

## IRB SOP 905

# Students and Employees as Research Subjects

### Purpose

This purpose of this document is to address the safeguards the researchers must consider and that the IRB will examine for research projects that includes a student or employee as the research participant to minimize possibilities of coercion or undue influence.

### Scope

This policy and procedure apply to all researchers and the USA IRB members where research is engaged at the University of South Alabama.

### Definitions

**Coercion** occurs when is person is completed to involuntary behave in a certain way by use of overt or implicit threat, harm, intimidation or other form of pressure or force. Coercion also occurs when potential subjects perceive pressure or force to participate. For example-4 (h)6 (re) f c11-14.52 -1.

## Policy

Student subjects are an integral part of certain research studies, such as research on teaching methods and comparisons of curricula. Any subject's participation in research must be voluntary and based upon full and accurate information. The relationship of instructor and student is inherently of unequal power. No matter how well intentioned the instructor is, students may feel compelled to participate and believe that failure to do so will negatively affect their grades and the attitude of the instructor (and perhaps other students) toward them. In pursuing research activities wherein students are research subjects, the protocol must be thoughtfully developed to balance the interests of subject protection and research goals.

When USA students and/or employees are being recruited as potential subjects, researchers must ensure that there are additional safeguards for these subjects. The

each individual research study, and must be free to decline participation in any available projects without penalty

## 2.0 Employee Participation

University employees, such as faculty, office staff, lab technicians, and postdoctoral fellows, are similar to students in that they are vulnerable to perceived, even if not intended, pressures to appear cooperative and supportive of their supervisor's work. Accordingly, many of the same procedures described above to reduce the likelihood of coercion in recruiting student volunteers apply equally to university employees.

Additionally, the IRB will review the following factors:

- 2.1 Employee participation in research must be voluntary. An employee shall not be required to participate in research as a condition of employment.
- 2.2 An employee's voluntary decision whether or not to participate will not affect their employment, performance evaluation, or any other employment practice.
- 2.3 Recruitment is conducted through the use of flyers, advertisements, postings, and/or announcements targeted to a larger audience than just to the employees.
- 2.4 If employees are specifically targeted, the researcher must provide a rationale for subject population (i.e., just selection of USA employees)
- 2.5 Data are collected and stored in manner that protects the privacy of the employee
- 2.6 If the researcher is obtaining consent and collecting the data (when the researcher is the employee's supervisor), there must be a method of obtaining consent/data collection that minimizes the possibility of coercion or undue influence.

## HISTORY

Effective Date:

Revisions: November, 2018

## Responsible Office:

Office of Research Compliance and Assurance