

**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**Institutional Review Board**  
**Policies and Procedures**

**Student Research**

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**References:** 45 CFR 46

**This Policy Replaces:** N/A

**Distribution:** N/A

**A. INTRODUCTION:**

This guideline addresses students conducting research. The NSU-IRB is guided by 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule) in its definition of research as being a “systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” The IRB distinguishes between research conducted in a classroom as part of the learning experience (“Student Research”) from research conducted to add to generalizable knowledge or a professional body of knowledge (clinical research, thesis, or dissertation work). The purpose of this policy is to clarify when student research must be reviewed by the IRB, and if it is deemed as “Student Research,” who is responsible for reviewing that research.

**B. DEFINITION**

1. **Dissemination** means the distribution of findings and includes, but is not limited to, master’s and doctoral theses/dissertations, presentation at a scientific meeting or conference, submission to or publication (paper or electronic) in a scientific journal, and posting on the Internet.
2. **Human subject** means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information.

*Intervention* includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes. *Interaction* includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. *Private information* includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for

specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

3. **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** means NSU board which reviews and approves the initiation of, and conducts periodic reviews of, biomedical research involving human subjects. The primary purpose of such review is to assure the protection of the rights and welfare of the human subjects.
4. **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 of healthy individuals.
5. **Student Research** means any observation or intervention, including administration of survey or interview questions, by a student as part of a course which is designed to develop or contribute to student learning or class discussion, but which will not lead to generalizable knowledge or publication/dissemination of findings outside of the classroom.
6. **Student Researcher** means any student enrolled in a course at Nova Southeastern University who conducts research on human subjects as an assignment or project within a course, excluding master's or doctoral theses research reviewed under the NSU Institutional Review Board procedures.

## C. POLICY:

### 1. Assignments for Class

Research conducted by students, graduate or undergraduate, as a part of classroom assignments does not usually fall under the federal regulation of research because it is not intended to or likely to lead to generalizable results. Rather, the activities are resources of teaching which facilitate learning of concepts and the opportunity to practice various procedures, including research methods (interviewing, observation and survey techniques, as well as data analysis).

While most assignments for class do not require IRB review, some do as a result of the vulnerability of subjects or the potential risk to subjects including:

- Studies in which children will be interviewed or surveyed.

- Studies in which children are being observed, and data collected, where the investigator is also a part of the activities being observed.
- Studies involving prisoners, the mentally disabled, or pregnant women.
- Studies that ask subjects about illegal activities and which place the data at risk for subpoena and/or the subject at risk for loss of civil liberties.
- Studies in which subjects are at risk of breach of confidentiality, such as ones that ask sensitive or intrusive questions about behaviors.
- Studies that place subjects at risk due to emotionally charged subject matter.

Instructors are advised to discuss these issues with their students and clarify the role of the IRB should the student be interested in pursuing a research activity that might necessitate IRB review. Instructors should contact their center/college's IRB Center Representative for more information. Center Representative contact information may be located on the IRB website (<http://www.nova.edu/cwis/ogc/irb/>).

Instructors are expected to review the proposed research to determine if it meets the definition of student research and is permissible under these guidelines. In instances where a class of students will be conducting group or individual research projects as a part of the classroom instruction, and the instructor believes that, under NSU-IRB guidelines, IRB approval is required, the instructor shall present for IRB approval one application setting forth the information requested within IRB documents.

Student researchers should also note that if there is any likelihood that the results of the project might later be used for research that does lend to generalizable knowledge (for example, within a dissertation or a presentation to a group other than the class), IRB approval must be secured prior to conducting the research activities. IRB approval cannot be granted retroactively. It is expected that any data collected as a class project will be destroyed after the grading of the project has been completed.

## **2. Thesis**

Thesis and dissertations projects involving human subjects are considered research as defined by 45 CFR 46 and require review by the IRB (beginning with the Center Representative of the researcher's college/school). Information related to the IRB process is available on the IRB website and Procedures Manual.