<div align="center">**Students as Researchers Guidance**</div>

Students as Researchers

In order to constitute student research a project must be initiated and conducted by the student, under the guidance of a faculty sponsor. This includes the development of the purpose and objectives of the research, description of research methodology, construction and distribution of surveys and related consent documents, and analysis of data. Undergraduate students should be listed as the Research Associates on the IRB application with the faculty sponsor listed as the PI. Graduate students may be listed as the PI, but these applications must include a faculty or staff member listed as the Faculty Sponsor.

Categories of Student Research Involving Human Participants

Questions regarding these categories and human research participant requirements should be directed to the Research Compliance Coordinator in ORGA. Course IRB approval may be appropriate in some circumstances.

1. Research Practica or Course-Based Research Assignments

A number of departments offer courses that require students to undertake projects in which other people are interviewed, observed, or otherwise serve as participants. The purpose of these course projects is to train students and provide them with a closer view of social, educational, or psychological processes, and an opportunity to practice various research methods. Such projects typically do not lead to generalizable knowledge and are not undertaken with that goal in mind. Therefore, the IRB does not consider them to be research and IRB review and approval is not required unless study subjects include persons who are not enrolled in the course and/or departmental research participant pool and involve:

- minors (some teacher education projects may be exempt from this requirement),
- other special or vulnerable populations whose ability to give informed consent may be compromised,
- pregnant women or fetuses who may be put at risk of physical harm,
- a topic of a sensitive nature, the examination or reporting of such may place the participant at more than minimal risk, or
- any type of activity that places the participant at more than minimal risk.

However, even when human participant involvement in course projects or pilot studies is not considered research, these projects should follow the same guidelines for the protection of people's privacy, dignity, and welfare.

If the instructor and the students have completed the CITI training and this course work unexpectedly results in a project worthy of publication or presentation beyond the class, the IRB does not consider there to be barrier to dissemination (unless determined otherwise by the publication or presentation venue). A letter to this effect can be secured from the Research Compliance Coordinator if needed. However, if there appears to be a chance that the project will result in generalizable information, it is strongly recommended that IRB approval be secured before the research begins.

2. Individual Research Projects

Student-initiated and/or student-conducted research using human participants that does not fall under the heading of a research practicum or a course-based research assignment and which is undertaken with the intent to contribute to generalizable knowledge, requires human research participant review and approval. This includes, but is not limited to, undergraduate bachelor's essays, capstone or senior research projects, graduate thesis research, and independent studies.

Training in Human Participant Research

The IRB recommends inclusion of basic CITI Program training as a course requirement for research methods courses and other courses in which students may be involved in research with human participants.

Class guest presentations may also be arranged by contacting the Research Compliance Coordinator by emailing compliance@cofc.edu.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Student Researcher

In addition to the responsibilities incumbent in the conduct of research, the student researcher is responsible for the following:

- Reading all information for researchers posted on the IRB section of the ORGA website;
- Initiating any necessary communications with ORGA;
- Completing IRB-approved training;
- Completing the Human Participant Research Review application with assistance from the faculty sponsor;
- Completing all paperwork associated with requests for continuation or modifications, if needed; and
- Submitting a final report as soon as the project is completed. When applicable under the Flexibility Policy, student research will be administratively closed one year after the approval date, unless additional time is requested.

Responsibilities of the Undergraduate Student Researcher

In addition to the responsibilities incumbent in the conduct of research, the student researcher is responsible for the following:

- Reading all information for researchers posted on the IRB section of the ORGA website;
- Initiating any necessary communications with ORGA;
- Completing IRB-approved training;
- Assisting the faculty sponsor with the completion of the Human Participant Research Review application;
- Working with their faculty sponsor to ensure all paperwork associated with requests for continuation or modifications, if needed, is completed; and

- Providing information to their faculty sponsor so they may file a final report as soon as the project is completed. When applicable under the Flexibility Policy, student research will be administratively closed one year after the approval date, unless additional time is requested.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Sponsor

Faculty Sponsors are responsible for providing guidance and oversight to students regarding the conduct of their research. This includes ensuring the timely submission and accurate completion of protocols, submission of protocol modifications and/or requests for continuing reviews, compliance with the ethical conduct of human participant research, and the submission of final reports.

The faculty sponsor is also responsible for the submission of the final report if a student fails to do so. When applicable under the Flexibility Policy, student research will be administratively closed one year after the approval date, unless additional time is requested.

It is imperative that students be afforded ample opportunity to design and conduct their research projects. Therefore, it is important that early in the course they are provided with full information and ample guidance.

Timelines for Successful Student Research

Please refer to the example timelines for successful student research involving human participants on the IRB webpage.

The IRB recommends not rushing human participant research whenever possible. Students can often underestimate the amount of time it takes to secure IRB approval. It is very important to follow these recommended timelines since failure to do so can leave the student without adequate time to collect and analyze data.

The faculty sponsor should be aware of these timelines and help provide alternative methodologies that do not require IRB approval if a student falls behind this schedule. This is especially imperative if the student must complete the research to graduate on time. Additional time should be added if the research

Be aware of these items that can add extra time:

- Completing the CITI training.
- Obtaining permission from another organization or school to recruit participants from their population.
    - This can take days to months, depending on procedures of the site providing permission.
- Creating the attachments. Be sure to use the correct consent template to reduce the amount of time.
- Multiple rounds of revisions. Important to only resubmit for review only after **all** requested revisions have been made.
- Getting enough participants for analysis.

Approved: October 16, 2009; Revised: 9/15/2023; Administratively updated: 6/3/2025