

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY
RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW

This policy pertains to employees.

Fox Valley Technical College's Institutional Review Board reviews research proposals to be conducted at the College by faculty, staff, or by external requestors in order to ensure that all required safeguards of the rights of research participants are met. This review is intended to minimize the risk of negative consequences to participants and reduce any potential liability incurred by the researcher or the College. All research must be mindful of the rights of individuals and be conducted according to standards established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 45 CFR 46.

Research includes any activity that obtains generalizable data or data for any purpose other than measurement of student performance. Most student research conducted using human subjects as part of an in-class assignment is not generalizable or systematic research and, therefore, typically exempt from IRB review (see attached policy addendum – FVTC Class Assignments/Research Projects).

Examples of research that might require review for human subject compliance include:

- Activities intended to provide material for presenting at a professional meeting or conference
- Activities that provide a benefit to the instructor or FVTC staff member that is independent of the interests of the student, such as gathering data for use in a paper or thesis
- Activities conducted at the request of a third party in exchange for some compensation, monetary, service, or otherwise

Failure to obtain Institutional Review Board approval prior to undertaking any research activity is a violation of FVTC policy and, in most cases, will release FVTC from any indirect liability otherwise incurred. In these cases, the researcher would be solely responsible for any liability.

The FVTC Institutional Review Board has a minimum of five members who have background in academic research, preferably at the doctoral level. The review of proposed research requires the researcher to provide evidence of:

- Departmental/division leadership approval where staff and or students will be the focus of the proposed research including:
 - Identification of commitment of time or other resources
 - The extent to which the research activity interrupts the teaching/learning/working environment of the College
- Research review including protection of human subjects by the researcher's institution of higher learning IRB
- Informed consent of human subjects for non-exempt areas
- Protection of confidentiality for research participants to assure that individual student or staff information cannot be identified and is destroyed upon completed of the research

Questions and assistance regarding proposed research can be directed to the Associate Vice President – College Effectiveness.

Adopted: 07/11/07

Reviewed: 02/06/2024

Revised:

Administrative Policy Addendum FVTC Class Assignments/Research Projects

FVTC students are limited to engagement in research that is expressly supervised by their instructors as specific class assignments or projects. Student initiated data collection from internal or external individuals (human subjects) such as surveys, questionnaires, etc. without prior instructor approval as part of a class assignment is prohibited.

A class research project is an academic project or student assignment that may involve collection of data from human subjects when the data is used solely for the purpose of teaching course content and is not intended to be used to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

All projects where human subjects may be involved must have the explicit approval of the course instructor. Course instructors who require such assignments are encouraged to undergo approved IRB training in order to ensure that their assignments and the work their students do complies with federal rules and guidelines.

For an in-class assignment that DOES NOT require an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review (see Administrative Policy: Research Proposal Review), instructors have an obligation to ensure that students understand their ethical obligations in carrying out their assignments. Instructors should provide guidance to students collecting information so as to minimize any unwitting or unintentional harm to other students or individuals, especially if students will interact with or collect private information about vulnerable individuals.

Faculty members may pursue some of the following options:

- Review students' plans for classroom or group projects and suggest improvements in design and protections for confidentiality.
- Explain ways in which students should be attentive to the welfare of individuals in vulnerable situations, such as young children, prisoners, or the cognitively impaired, or when there is any possibility of physical harm.
- Explain ways in which students should be attentive to the welfare of individuals in situations in which students will pose sensitive questions, including topics related to sexual activity, victimization, use of alcohol or illegal drugs, or involvement in illegal activity.
- When written questionnaires are to be used, suggest that information be printed on them explaining the use of the data for coursework and including the name and contact number of the instructor.
- Suggest, whenever possible, anonymous data collection so that the data are not linked to individuals.
- Suggest that information identifying individuals be kept separately from the information collected from those individuals.
- Suggest destruction of non-research data at the end of the course or within a short time afterward.
- Instruct students about the privacy and security vulnerabilities associated with networked computers.