

Students as Research Subjects

1. Overview
 - 1.1. Informed consent is a fundamental principle of federal regulations that govern research involving human subjects. A subject's participation must be voluntary and the decision to participate in research must be made based upon full and accurate information about the research. Students recruited as research subjects are more vulnerable to coercion because they may feel obligated to participate in research, believing that failure to do so will negatively affect their grades and/or the attitude of the teacher towards them. Students are at a greater risk of experiencing negative consequences if confidentiality is not maintained for the research data.
2. Recruitment of Students
 - 2.1. In general, investigators should not use their own students as subjects in their research, if it can be avoided.
 - 2.2. Researchers who wish to use only their own students must be able to provide valid scientific justification for selecting their own students as research subjects. Convenience is not a valid justification.
 - 2.3. Recruitment methods must not lead potential subjects to think they will be compromised by not participating. In addition, the recruitment materials/process should not imply that participation could lead to a more favorable status, evaluation, or future opportunity.
 - 2.4. Investigators should only make study-related announcements (such as study title and investigator contact information) or provide recruitment materials (such as fliers) to students in KSU classrooms or online courses, so long as the investigator is not also the class instructor. Direct recruitment may be approved by the IRB when the investigator is the instructor if the purpose of the research is directly connected to students in a particular class. For example, if the research examines teaching methods in a particular course taught by the investigator.
 - 2.5. For research performed in a classroom, where the investigator is the instructor in the classroom, it is recommended that data be collected by an independent third party so that the instructor does not know who participated, and does not have access to the identifiable data or identity of participants for any purpose until grades have been assigned and entered.
 - 2.6. In situations where participation in research is part of a course requirement, alternative means for obtaining equivalent credit must be made available to students that do not want to volunteer as a research subject.
 - 2.7. Whenever possible, researchers should avoid data collection during regular class meetings. When study participation consumes a significant portion of a class section, loss of instructional time for both participants and non-participants may be considered a loss of benefits. Research procedures proposed using class time should include an explanation of the benefit of the research to the students. For example, the investigator should explain how participation in the research would be a learning experience for the students and how the research is relevant to the course of study being taught in that class. An alternative activity should be provided for students who choose not to participate.

- 2.8. Investigators shall ensure that students know that they may choose not to participate in the research and that their decision will not affect their grade, class standing, or relationship with any instructor. (Template language for informed consent: choosing not to participate in the research will not affect your grades, class standing, or relationship with any instructor.)
- 2.9. Instructors should not use their students' class assignments (e.g., journals, term papers, etc.) in research without the prior written consent of the students, regardless of the access an investigator may have in his/her academic role.
- 2.10. The use of de-identified student records may not require written consent, but de-identification requires more than just removing names or ID numbers. De-identification to FERPA standards requires that all direct and indirect identifiers that could be used in combination to identify an individual be removed; for example, demographic information that creates small cells of individuals must be removed from a data set prior to disclosure. For more detailed information about use of students educational records, refer to the [policy register](#).
- 2.11. Research conducted by graduate students in a class in which the researcher teaches, assists in the class or does any grading are subject to the same restraints described above.
- 2.12. Investigators requesting student data for research from the Registrar's Office must comply with the [Registrar's policy for the release of student information](#). The Registrar may or may not grant such a request, regardless of IRB approval.