

Community College of Vermont

CCV Course Guidelines for Human Subjects Research

CCV maintains a process for institutional review of all research projects involving human subjects conducted by or about CCV students, faculty, and/or staff in accordance with our [Research By or About CCV Students, Faculty or Staff](#) policy.

CCV students commonly undertake research activities as part of their coursework. However, faculty need to carefully and appropriately supervise students whenever they engage in research that involves human subjects. Any faculty member assigning a research project should guide students in the selection of topics, the gathering and reporting of data, and the use of ethical research protocols. However, because CCV courses represent lower division collegiate work, students are generally not expected to conduct original research with human subjects.

Which classroom assignments are not in need of review?

Collecting any data from humans that is used to answer an original research question is considered human subjects research. However, there are some general categories of research that are considered exempt and would not require faculty or students to submit their research project for review and approval. These include informational career interviews, food preference surveys, and collection or use of public data.

Below are examples of the kinds of topics and methods that are not considered human subjects research in need of dean's office approval:

- Students research census records to determine demographic changes in their community over time.
- Students conduct an informational interview with a professional in a given field to better understand career choices.
- Students collect data on eye color by observing passersby as part of an exercise to demonstrate distributions, means, etc.
- Students interview family and peers about their favorite novels as part of an exercise to demonstrate interviewing technique and the effect of varying technique on data collected.
- Students collect responses from peers in the learning center related to food preferences.

Which classroom assignments do need review?

Research topics and assignments that include the collection of data from living subjects that is meant to be generalizable to inform a research question is human subjects research. Below are examples of research activities that do constitute original research and require explicit advance approval from the academic dean:

- A student wants to interview friends about drug and alcohol use.
- A student wants to anonymously survey teens at the local high school about eating disorders.
- A student wants to interview elderly patients with dementia.
- A student wants to survey other CCV students about past experiences with bullying.
- A student wants to observe interactions between male and female toddlers at a local child care facility.
- A student wants to photograph participants at a political rally for a piece they are writing on the changing demographics of supporters.

What is the process for approval?

CCV maintains a process for institutional review of all research projects involving human subjects conducted by or about CCV students, faculty, and/or staff in accordance with our [Research By or About CCV Students, Faculty or Staff](#) policy. Any student or faculty wishing to conduct research in need of approval will need to submit the Application for Research Involving Human Subjects. More information and guidance can be found in the Guidelines for Submission of Application for Research Involving Human Subjects.

What to do if you are unsure?

In essence, students should understand that any research involving human subjects must address three important principles:

- **Respect** – includes voluntary and informed consent of all participants
- **Beneficence** – entails an obligation to protect persons from harm by minimizing risks and maximizing benefits
- **Justice** – requires that the selection of subjects be fair and equitable and that particular care be taken when working with populations whose status puts them in a vulnerable position

Whenever a student and/or faculty is not sure that approval is required, they should contact the Academic Dean's office for clarification at AcademicDean@ccv.edu.