

IRB Policies on Student Research

A project involving systematic data collection with the intent to contribute to generalizable knowledge is considered to be research. Graduate level research utilizing human subjects must undergo IRB review.

Undergraduate class-assigned projects (including capstones) using human subjects for “purely educational purposes” do not require Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approval if they meet **ALL** the following criteria. Course instructors have the primary responsibility for ensuring that any class-assigned activities meet the stated criteria and are conducted according to policy and ethical standards of the discipline. Any paperwork (i.e. informed consent, surveys, etc.) related to the project must be maintained by faculty for a minimum of one calendar year.

If **ALL** criteria are not met, then the project must undergo IRB review. Data collected as a “class assigned project” may not be presented in any public forum (including ROE) or published. The course instructor must use their professional judgement to determine whether a student project is worthy of future presentation or publication PRIOR to data collection, and advise the student to go through the IRB review process.

1. The activity must be minimal risk.

Definition: A project is considered to be “minimal risk” if the probability of harm or discomfort is no greater than those likely to be encountered in everyday life. Harm or discomfort may be physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, or moral.

- a. *physical harm: i.e. sprain, strain, bruise, etc.*
- b. *psychological harm: i.e.: arousal of distressing memories*
- c. *social harm: i.e. embarrassment*
- d. *economic harm: i.e. loss of money, job or benefits*
- e. *legal harm: i.e. problems with the law/police*
- f. *moral harm: i.e. damaged reputation*

2. Data collection must be anonymous.

The class activity will not collect any form of personally identifiable information (signature, name, phone number, email address, government or university issued ID number, or date of birth). Classroom-based surveys should avoid “inadvertent disclosure.” Adrian College has a small student body, and although personally identifiable information may be omitted from surveys, some demographic questions may inadvertently disclose a participant’s identity. Care must be taken to maintain anonymity.

3. Participation must be voluntary.

Participants must be able to decline to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

4. Oral or written informed consent must be provided (to maintain anonymity, please do not require signatures).

Informed consents should include the purpose of the project, necessary tasks and time commitment required from participants, risks and benefits of participation, and how data will be kept confidential. Participants should also have the contact information of the project leader in case there are questions.

5. The activity must not target vulnerable populations (children/minors, prisoners, pregnant women, persons lacking capacity to give informed consent, or persons with mental and/or physical challenges).

6. Data must not be used for public presentation or publication (including ROE).

Data collected as a “class assigned project” may not be presented in any public forum or published. The course instructor must use their professional judgement to determine whether a student project is worthy of future presentation or publication PRIOR to data collection, and advise the student to go through the IRB review process.

*We would like to Acknowledge the use of IRB guidelines from St. Mary’s and Midwestern State Universities for the development of this policy.