

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Research as a Course Assignment

Student research conducted within an academic course may be categorized as either a **course assignment** or **disseminated research**.

Disseminated Research

Disseminated research occurs whenever information is formally presented (e.g. poster, oral or written) to **any audience beyond the course**. It also includes **Graduate theses and Honors theses**. Disseminated research must be reviewed under [University Policy 3990](#).

Course Assignment

If the student research is categorized as a course assignment it falls under the policy described in [University Policy 3991](#). The data collection and interpretation is for pedagogical purposes only and is contained wholly within the course environment. Such data is gathered **without** the intention of disseminating it beyond the instructor and students of the course.

All research course assignments must still be planned and carried out with a due consideration of the University's ethical and legal responsibility to protect individuals involved as the subjects of these activities, especially when exposed to more than a minimal risk. Student research which involves specialized populations as subjects (for example: pregnant women, fetuses, abortuses, prisoners, individuals with physical or mental disabilities, minors, economically or educationally disadvantaged, or institutionalized individuals) is always considered to be above minimal risk. (Minimal risk is defined as "the risks, anticipated in the proposed activity, are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.") Suitable precautions must be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the results of any procedure pertaining to a particular person who is a participant in the activity.

Role of faculty in supervising student research categorized as a course assignment:

- A. It is the responsibility of faculty to determine, prior to giving as assignment, whether a project falls within the area of course assignment or disseminated research. Disseminated research must be reviewed under Policy 3990. Student research originally conducted as a course assignment may not later become disseminated research. No IRB approval will be given after the fact.
- B. It is the responsibility of the faculty to discuss research ethics with the class in the context of the assignment prior to the initiation of data collection.
- C. It is the responsibility of faculty to monitor student projects from beginning to end for impact on human subjects. Special attention should be paid to maintaining confidentiality, minimal levels of risk, the freedom to withdraw, and informed consent.
- D. It is the responsibility of faculty to report unexpected adverse affects on human subjects to the department chair.