

Institutional Review Board

<http://gra.sdsu.edu/research/irb>

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The IRB Quick Reference Guide For Education Research

Recruitment Tips

State within the protocol who will recruit potential participants and describe the recruitment process. Be sure to include the **WHO, WHEN, AND HOW** of recruitment procedures.

Keep in mind the possibility for undue influence to participate in research when individuals are in a subservient position to the investigator (e.g., student, employee, etc.). An individual in this situation may participate in the research to comply with a class requirement or to appear supportive to the investigator. Be sure to state within the protocol how any undue influence during recruitment will be minimized.

If minors are involved, be sure to discuss how parents are notified of their child's opportunity to participate in the research.

If recruitment of minors will occur through the classroom, consider asking teachers to help distribute your parental permission forms and assent forms, along with a cover letter explaining the study to parents for review.

How to Use This Guide

The *IRB Quick Reference for Education Research* provides basic tips on protocol development for research conducted in an educational setting. This guidance should be used in conjunction with information regarding the review process and protocol development found at <http://gra.sdsu.edu/research/irb>.

Important Tips - Review level

Research can be **exempt** if study activities include normal classroom activities.

- For example, research which includes analyzing students test scores before and after using a new teaching technique is eligible for exempt review. Interviews with students conducted after class about their math knowledge would require **expedited** review as afterschool interviews are not normal class activity.

Research will be **expedited** if audiotaping or videotaping will occur or if focus groups are included in research activities.

For more information on review levels, see the **FAQ section of the IRB website**.

Important Tips -

Normal Classroom Activity vs. Research

It is important to clearly describe within your protocol what activities all students will participate in as part of normal classroom activity versus what activities only those who agree to participate in the research will participate in.

It is also important to make the distinction between classroom activity and research within your protocol because this will impact what information is included within the consent form.

- Example: All students in class take a final exam as part of normal classroom activity, which will be used for analysis. 5 students will be asked to complete an interview about how they studied for the exam. The IRB will not need to review the final exam questions, but will need to review the interview questions. Similarly, the consent form should describe the interview, but only ask for permission to use exam data for analysis.

The IRB only has oversight over research activities and will not need to review details of normal class activities.

Consent Process Tips

Different consent forms are appropriate for different types of research activities. Consent form templates are available on the main IRB webpage.

When minors are included in research, parental permission must be obtained before assent is obtained.

Written assent is obtained for children 7 and older. Verbal assent is obtained from younger children.

Consent forms, parental permission forms, and assent forms should be written in simplified language that will be understandable to the population under study.

When asking participants to be involved in multiple activities (e.g., participate in afterschool interviews, agree to have in class group presentations videotaped, allow course work throughout the semester to be analyzed) consider including check boxes within the consent form so that students may elect to participate only in those activities they feel comfortable with (if your research design allows this flexibility).

Risks, Benefits, and Incentives

RISKS

According to Federal Regulations, a description of any reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject must be included in the protocol.

When a teacher conducts research with students, these research participants often fear that their choice to participate in the study may impact class grades or standing with the teacher. Procedures must be developed to reduce the possibility of undue coercion to participate.

When the research includes focus groups, some participants may be uncomfortable speaking in a group. Information should be included within the consent form that participants only need to share what they feel comfortable disclosing to the group.

When the research involves audio or videotape, participants may be uncomfortable with how their voices or images will be used. Be sure to include information within the consent form (and protocol) regarding how tapes will be stored and used so that individuals will be able to make an informed choice whether to participate,

Be sure to address within your protocol how all identified risks will be managed.

BENEFITS

Benefits are especially important to consider when the research has a benefit for participants that non-participants will not receive, thus putting them at a disadvantage in the classroom.

For example, if participation in the research involves the receipt of extra help with homework assignments those students who do not participate are at a disadvantage in class and should also be offered help with homework, even if they choose not to participate in the research.

INCENTIVES

If extra credit is offered for participation in research, an alternative extra credit assignment must be made available for those who would like extra credit, but do not want to participate in research.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- (For the entire list, please see 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)

If accessing student records for your research, be sure your access is FERPA compliant and specify within your protocol whether you will be obtaining consent to access records or whether any of the above conditions from 34 CFR § 99.31 apply.

The Main IRB Site contains helpful hints and important guidance.

FAQ's, sample protocols, SDSU Research guidebook, and other helpful guides, templates and forms can be found here.

Get the Details!

Find out about subject recruitment, informed consent, writing a protocol, analyzing existing data and more. Details can be found within the Research Integrity/Regulatory Compliance section of the website at <http://gra.sdsu.edu/research/irb>

Document Checklist:

Screening Form or Checklist (if applicable)

Letters of Authorization - Permission must be obtained from the location where the study will take place, if non-public. Usually this involves obtaining a letter from the school principal/or school district stating permission to conduct your study at the given school(s). Required permission can be documented in a letter from an agency (or data owner) directed to the Principal Investigator.

Recruitment Materials - One or more of the following may be applicable to your study. Upload all that apply to your protocol:

Flier

Verbal Script

Cover Letter

Consent Documents - One or more of the following may be applicable to your study. Upload all that apply to your protocol. Templates are available on the IRB webpage. Please use the available templates when developing forms for use in your study:

Consent form

Parental Permission form

Assent form

Exempt Consent Script

Videotape Release form

Measures - One or more of the following may be applicable to your study. Upload all that apply to your protocol:

Interview Questions

Survey Instruments

Focus Group Questions

Faculty Sponsor Assurance Form (for student research) - A copy of this form is available on the IRB website under the "Important Forms" section.