

Research and the Classroom

Guidelines Prepared by The Sage College's IRB

In an academic institution, such as The Sage Colleges, research activities occur in the classroom or involve course assignments; classes are also used to recruit subjects to participate in research. These activities may create problems regarding the protection of subjects in research. This document is designed to give guidance to faculty and students as to the appropriate procedures to be followed in order to protect faculty and students in their roles as researchers and/or subjects in research activities related to coursework.

Classroom Assignments

1. Research (observations, interviews, surveys, experiments, etc.) that is carried out on students in the class as a part of the educational experience, is not subject to IRB review as long as the data are used for the assignment and not made public outside the class through oral or written presentation. If the data are made public, the project must be reviewed by the IRB (whether the decision to present the data outside the classroom occurred before or after the data was collected). Classroom assignments, identified above, which do not require IRB review, may still place students at risk. The instructor needs to be aware of this and is responsible for dealing with this issue.
2. If the data for a class project are collected on subjects who are not members of the class, the project must be reviewed by the IRB whether or not the data are made public outside the classroom. Honors projects, theses, and research methods courses are some examples of courses to which this applies. Observations or interviews of a single person (for example, interviewing a parent about child-rearing practices by a student in a Child Psychology class) are not subject to IRB review, as long as the data are not used outside the assignment. A case study completed in an internship but presented outside the class (for example, in the Sage Colleges research symposium) is subject to IRB review (whether the decision to present is made before or after the case study was completed).
3. If a class assignment must be reviewed by the IRB (i.e., it does not qualify for the exclusion above) and if it is carried out on a regular basis, the faculty member may apply for a general approval for that assignment. A general approval is one that carries over semester to semester. If approved, the faculty member does not have to submit the project for approval each term; an annual listing of projects completed is required. See the IRB chair for further information.

Recruitment of Subjects from a Class for Research Not Related to the Class

1. In no case may a faculty member recruit subjects from his/her own classes. Consent under these conditions is not considered voluntary.
2. Whenever a faculty member gives permission to someone to recruit subjects, the faculty member must not be present during the recruitment (for the same reason as 1 above).

3. The IRB discourages faculty from taking class time for subjects to participate in a research project of someone who is recruiting students from that class. At least one exception would be when the research has relevance for the course and the researcher or instructor makes the appropriate connections.

Grade Credit for Participation in Research

A student's participation in research provides a source of subjects which benefits the research activities of faculty or other students. It supports the broader academic community rather than the activities of a specific course. The IRB, in its role of supporting the research program of The Sage Colleges, encourages giving grade credit for participation in research with the following stipulations:

1. The credit given may be extra credit or a course requirement.
2. Students **MUST** be given an opportunity to earn the same extra credit or complete the course requirement by completing an EQUAL alternative assignment. Participation in the research is considered voluntary since the student has a choice.
3. The specifics of the assignment (s) must be stated in the course syllabus.

Adopted by the IRB July 2005