

Drake University Human Subject Research Guide for **2011** Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Researchers across disciplines conduct Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research.
This document is informed and inspired by a Un

participants, or research that involves intentional deception of the participants); however, vulnerable populations can include economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals, as well as other socially vulnerable categories. If there is any question about the ways in which an SoTL study might have increased risk for these populations, the IRB is likely to work with you to minimize these risks.

Most SoTL work will fall into one (or a combination) of the following commonly recognized **exempt** review categories (*as defined in federal regulations*):

1. **Exemption for education.** Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular or special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods is exempted.
2. **Exemption for research involving educational tests.** Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement) is exempted, unless (a)

years or older can give informed consent. In some instances of exempt studies, informed consent may not be required (ex. category 4 above). Consult the IRB if you are unsure.

- Clearly delineate to the students which class assignments in the syllabus are required for the class and which of these required assignments will be used for research purposes. For each required class assignment also used for research, ensure that students understand they can choose to exclude their assigned work from the research without penalty. If there are optional class assignments used only for research purposes, be certain students understand they can choose whether to participate without penalty. Extra credit points should not be offered for research participation in required or optional class assignments.
- Emphasize that deciding not to participate in the research will have no effect on grades in the class. In fact, it is ideal if the instructor does not know until after final grades for the course are submitted which students have elected to participate in the study. Consult your IRB about ways to accomplish this task.
- Do not access students' confidential data (e.g., overall GPA) without requesting the students' permission to use that data. This can be a violation not just of research ethics, but also of their FERPA privacy rights.
- Take every precaution to present/publish the student data in an ethical and confidential manner. If possible, publish or present data in aggregate form. If using student work, excerpts, or quotes, take precautions to remove obvious student identifiers (name, class, year, etc.), choose excerpts or quotes that are not directly linked to students or that pose no risk to the students, and to present/publish the student evidence in the least identifiable