subjects

- Federal regulations and College policy require IRB approval for all research with human subjects regardless of whether the research is conducted by faculty, staff or students
- Research is defined as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge
- Generalizable knowledge means that findings of the research may be shared outside of the College community, such as with a publication or professional conference presentation
- The following are considered research that, if it involves human subjects, requires IRB review and approval:
 - Faculty, staff or student research that may be published or presented at a professional venue
 - Honor's projects, Master's theses and dissertations that involve intervention/interaction with human participants or the use of human data even if there are no current plans to publish or present the results at a conference
- Class projects are not considered research and do not require IRB review and approval if they satisfy ALL of the following criteria:
 - they are designed solely to provide students with training about research methods
 - they do not involve protected or vulnerable populations*
 - they do not collect sensitive personal information (e.g., questions about alcohol/drug use, victimization, sexual behavior/attitudes, criminal activity, medical history, or mental health, and any information that could damage an individual's education, financial standing, employability or reputation)
 - they do not collect any identifying information on participants
 - they involve minimal risk (i.e., no more than would be encountered in routine daily activities)
 - they will not be disseminated outside of Owens Community College
 - Participants are recruited in a voluntary manner
 - The data will not be saved in any way to be used in the future
 - No college faculty, staff or student receives compensation or support from an external company/organization/agency for collecting, analyzing or reporting the results of the project

*Examples of protected and vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to:

- Children/minors (under the age of 18)
- Prisoners
- Pregnant women
- Fetuses and products of labor and delivery
- People with diminished capacity to give consent

If there is any question about whether a proposed project involves a protected population, involves sensitive information, or otherwise requires IRB review, contact the IRB for guidance at IRB@owens.edu.

Instructor Responsibilities for Class Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

- Instructors who require students to do classroom-based research assume responsibility for the conduct of those projects and must ensure that all IRB guidelines are met if applicable
- Instructors should discuss general principles of ethical and professional conduct in research with students prior to the initiation of the project, including such topics as:
 - Participant safety and the minimization of risk
 - Potential benefits of participation
 - Data security, confidentiality and destruction
 - Interacting with participants in a professional, respectful and sensitive manner
 - Managing sensitive topics
 - The unique needs of the participant population
 - Minimizing the possibility of coercion and undue influence to participate

Student Obligations

- For student research and class projects involving human subjects, students must:

Orally	In writing
identify themselves as Owens students, state that they are performing the activity to fulfill a course requirement, and identify the course	provide the name and contact information for the supervising instructor
tell participants the purpose of the project, what they will be asked to do, how long it will take, and that they can discontinue their participation at any time without any negative consequences	leave a document with the participant that informs them of the purpose of the project, what they will be asked to do, how long it will take, and that they can discontinue their participation at any time without any negative consequences; this document should inform participants that their information will be kept confidential, state who will have access to the information, and explain that the information will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project and not be used for any future purposes
describe projects that do not undergo IRB review as a “class project” rather than as “research”	obtain written, signed voluntary informed consent from all participants, and provide the participant with a copy; however, no identifying information (<i>e.g.</i> , name, address, phone number, email address, social security number, school id, etc.) may be collected from participants; participant names and signatures should be on the consent form only

- For projects involving research with human subjects that will result in generalizable knowledge that may be shared outside of the College community, the project must obtain IRB approval, be described to participants as research, and provide the participants with all of the information listed above, plus any additional information required by the IRB.