

Kentucky State University

Office of Research, Grants, and Sponsored Programs

Policy

Research Using Kentucky State University Students as Participants

If faculty are interested in recruiting students from their classes to serve as their research participants, they should think very carefully about the implications of using students as participants in research. 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.

If students are determined to be appropriate participants, then several key issues need to be considered.

1. **Coercion:** If the instructor of the course is also the Principle Investigator (PI) on the project, recruitment of students into the project by the instructor could be viewed as coercive. Students may fear that their grades would be jeopardized by their non-participation in the research, especially since the instructor could identify who has participated and who has not. Therefore, it is important that measures are built into the research to ensure students that their participation is strictly voluntary and that they may withdraw their participation at any time without penalty.
2. **Consent:** Even though potential participants are enrolled in the PI's class, informed consent is still required. The PI must explain the procedures; disclose all the risks and benefits, and any other information, which may influence the potential participant's decision to willingly participate.
3. **Extra Credit:** If extra credit is offered in exchange for participation, an alternate means of earning equivalent extra credit for an equivalent commitment of time and effort should be made available to the entire student pool.
4. **Use of Class Time:** The use of class time for research purposes must be justified. Researchers proposing the use of class time for research should include an explanation of the benefits of the research to the students. Specifically, the researcher 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.
5. **Use of Class Assignments in Research:** Instructors should not use their students' class assignments (e.g., journals, term papers, etc.) in research without the signed consent of the students.
6. As with all research using human subjects, protocols should be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the beginning of the research.

Reference to the Federal Regulation that governs this policy document:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/45-cfr-46/index.html>