NAU IRB Guidance for Class Projects

July 6, 2015

Class projects involving human participants in research are required to undergo review by the NAU Institutional Review Board (IRB). A project is considered research if the findings will be:

- Submitted for publication and/or presented at conferences or meetings
- Presented at any off-campus symposium or other research presentation venue
- Otherwise presented as research outside the NAU campus community
- Posted on a website other than an official NAU undergraduate research website
- Used for future research

A class project that involves data collection activities for the express and sole purpose of writing a paper or report for the instructor or to share with other students in the class is NOT research and does NOT need to be submitted for IRB review.

IRB review of class projects ensures that:

- The rights and welfare of human research participants are protected
- Student research is conducted in an ethically and scientifically sound manner
- The research conforms to the university’s human subject research requirements

Projects that include collecting data at the University Union should comply with the University Union's policy.
Applications

Students are encouraged to submit their research protocols for IRB review on IRBNet, our online submission system. Even if the project is low-risk and likely to fall under the category of exempt, it should still be submitted on IRBNet for review by NAU IRB staff.

Both students and instructors are required to complete the online CITI training prior to submitting an application to the NAU IRB.

Consent forms should be clear, succinct, and well written. Formatted as a letter, consent forms should directly address the audience (prospective participants) by being worded with "you" instead of "participants" or other vague wording. Passive voice should be avoided.

Special and vulnerable populations

Research that targets special or vulnerable populations may undergo additional review that can take several months to go through the review and approval process. Students and instructors should carefully consider time constraints when planning research that involves special or vulnerable populations or risk that is greater than minimal risk.

Special and vulnerable populations include:

• Minors under age 18
• Juvenile or adult prisoners
• Pregnant women and their fetuses
• Native Americans living on reservations
• Persons who are educationally or economically disadvantaged
• Persons who are cognitively impaired
•Persons who are undocumented

**Instructor responsibilities**

In all cases, instructors must:

• Carefully review students' IRB applications to make sure the student has properly described the research plan (this is done through IRBNet, which the instructor should have access to)
• Ensure that students' IRB applications include the appropriate informed consent/assent forms, data collection instruments, letters of support, and any other additional documentation
• Report any adverse events or unanticipated incidents to the IRB
• Make sure that students submit amendments to the IRB for changes or revisions to approved research
• Make sure that students submit a continuing review application to the IRB 30 days before the IRB approval date expires for research that must be extended beyond the one-year approval period

**Resources**

• [Intro to NAU IRB and IRBNet](#)
• [Regulatory Compliance PowerPoint](#)