

Guidance for Classroom and Student Research Activities

This policy provides guidance for research activities conducted by students in the classroom or as independent projects.

Research is defined as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (45 CFR 46). Classroom assignments requiring students to plan, initiate, and conduct a study involving human subjects typically do not meet all aspects of this definition. Classroom assignments permit students to learn and practice research methods, rather than produce generalizable findings.

When a classroom or student research activity does not require IRB review, the LU IRB will provide an acknowledgement on a case-by-case basis. This acknowledgement will include a reminder that faculty overseeing classroom research activities are responsible for ensuring students will conduct their activities ethically, responsibly, and in accordance with any other relevant LU policy.

1. What Classroom/Student Research Activities Do Not Require IRB Review?

If a classroom activity meets all the following conditions, it will not require review by the IRB:

- The project is required to meet a course objective, and is therefore limited in scope and sample size.
- The project is minimal risk, as: no sensitive data are collected during the project and no identifiable private information is retained. The LU IRB maintains a policy to retain data and records associated with human subjects research for three years after the closure of the IRB approval. Data and documentation associated with Classroom Research Activities should be destroyed or deleted upon closure of the IRB approval and full analysis of project data.
- The participants are not from a vulnerable or special population (e.g. pregnant women, prisoners, minors, or cognitively impaired individuals). Minor participants registered in the Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP) qualify as prospective participants in classroom research activities as this registration process authorizes this engagement.
- Students may present findings from Classroom Research Activities at LU internal scholarly events, consistent with the data management plan approved in the IRB application. Students may be able to present findings outside of the LU context after authorization by the LU IRB.
- Participants will receive an Information Sheet describing the research prior to their participation, when practicable.

Prior to initiating a classroom or student activity, faculty must complete the following each semester for each course involving a project:

- Provide the course syllabus and a description of the classroom activity to the LU IRB. The parameters of the research activities should be well-defined, as to ensure they do not constitute human subjects research. Faculty will receive a letter confirming the status of the activity.

- Confirm that students will share an Information Sheet about their research with participants before conducting any project activities.

2. What Classroom/Student Activities Require IRB Review?

Any activities that do not meet all the conditions listed above will require submission to the IRB for review. These are examples of systematic and generalizable research activities involving human subjects that do require review by LU IRB:

- Theses, dissertations, and any systematic research activity performed by a student which is designed to produce generalizable knowledge (e.g. conference presentation or publication).
- Any research activity performed by a student which may develop sensitive data and/or involves a vulnerable population (e.g. pregnant woman, prisoner, minor, cognitively impaired individual).
- Some “Action Research.” Research activities undertaken in fulfillment of requirements for graduate degrees in Education often fall under the category of action research, which can be defined as “inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process, but it is different from isolated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken and generally requires that some sort of evidence be presented to support assertions.”¹ Given this definition, most action research constitutes research with human subjects.

¹ K. Herr & G.L. Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. (SAGE Publishing, 2015) 3.