

CUNY HRPP Guidance: Student Subject Pools

1. Purpose

This document provides guidance regarding the creation and operation of student subject pools, as well as guidance on recruiting from existing student subject pools.

2. What is a student subject pool?

Student subject pools are generally comprised of undergraduate students enrolled in particular courses that offer course credit (or other incentives) for participation in research projects.

3. CUNY HRPP or IRB review of subject pools

CUNY HRPP or IRB review is required:

1. For the creation and operation of a subject pool; AND
2. For human subject research projects that recruit from student subject pools.

4. Subject Pool Criteria and Considerations

4.1. Voluntary participation

Student participation in both the subject pool and any research project that recruits from the subject pool must be completely voluntary. Therefore, protocols must include mechanisms for assuring the students:

- That their participation is entirely voluntary; and
- That the students may withdraw their participation at any time without any penalty

4.2. Alternatives to participation

In order to minimize the potential for coercion that may arise from granting students course credit in exchange for participation in research, the subjects must be given alternatives to such participation. Alternatives should be comparable in time, effort and fulfillment of course credit. Examples of alternatives include:

- Submission of research papers
- Attendance at research talks

4.3. Recruitment

Researchers and IRBs must ensure that the recruitment process for participation in the subject pool, as well as participation in individual research projects recruiting from the subject pool, minimizes the potential for coercion. It is, therefore, recommended that students be recruited only through the subject pool, rather than through flyers, announcements, or direct invitation.

4.4. Minors

4.4.1. Inclusion of Minors

It is possible that some students at CUNY are minors. Researchers who include minors in subject pools must ensure that these minors are provided the additional required protections as discussed in Section 11 of [CUNY HRPP Policies and Procedures Manual 2009](#).

4.4.2. Exclusion of Minors

Some research projects that recruit from subject pools may require the exclusion of minors. These projects must provide minors in the subject pool with appropriate alternatives, as discussed in Section 4.2 above.

4.5. CUNY College-specific requirements

Individual CUNY Colleges may have specific requirements regarding recruitment of students at the given College. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with any local policies or procedures. Please refer to the [CUNY College-Specific Policies Regarding Recruitment of Students as Research Subjects](#) for more information.

References

1. [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 – Public Welfare DHHS, Part 46 – Protection of Human Subjects](#)
2. [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21 – Food and Drugs, Part 50 – Protection of Human Subjects](#)
3. DHHS Office of Human Research Protections, “[Guidance of Engagement of Institutions in Human Subjects Research](#)”