



## Form C: Policy on FHDA Class-Assigned Research Projects

**PURPOSE:** This form provides a policy on class-assigned research projects to help inform faculty and students planning a research project and seeking IRB approval.

### 1. General Policy

Classroom activities designed exclusively for educational purposes—to teach research methods, interviewing techniques, or data analysis—are **not** considered "systematic investigations designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" under 45 CFR 46. Therefore, they generally do not require IRB review. The [Federal Register](#) defines rules for the protection of human subjects, which are outlined below for class-assigned research projects.

### 2. Criteria for Exclusion (No IRB Review Needed)

A student project is excluded from IRB review only if **ALL** of the following conditions are met:

- **Educational Purpose:** The sole intent is to fulfill a course requirement. Results will **not** be published, presented at conferences, or archived for future research (e.g., Master's thesis).
- **Minimal Risk:** The probability of harm or discomfort to participants is not greater than that encountered in daily life.
- **No Vulnerable Populations:** The project does not target minors (under 18), prisoners, or individuals with cognitive impairments.
- **No Sensitive Topics:** The project does not ask about illegal behavior, sexual history, substance abuse, mental health disorders, victimization, or other data that could damage the participant's reputation or legal standing if revealed.
- **No Deception:** Participants will be fully informed about the nature of the assignment.
- **Confidentiality:** No direct identifiers (names, IDs) will be linked to the data, OR identifiers will be destroyed immediately after the assignment is graded.
- **Consent:** The student has a plan to obtain verbal or written consent using *Form E: Classroom Project Consent Script*



- **Data Destruction:** All identifiable data (recordings, signed consent forms) are destroyed at the end of the term by shredding and secure disposal or deleting digital records from both cloud or hard media.

### 3. FHDA Instructor Responsibilities

FHDA Faculty assigning research projects are responsible for:

- **Ethical Training:** Ensuring students understand the principles of informed consent and privacy. Suggest requesting that students complete the free IRB training [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) free training)
- **Reviewing Protocols:** The instructor must review and approve the student's research plan *before* data collection begins.
- **Protecting Participants:** Ensuring students use *Form E: Classroom Project Consent Script* that clearly states the project is for a class assignment, not a formal research study.

### 4. When is IRB Review Required for Students?

IRB review is **mandatory** if:

- The student intends to publish the results (e.g., in a journal, at a conference, or for a Master's thesis/Doctoral dissertation).
- The project involves external funding.
- The project involves deception or sensitive populations.
- The findings are intended to be generalized beyond the classroom (e.g., a proposal to change District policy).

### Student Research Decision Checklist

#### Instructions for Students:

- **Q1:** Is this project *only* for a course grade?
  - If **NO** (it is for publication/thesis): **STOP.** You must submit a full IRB Application.
  - If **YES:** Go to Q2.



- **Q2:** Does the project involve minors, prisoners, or sensitive topics (drugs, sex, illegal acts)?
  - *If YES:* **STOP.** You must modify your topic or submit an IRB Application.
  - *If NO:* Go to Q3.
  
- **Q3:** Will any data be shared outside of this class (e.g., posted online, shared with administration)?
  - *If YES:* **STOP.** You must submit a full IRB Application.
  - *If NO:* **Proceed.** You do not need IRB review. You must still obtain informed consent from participants.