

Classroom Research 2022: General Guidance

Arizona State University (ASU) requires that all research involving human subjects conducted by faculty, students, or staff affiliated with the university, be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to initiation, regardless of the source of funding, and regardless of its federal status as an exempt, an expedited, or a full review project. See:

<https://researchintegrity.asu.edu/sites/default/files/ASU%20Procedures%20for%20Human%20Subjects%20Research%20dated%2012102021.pdf>. Investigators including research team members, may not solicit subject participation or begin data collection until they have received written approval from the IRB.

The IRB requires that all student research activities be supervised by a faculty member who serves as the Principal Investigator (PI). Some types of student activities may not require IRB review above and beyond faculty supervision. ASU supports a wide range of both undergraduate and graduate student research projects using human subjects—from course-related research exercises to Ph.D. dissertation studies. When evaluating whether IRB review is required, it is important for the student researcher to consider how they plan to use the data to be collected. Specifically, whether there are any plans for their research project to leave the classroom.

How does ASU's IRB define 'research'?

Research – Projects which employ systematic data collection with the intent to contribute to generalizable knowledge. Thesis and dissertation projects involving human subjects are considered research as defined by [45 CFR 46](#) and require review by the IRB. The IRB considers results to be generalizable if they are expected to be submitted for publication in a journal or conference proceedings, published in bound volumes such as theses or dissertations, presented at a professional conference or otherwise widely distributed. When a student researcher plans to share their results outside of the ASU community or classroom to a wider audience, IRB review will be required.

When is IRB review not required?

Methods Training/Curriculum – Research projects for which the overriding and primary purpose is a learning experience in the methods and procedures of research to acquire knowledge and skill is typically not subject to IRB review. An example of this is research that is carried out by students as part of an applied/culminating project for research methods training. This type of research is further characterized by minimal risk (or null risk) to human subjects and clearly falls within ethical guidelines for the protection of human subject participants in research. Important factors to consider are the potential risks to subjects posed by the activity itself, in terms of:

1. Potential harm from subject participation in the study;
2. Possibility of accidental/inadvertent disclosure of confidential information;
3. Whether the individuals are either unable to give consent or are subject to significant coercion or pressure to participate.

Curriculum projects in which students conduct research involving human subjects need not be reviewed by the IRB if the following conditions are satisfied:

Results will never be distributed outside the classroom and/or institutional setting or used for publication. If there is even a remote chance that the data or the report/manuscript will be used in the future for an off- campus conference presentation, or submitted for publication, the research should go through IRB review.

If the project is approved by the IRB before data collection begins the data will not be available for use in future presentations, publications, or research.

Faculty Responsibilities in Supervising Student Research Activities.

The faculty and the department have the responsibility for (1) making the decision whether student research activities involving human participants meet eligibility for exclusion from IRB review; (2) overseeing the student research activities; and (3) assuring ethical principles are adhered to in the conduct of those activities. It is also suggested that individuals take the IRB training courses by logging into www.citiprogram.org Specifically, all participants must be invited to voluntarily participate and receive an explanation of what the activity is about and understand that their participation is voluntary, and the [Principles of the Belmont Report](#) regarding Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice should be adhered to when conducting the activity.

The following are good resources that adopt that same policies as ASU.

<https://research.usu.edu/irb/files/Class-Based-Activities-Guidance.pdf>

<https://research-compliance.umich.edu/human-subjects/human-research-protection-program-hrpp/hrpp-policies/class-assignments-irb-approval>