

# GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH- RELATED ACTIVITIES IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to provide course instructors with information on how to recruit and conduct research-related activities involving students in university classroom settings.

## 2. Background

In accordance with Article 3.1 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2), course instructors recruiting participants in classroom settings must ensure that participants are able to voluntarily decide on their own whether to participate or not in research studies. Given the asymmetrical relationship between instructors and students, special care must be taken to ensure that there is no undue influence on students to participate in research-related activities.

Instructors conducting classroom recruitment and other research-related activities must ensure that research is conducted in a manner that (i) is respectful toward students, (ii) treats students fairly and equitably, and (iii) demonstrates concern for students' welfare.

## 3. Criteria for Classroom Recruitment

Instructors wishing to recruit students in their own classrooms for their own research studies must do so via a third party, e.g., by a research assistant or co-investigator. Instructors wishing to conduct recruitment in another instructor's classroom may do so themselves but must seek approval from the relevant course instructor. All instructors wishing to conduct classroom recruitment must demonstrate the following to the Research Ethics Board (REB):

- (1) That the research project involves an educational component;
- (2) That the research project is related to the relevant program or discipline; and
- (3) That the research is being conducted in accordance with any professional guidelines or codes of conduct that might apply to them as a result of any affiliations or special duties they may have.

**N.B.** Instructors that do not demonstrate to the REB that their research projects meet these conditions may not recruit students in classroom settings.

## 4. Classroom Recruitment

Instructors planning to include a research participation component in their own courses for their own research projects should clearly communicate this to students both in the course syllabus as well as in-person (preferably on the first day of class). **In these cases, recruitment must be conducted by someone other than the instructor, such as a research assistant, co-investigator, etc.** This is necessary to reduce any perception of coercion, and to reduce the

possibility of bias by the person evaluating the students as a result of knowing who is or is not participating in the research project.

Instructors should clearly convey the following information to students in the syllabus and in-person:

- (i) How much participation is possible or required;
- (ii) The amount of time required for participation;
- (iii) The amount of credit gained by participating, or lost by not participating;
- (iv) The right to withdraw from participation without penalty;
- (v) The potential benefits associated with participation;
- (vi) The procedures for raising concerns and making complaints;
- (vii) The debriefing measures for research that involves deception;
- (viii) Information about penalties for non-appearance or non-compliance;
- (ix) The projects from which students may choose; and,
- (x) A list of appropriate alternatives to research participation.

In addition, instructors planning to include a research participation component in their own course must ensure that the potential benefits from students' participation in research related activities are, where possible, also extended to non-participants. So, for example, if one of the potential benefits of participation is the first-hand experience of, say, engaging with certain new technology, perhaps a walk-through of the study without the participants' data being used might be offered to non-participants.

**N.B. All instructors conducting classroom recruitment must receive REB approval before any research-related activities begin.**

## 5. Alternative Opportunities

The REB does not encourage or discourage instructors awarding marks to students who participate in research-related activities. If marks are awarded, they must be allocated in accordance with the guidelines on incentives laid out in the TCPS 2, and with relevant departmental or program policies. Typically, 1% or 2 % of a student's final grade (or a 1% or 2 % bonus mark) is sufficient to meet most projects' recruitment needs. Instructors wishing to allocate a higher percentage must demonstrate to the REB that the higher percentage does not provide any undue influence on students to participate in research-related activities.

In an attempt to eliminate any undue influence that students might experience to participate in research projects that are being conducted by their course instructors, instructors that allocate a certain percentage of students' grades towards their participation in research projects – or where bonus marks are being awarded – must ensure that there are opportunities for students to earn those grades – or bonus marks – in a different manner.

The following is a list of alternative opportunities that researchers may wish to offer students who do not wish to participate in research related activities:

- Observing an experimental session and writing a brief paper about it.
- Writing a paper reviewing a journal article.
- Conducting a simulated case study using one's self as the participant.
- Watching a videotape and participating in a discussion.
- Attending a research colloquium, presentation, or "brown bag" lecture.
- Attending a student presentation session by upper-level students.
- Negotiating an individual project.

**N.B.** Where applicable, instructors must specify how a student who volunteers to participate in a study but is not selected is dealt with in an equitable manner.

## 6. Privacy and Confidentiality

According to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), and Toronto Metropolitan University's Privacy Policy, instructors may not share the contact information (including email addresses) of their own students with other instructors or researchers for recruitment purposes. Also, instructors may not use their own students' contact information (e.g., email addresses) to recruit students for participation in their own projects. This applies regardless of whether it is the instructor who generates a list of potential participants or a third party, and whether the list already exists as, for example, a class e-mail listserv, or needs to be compiled.

Instructors may recruit students in their own classes by posting a recruitment notice as an announcement on D2L, their course website (if applicable), or both. In cases where instructors are recruiting their own students via these avenues, the contact for interested potential participants to get in touch with must be someone other than the course instructor, such as a research assistant or co-investigator. It is imperative that instructors' involvement in research-related activities with their own students be as limited as reasonably possible given the asymmetrical relationship between instructors and students, and the undue influence that students may feel to participate in projects that are being conducted by their instructors.

Instructors/researchers wishing to recruit students for research-related activities from classes other than their own must seek and receive the relevant course instructor's approval. If the recruitment is to be done in-person, the course instructor for the class must be outside the room while the researcher conducts recruitment. Care must be taken to ensure that the instructor does not have knowledge of who agrees to participate and who does not agree to participate in the research project. If a course instructor/researcher wishes to recruit students from another class online, it should be done as an announcement on D2L or an announcement on the relevant instructor's course website, or both. Instructors are not permitted to email students in order to recruit them to participate in research-related activities.

## 7. Research-Related Activities and Class Time

Instructors or researchers conducting recruitment in classrooms must keep their recruitment script brief, as class time is to be dedicated toward course-related activities and objectives.

Participation in research activities (e.g., completing surveys, filling out questionnaires, partaking in interviews, etc.) should be conducted outside of class time. In cases where participation in research projects is directly related to the course material, and where adequate alternative opportunities are present (for those students who wish not to participate), participation in research projects during class time may be permitted. If class time is to be used for conducting research, the researcher must demonstrate to the REB that the research is directly related to the course content.