**The George Washington University**
**Office of Human Research**
**Principal Investigator Considerations for Student Research**

When supporting student projects, the Principal Investigator (PI) should work with students/protégés to first verify whether the project involves human subjects research in order to determine whether review and approval by The George Washington University Office of Human Research (OHR) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be required. ***It is the PI's responsibility to make the initial determination. If uncertain, please contact the OHR for assistance in making this important judgment.***

The Human Subjects Research Determination Worksheet is available to assist in determining whether review by the OHR/IRB is needed. Please note that, in general, undergraduate honor's projects, masters' theses, and dissertations are considered generalizable knowledge.

***Regardless of whether or not review is required, the PI assumes full responsibility for the project, including oversight of the student researcher, and for ensuring that s/he will respect and protect the rights and welfare of individuals enrolled in the project.***

The OHR is here to assist you in maintaining ethical practices during your research. We welcome your questions. For general questions, or to request a meeting with the OHR staff, please call (202) 994-2715 or email ohrirb@gwu.edu.

**<u>Student Research Checklist:</u>**

*If the student project does <u>not</u> require review, consider the following:*

- ✓ The participants' safety and welfare should be protected as rigorously as for any human subjects research study and the same ethical principles should apply such as:
  - ° Respect for persons through voluntary participation and informed consent;
  - ° Beneficence by maximizing benefits and minimizing risks; and
  - ° Justice by selecting populations appropriate to the research question.
- ✓ The project should not be intended for generalizable knowledge outside of classroom purposes (e.g. publications, external presentations, etc.).
- ✓ The project should **<u>not</u>** include vulnerable populations[1].
- ✓ The project should **<u>not</u>** involve sensitive topics[2] or deception.
- ✓ The PI should oversee all aspects of the design and implementation of the student project. If the PI cannot be on site with the student, the PI should have a plan for ensuring prompt communication and supervision.

*If the student project <u>requires review</u>, consider the following:*

- ✓ The project should involve no more than minimal risk[3] to subjects.
- ✓ In general, student projects should **<u>not</u>** involve sensitive topics[2], procedures, or environments that could place themselves or the subjects at risk, unless the student is appropriately trained and qualified to conduct the study and will receive significant oversight from the PI or another mentor.
- ✓ Respect should be employed toward subjects through voluntary participation and informed consent.
- ✓ The value of the research should outweigh the risks to subjects.
- ✓ There should be safeguards for ensuring the confidentiality of data and privacy of subjects.
- ✓ The PI should oversee all aspects of the design and implementation of the student project. If the PI cannot be on site with the student, the PI should have a plan for ensuring prompt communication and supervision.

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[1] Vulnerable populations include: children, prisoners, educationally or economically disadvantaged, decisionally-impaired, etc.

[2] Sensitive topics include, but are not limited to: damaging or stigmatizing information, illegal activities, such as drug use, involvement in criminal behavior, immigration status, if undocumented, opinions about supervisors, health information, etc.

[3] Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

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Adapted from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Classroom Research Project Checklist