

**Department of Education
Research Review Policy For Students & Faculty
Adopted Spring 2010**

The Department of Education acknowledges the vital role that research and scholarship play in the professional development of faculty and students. To this end, the Department recognizes the necessity of protecting the well being of all people who are the subject of studies conducted by faculty and students. The departmental policy on the use of human subjects is consistent with the Westminster College Institutional Research Review Council's Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects, Non-Human Subjects, or Environmental Interventions: General Principle of Ethical Conduct of Empirical Research.

Students or faculty members who are conducting research in which humans serve as subjects must follow the following procedures:

1. Review the College policy and procedures (page 3 and beyond).
2. Write a brief summary of the study addressing each point below:
 - a. the purpose of the study
 - b. description of participants
 - c. type of data collected
 - d. location and time of data collection
 - e. statement of risks/benefits to the participants
 - f. whether and how the data will be confidential or anonymous
 - g. who will have access to the data
 - h. informed consent procedures
3. Complete the review checklist (page 2).
4. Submit a hard copy of the completed overview of the study (item 2 above) and check list (page 2) to the department chair who will forward it to the Department of Education Research Review Committee. The committee will consist of two or more department faculty.
5. The Department of Education Research Review Committee will review the proposal. If the proposal meets all the guidelines for Exempt Protocol as described in the Westminster IIRC policy noted above, the committee will send a notice of approval to the applicant via email and a hardcopy following this. The committee's decision will serve a proxy approval by the Westminster Institutional Research Review Board.
6. Checklists that contain one or more checkmarks indicating potential risk for participants will be forwarded to the College IRRC by the departmental committee for review for approval.

Research Involving Human Subjects, Non-Human Subjects or Environmental Interventions: General Principle of Ethical Conduct of Empirical Research

General principles for conducting ethical research, types of research that require review by the Westminster College Institutional Research Review Committee (IRRC), and normal procedures to be followed for reviewing research are described below. This checklist serves only as an informational guideline, but does not replace review by faculty colleagues and the IRRC. **An answer of “false” indicates the need for further discussions with and/or a formal review by the IRRC. If you are a student, discuss with your advisor. For faculty, see policy following this.**

True False N/A

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Humans are informed about the nature of their participation before it occurs.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Participants are told the purpose of the research.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>People are told that they have the right to consent to their participation or to withdraw at any time in the process.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Research has important benefits.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Research minimizes physical, social, and psychological risk to research participants.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Participants do NOT include vulnerable subjects such as children (under 18), mentally disabled, prisoners, and pregnant women.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The project does NOT involve administering drugs or alcohol, taking blood or tissue samples.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The project does NOT involve sensitive subjects such as illegal conduct, alcohol or drug use, or sexual behavior.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Research does NOT include compensation to participants.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Empirical data from humans is kept confidential; participants will NOT be identifiable to anyone but the researcher during and after research.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Participants will be told how their data will be kept confidential.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Deception will NOT be used.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>People will be identified in reports only with their express written permission.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Participants will be given a name, address, and telephone number where they can get more information (this may include faculty advisor and IRRC Chair).</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Animal subjects will be cared for following guidelines for proper use and care of non-human subjects. (This includes feeding, housing, exposure to experimental treatments, and termination.) See the Westminster College Animal Care and Use Program.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>All environments will be protected (e.g., chemical wastes must be properly disposed). Ecosystems should be maintained or restored.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The individual supervising the research has expertise in that particular area.</i> |

Institutional Research Review Committee
Procedures for Review of *Faculty* Research Proposals
Updated 03-24-04

- I. Initiated by faculty researcher when research is deemed to fall outside of departmental ethical research review guidelines
- II. If there is some question as to whether a project requires an ethical review, a statement on research and checklist of research concerns are included at the end of this document
- III. Materials to submit for review
 - A. IRRC Review Form (see below)
 - B. Explanation of the project
 1. Cover page identifying project title and researcher(s), with signature(s)
 2. Explanation why this project is being submitted for special review (falls outside departmental ethical research review guidelines)
 3. Research question being pursued
 4. Research design/procedure
 - a. Include relevant materials as appendix (e.g., questionnaire)
 - b. Include definitions of important technical terms
 - c. Include any cover/contact letter and/or debriefing materials given to participants
 - C. Writing should be directed to a general audience
 - D. Materials should be limited to 10 pages (excluding appendix)
- IV. Review
 - A. Should be submitted to IRRC Chair (electronic preferred, or hard copy)
 - B. The IRRC Chair distributes the project to IRRC
 - C. If necessary, the IRRC meets with researcher(s) to review the project
 - D. The IRRC sends a written response/evaluation form to the faculty member(s) within 7 calendar days. A copy is sent to the VPAA

Statement on Research Involving Human Subjects, Non-Human Subjects or Environmental Interventions

Ethical considerations exist for all types of empirical research. Therefore, general principles for conducting ethical research, types of research which require review by the Westminster College Institutional Research Review Committee (IRRC), and normal procedures to be followed for reviewing research are described below.

General Principle of Ethical Conduct of Empirical Research

Respect all research subjects

- 1. Humans should be informed about the nature of their participation before it occurs and have the right to consent to their participation or to withdraw at any time in the process. Research should minimize risk to research participants. Empirical data from humans should be kept confidential. Individuals should be identified in reports only with their express written permission.*
- 2. Animal subjects should be cared for following guidelines for proper use and care of non-human subjects. This includes feeding, housing, exposure to experimental treatments, and termination. For further information, please see the animal care guidelines on the W drive in the IRRC folder.*
- 3. All environments should be protected. Chemical wastes must be properly disposed. Ecosystems should be maintained or restored.*

Although this principle seems simple, its application is complex. Each discipline using empirical research for inquiry has professional guidelines for ethical research methods. Student researchers should be aware of these guidelines and provide sufficient information for course instructors to ensure that the research meets the discipline's ethical standards. For most research, peer review (faculty or faculty/students) is essential. Department policies on peer review should be consulted. If no such policy exists, research protocol should be submitted to the IRRC for ethical review at least 14 calendar days before the board meets. **For further information on discipline-specific guidelines for ethics in research, please refer to the list of websites on the W drive.**

Common Types of Empirical Research

- 1. Survey Research** is obtaining information from other people by asking them questions through face-to-face interviews, written questionnaires (e-mail or standard), and telephone interviews. Before they are administered, surveys for a class project to provide information to the student should be approved by the course instructor.

Surveys do not need to be reviewed by the IRRC if they are anonymous, or do not ask disturbing questions of a population unable to make informed decisions. For example, surveys should forewarn potential respondents about the nature of questions so individuals can decide about participating. Since different topics are stressful to different people, forewarning respondents is always advisable.

Survey Research should conform to disciplines' ethical guidelines. For example, a survey conducted for a business class should conform to business guidelines; one conducted for history should conform to history guidelines. Student researchers and course faculty members should ensure the survey is constructed and administered according to appropriate ethical guidelines. Special cases (defined below) should be submitted to the IRRC.

2. a) **Observational Research** involves observing public behavior without any manipulation or intervention by the researcher. Although some cases may occur in which observing public behavior may be used for research without prior approval from those observed, securing permission from the subjects **before** records are made is good practice. Confidentiality should be maintained. Thus, to observe littering behavior on campus is ethical, but it is not ethical to reveal litterers' names in the research report. Students who plan to engage in observational research as part of a class project should have prior approval from the course instructor for behaviors under study, proposed methods of observation, and measures to ensure confidentiality.
- b) **Participant-Observational Research** involves the researcher actively participating in the group being studied. In these cases, the researcher generally should reveal his or her researcher identity.
3. **Experimental and Quasi-experimental Research: Experimental research** is introducing a subject to a particular treatment and measuring the resulting particular outcome. An example is introducing a loud noise and measuring any change in a subject's heart rate. **Quasi-experimental research** is using existing differences to categorize subjects and measuring their response. An example is comparing different age groups on a specific measure.

Experiments may be conducted anywhere—in laboratories, classrooms or the field (wherever subjects are). Before conducting experiments or quasi-experiments beyond class assignments, students should present a written summary of their experimental protocol to their course instructor for approval. Students must receive written approval from course instructors before conducting any research. A short form is adequate, including date, brief research description, and instructors' signature.

**Westminster College
Institutional Research Review Committee**

Faculty Research Review Form

This form is to be filled out by the convener of the Institutional Research Review Committee (convener responds on dotted lines), and sent to the IRRC Chair. After IRRC review, completed copies are sent to the IRRC, the student researcher, the faculty advisor, and the Chair of the Department. The completed original form, attached to the research documents submitted for review, is sent to the Dean of the College.

The proper completion of this form attests to the convening of an Institutional Research Review Committee on this date _____ for the purpose of reviewing the ethical implications of the research project entitled

.....
as proposed by

The IRRC met to review the ethical procedures that will be used to conduct the research, specifically, reviewing the implications of the research on the well being of the research participants, non-human subjects, student researchers, and/or the project's environmental impact. This review was conducted according to the ethical principles and procedures identified in the resource entitled

.....
as authorized by the body known as

- ___ The IRRC has determined that the proposed research meets the appropriate ethical standards.
- ___ The IRRC has determined that the proposed research meets the appropriate ethical standards and forwards the attached suggestions.
- ___ The IRRC has determined that the proposed research meets the appropriate ethical standards pending resolution of the attached concerns, by the researcher.
- ___ The IRRC has determined that the proposed research does NOT meet the appropriate ethical standards. An explanation is attached.

Signatures of participants:

Researcher(s)

Review Committee

