

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Special Subject Populations: Students

In general, research involving students of UT Tyler must adhere to any procedures involving the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, which may be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

When investigators propose to recruit students from their own classes to participate in research, they need to consider that student participation in such research may not be truly voluntary because of a desire on the part of the students to appear cooperative, highly motivated, or because participation in research is a course requirement. However, participation of students in research, both as a participant and PI, often has an important and legitimate educational purpose. As such, there must be a balance between this purpose and the possibility of coercion to participate in the research.

In short, due to the potential for undue influence, PIs generally should avoid recruiting subjects from their own classes. When recruiting from their own class is the only feasible way to do a study, PIs are expected to design the research in such a way that the potential for students to feel pressure is minimized. These steps include:

1. Any faculty involved in assigning grades to students may not be involved in recruiting participants, directly collecting data, or handling identifiable data until after final grades are posted.
2. Posting IRB approved advertisements throughout the university to recruit subjects from a broad base of students
3. Providing a number of research projects from which to choose, if participating as a subject in research is a course requirement
4. Providing alternative and equal methods for meeting course credit (or extra credit) requirements, such as attending a series of research presentations by faculty, writing a brief paper, or conducting one's own research. Alternatives to participating in research for extra credit must be equal in effort and time as participation in the research project.
5. Research participation should be self-motivated. Receipt of extra credit in a course for student research participation as a research subject is discouraged.
6. If incentives for participation are offered (e.g., extra course credit), the incentives should not be so large as to cause undue influence. Typically, this means that any credit or extra credit must be only a small portion of the total grade.
7. If possible, design the study so that the instructor is blind to the identity of the participants (at least until after the final grades have been assigned). For

example, another PI can run the study and keep any identifying information from the instructor. If a PI designs a study in this way the following points are crucial:

- a. *Before being asked to participate, potential subjects should be informed that the instructor will not know who did and who did not participate (at least until after the final grades have been assigned).*
- b. *The research should be designed so that the instructor cannot infer who participated through indirect means (e.g., by seeing who walks into the laboratory, by getting a list of who earned extra credit for participating in the study).*