Institutional Review Board (IRB): Formal Proposal vs. Class Project

IRB Committee Members:

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Research under IRB purview:

- **Formal investigations** - classical sense of research project; formal project with hypotheses, research participants, etc.
- **Pilot projects** - e.g., working with county or state agency conducting pilot program and conducting evaluation of that program
- **Exploratory studies** - intended to generate testable hypotheses for future investigation
- **Student independent and capstone studies**
- **Some demonstration activities** – classroom demonstration projects that extend beyond classroom
- **Some service programs** - data collected within service- or community-based learning experiences will be disseminated *to any audience beyond the course* through formal presentation

Requirements for Class Project Proposal

ALL criteria must be met:

- The research is conducted by Southwestern University students for class credit.
- The participant data are anonymous.
- The research is not about a sensitive or illegal issue (e.g., drugs, alcohol, sexual activity).
- All participants are 18 years of age or older.
- Data collection occurs on the SU campus.

OTHERWISE MUST SUBMIT FULL PROPOSAL

Full Proposal Submission Guidelines

- Research conducted by students and/or faculty
- The participant data are identifiable.
- Research is about sensitive issues (drug, alcohol, sexual activity)
- Research conducted with individuals/students outside of SU campus
- Participants are minors

Class Project vs. Full Proposal

Class Project	Full Proposal
❖Mini-ethnographic Project	❖Ethnographic project
❖Students will conduct interviews and engage in participant observation.	❖Uncover how the knowledge of the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality affects their spirituality and their perception of their sexuality and HIV status
❖Participants will be above 18 years of age and from the SU community.	❖Interview with members of a community group
❖One-page handout outlining project included	

Generally, research does NOT include:

- Classroom activities that teach research methodologies or simulate research activities
- Activities conducted to improve the quality of teaching in a particular classroom
- Activities required for quality assessment (QA) or quality improvement (QI), including those activities designed for institutional evaluation/improvement

Scenario #1

- A general research project for Survey of Exceptionalities
- Small research teams of 3-4 students will devise their specific research focus
- General research focus will be on development of attitudes toward and beliefs about people who identify or are identified by the construct "disabled"
- Each group will design an interview or survey
- Basic demographics (gender and age) will be collected
- Results of all 5-6 projects will be presented at the annual student research symposium

Scenario #2

- Collaborative project with a high school teacher in GISD
- Developing new curricular materials to be used in high school class
- Students in 4 classes will use the new materials
- Students in 3 other classes will use the traditional curriculum
- At the end of the unit, students in all 7 classes will take a multiple choice assessment exam
- Will compare the performance of students using the new curriculum with students in using the traditional curriculum

Informed Consent & Assent

- All subjects must provide informed consent before participating
- Since obtaining written consent is often impractical, consider requesting a waiver of "letter of consent" and include in the instructions a statement such as, "Completion and return of the enclosed questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in this study."
- Instructions should clearly state that participation is voluntary and that lack of participation will have no adverse consequences
- Subjects must be allowed to skip items on a survey, avoid web-based surveys that require a response to proceed
- Assent is required for children (17 years of age and under) participating in a research study. Assent must be obtained in addition to parental consent.
  - A minor's choice to participate is called "assent" because they cannot give consent.

Age considerations

Under-age participants…

- Students under 18 years of age are "children" and therefore fall into the category of "vulnerable" populations, require permission from their parents before participating in any survey
- Usually easier to exclude all students under 18 from your project

Research with children

- District approval of research (GISD, Taylor ISD, etc.)
- Student teaching
- Capstone research in schools

Submission of projects

- Web site lists projects under IRB purview and exceptions
- Templates

Question & Answer

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