



## **Guidelines for Using Students as Subjects**

Originally Adopted by the Institutional Review Board on 5/25/05  
Revised by the Institutional Review Board on 11/07/06

Particular care must be taken when students are used as subjects as there is an inherent power differential between them and faculty members who serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) or members of research teams. This differential in power may lead to perceptions by students that there is undue influence placed on them to participate in research projects.

Although students often provide a ready source of potential participants, they are not always as representative or appropriate to the research as other subject pools. Attention should be given to whether they are being used as they are a convenient and accessible sample as opposed to representing a chosen target group for research inquiry.

The following guidelines have been developed to sensitize PIs to the unique issues which exist when students are asked to be subjects in faculty research projects and provide advice to PIs to control situations of student coercion.

IRB applications which propose to use students as subjects must include narrative summarizing the PIs efforts to address each of these guidelines.

In the following standards, research faculty refer to those individuals who are serving as PIs or members of research teams conducting the proposed studies and teaching faculty refer to individuals who are providing course instruction.

1. Research faculty must use students who are not currently enrolled in courses that they are teaching in order to minimize feelings by students that their course grade will be influenced by their participation. Recruitment of students into projects in which instructors are PIs or members of the research team creates dual relationships with students which may unduly influence the rights of students to participate voluntarily and withdraw their participation at anytime without penalty.
2. Research faculty members must ensure that students participating in their research are at least 18 years of age or parental consent – in addition to student assent – is required.

3. Teaching faculty may **not** offer credit toward students' **base** course grades as incentives for participation (i.e., students must be able to earn 100% of all course points without having to participate). **Extra** credit may be offered, but may not exceed 10% of the total base grades for courses. The offering of only **extra** credit ensures that those who choose not to participate are not penalized and can still earn As. In addition, the capping of **extra** credit guarantees that participation will not significantly increase students' overall grades.
4. Research done with students as part of coursework should be directly related to the learning objectives as described in the curriculum. Research done with students as part of coursework must specify an explanation of the benefits of the research to the students. Specifically, teaching faculty must explain in writing 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. Teaching faculty must list research activities and alternate assignments in course syllabi with specifics about the terms of participation (i.e., whether extra course credit is being offered, the amount of extra course credit, and the specifics about alternative assignments).
5. When research faculty use students as subjects, written consent forms are required and teaching faculty must disclose whether extra course credit is being offered for participation, the amount of extra course credit being offered for participation (if applicable), and the specifics about alternative assignments for students who choose not to participate in the research (in instances when extra course credit is being assigned). Consent forms should also state that students can withdraw their research participation at any time with no negative consequences.
6. Teaching faculty who are requiring research participation as part of coursework are responsible for ensuring that **all** students who are used as research subjects have received approved instruction in the protection of human subjects. Teaching faculty may develop their own material on this subject and submit it to the NJIT IRB for approval prior to usage OR elect to utilize a previously-approved online training course. This course can be accessed by going to the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Human Research Protection website (<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>) and clicking on "Education." At the bottom of this webpage, the tutorial for the on-line training modules can be accessed. Students should at a minimum successfully complete the module on Investigator Responsibilities and Informed Consent (Module 2) in order to meet this requirement. Other modules may also be required by teaching faculty as appropriate. All student certificates indicating online human subjects' protection course completion must be maintained by the teaching or research faculty during the semester and given to the research faculty thereafter for storage until the completion of the research. Audits of both written consent forms and online training certificates will be randomly completed by the IRB.

7. Students who are receiving extra course credit for participation must be offered an equivalent alternate assignment if they chose not to participate. This alternate assignment should take the student no longer to complete than the time estimated for research participation and be worth a comparable amount of extra course credit.
8. **Full** extra credit must be given for research participation (or for chosen alternate assignments for students who do not want to participate). For example, if students follow the approved research procedures (as specified on the consent forms) or all of the specified requirements for the alternate assignments, they must receive all **extra** credit points. If students withdraw prior to completion of approved research procedures, they must have the opportunity, including ample time whenever possible, to complete agreed upon alternate assignments.