**Guidelines for Student Research Participant Pools**

**Introduction**

The Research Ethics Board acknowledges the usefulness of Research Participant Pools (RPPs) both to researchers and to students. RPPs can be useful to researchers, as they can provide a pool of potential participants for research projects. RPPs can be useful to students, as they can provide a valuable educational experience which supplements their course work. In assessing proposals for RPPs, the REB will consider and balance the perspectives of researchers and students.

Schools, Departments, Faculties, or individual professors are welcome to create their own RPPs. Creators of RPPs should develop them in accordance with the ethical principles associated with their professions or disciplines. As well, RPPs must conform to the following guidelines and must be approved by the Research Ethics Board prior to their implementation. It is incumbent upon the person or persons creating an RPP to demonstrate to the REB that the proposed RPP conforms to these guidelines.

The guidelines address ethical principles and provide information regarding specific information to be provided to potential participants in a Pool. It is hoped that these guidelines will form the basis for the creation of RPPs that are respectful and sensitive to students, as well as helpful in facilitating faculty research. It is expected that participation in an RPP has educational value in relation to the program with which it is associated.

**Ethical Principles**

An RPP must adhere to the following ethical principles:

1. The research must have been approved by the Research Ethics Board.
2. Students have the right to expect that any research they might participate in conforms to the document entitled "Students as Subjects" (available on the ORS website). This document describes (a) what should be included in a consent form, including such informed consent issues as the voluntary nature of participation, freedom from coercion, and the right to withdraw from the research at any time; (b) how research should be administered; (c) how subjects' names may be obtained; (d) how deception should be handled; and (e) the use of class time for research purposes.
3. One or more appropriate, equivalent alternate forms of research credit must be made available. Alternatives should not be reasonably perceived to be undue enticements.
4. Enrollment in all RPPs is to be initiated by the individual students. Students should not automatically be enrolled in an RPP by virtue of being enrolled in a course.
5. Participants must be debriefed after research participation as follows:
a. The researcher should provide a verbal and/or written description of the research.
b. The research should provide debriefing immediately after participation.
c. The researcher could include what is known about the research area in summary form.
6. Deception must be handled ethically in one of the following manners:
a. The researcher may inform participants they cannot be told everything about the study beforehand, but will be debriefed afterward.
b. The researcher may obtain consent to be deceived (with debriefing afterward).
7. If credit is given for participation, it should be specified how a student who volunteered for participation in a study but is not selected for it is dealt with in an equitable manner.
8. Whether or not to include the opportunity to earn marks for a component of a course is not for the Research Ethics Board to decide. However, if marks may be earned in a course as a function of participation as a participant in a research project, the marks must be allocated in a way that conforms to the following REB guidelines:
a. Marks are to be provided for participation only in research that has been approved by the REB.
b. Marks for participation in the research or in an appropriate alternative should not be perceived to be an undue enticement.

**Information to be Provided**

The following information is to be provided to potential participants in the Pool in an easily understood and respectful manner:

1. The RPP option or alternative should be mentioned in the course outline.
2. The research participant pool option or alternative should be announced in the first class.
3. How much participation is possible or required.
4. Amount of time required for participation.
5. Amount of credit gained by participating, or lost by not participating.
6. The right to withdraw from research participation without penalty.
7. Benefits of research participation.
8. Procedures for raising concerns and making complaints.
9. Information about penalties for non-appearance or non-compliance.
10. Research projects from which students may choose.
11. Appropriate, equivalent alternative(s) to research participation should be provided and described. Some possible alternatives are:

* Walking through the study as a participant without having one's data used by the researcher.
* 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.