

## **Appendix B: Student Research Policy**

### **Introduction**

Shepherd University requires that all research involving human participants be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as outlined in the Shepherd University Human Participants (Human Subjects) Policy. Neither solicitation for participants nor data collection may begin until a researcher has received written approval from the IRB.

The IRB requires that all student research activities be supervised by a faculty member. Shepherd University students – both undergraduate and graduate – engage in a wide range of research activities. Such activities may include class-related research projects, independent research, Honors or capstone projects, or graduate theses. The IRB recognizes that some student research projects may not require IRB review above and beyond faculty supervision. The purpose of this document is to clarify IRB policy on student research.

### **1.0 Policy**

- 1.1 Independent research projects always require review by the IRB.
- 1.2 Student research is generally not subject to (i.e., is excluded from) IRB review/approval. Curriculum projects in which students conduct research involving human participants need not be reviewed by the IRB if the following conditions are satisfied:
  - The project involves minimal risk to subjects.
  - The project does not involve sensitive topics.
  - The project does not involve persons from vulnerable populations as participants.
  - The project must involve the voluntary participation of individuals without any coercion or pressure being placed upon them by the researcher. Though not required, it is recommended that instructors consider having their students provide a consent document to participants and fully informing them of the research they will be taking part in.
  - The results of the project are not intended for dissemination and will never be distributed outside the classroom and/or institutional setting or used for publication, although the results may be presented to instructors or peers for educational purposes or as part of a class assignment. Please be aware the IRB approval cannot be retroactive. If the possibility exists that either the instructor or the student would consider disseminating the data as generalizable knowledge, the research must be submitted for IRB review.

## 2.0 Responsibility for Oversight of Student Research

It is a requirement of the IRB that all student research involving human participants must be supervised by a faculty member who has completed the [NIH Office of Extramural Research](#) training course. It is also strongly recommended that all student researchers complete the course before engaging in research involving human participants. A faculty member who supervises student research projects assumes the responsibility for 1) determining whether the projects meet the criteria for exclusion from IRB review, 2) ensuring that students are aware of and comply with appropriate ethical principles for the treatment of human participants, 3) notifying the IRB chair that the projects are occurring, 4) overseeing the conduct of the projects, and 5) all reporting required by the Human participants Policy.

## 3.0 Definitions Unique to Student Research

Appendix A provides definitions of terms common to all research projects where human participants are used. In addition to these terms, it is important to identify/specify how student research and student researchers are defined/described.

- 1. Independent student research projects** are those that employ systematic data collection with the intent of contributing to generalizable knowledge. Theses, dissertations, and capstone and honors research projects involving human participants that are considered research as defined by 45 CFR 46 (i.e., “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”). Investigations designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge are those that seek to draw general conclusions, inform policy, or generalize findings beyond a single individual or an internal program. While such research is often disseminated through scholarly publication or presentation of the data, research results do not have to be published or presented to qualify the experiment or data gathering as research. The intent to contribute to “generalizable (scholarly) knowledge” makes an experiment or data collection research, regardless of publication.
- 2. Student Research** means any observation or intervention, including administration or 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. Research projects for which the overriding and primary purpose is a learning experience in the methods and procedures of research does not meet the federal definition of research.
- 3. Student Researcher** means any student enrolled in a course at Shepherd University who conducts research on human participants as an assignment or project within a course, excluding capstone projects or master’s thesis research which must be reviewed under Shepherd IRB procedures.