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## Delaware County Community College Institutional Review Board (IRB)

### Purpose

Delaware County Community College encourages research<sup>1</sup> and projects that increase student learning and improve the quality of instruction. In order to demonstrate its concern for protecting the rights and safety of its students and staff, the College has established an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

### Mission

The IRB is established to identify, assess, and manage any potential risks associated with research involving College students or employees, or with research that College employees conduct at other institutions, as representatives of the College. The IRB will help ensure that research conducted under its purview is consistent with basic ethical principles outlined in The Belmont Report (<http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html>), including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. It will provide guidelines for research to the college community, and will ensure that all research subject to its review is in compliance with all applicable federal regulations.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The functions and duties of the IRB will include:

1. Developing the policies and procedures necessary to accomplish its mission.
2. Determining which research studies or projects are subject to or exempt from its review.
3. Approving or disapproving studies or projects submitted for review.
4. Monitoring studies in progress to ensure that they are in compliance with the standards it has established.
5. Provide periodic reports to the appropriate college officials or groups.
6. Provide for the education and development of its members.

<sup>1</sup>Federal regulations define *research* at 45 CFR 46.102(d) as follows:

*Research* means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

Research that has been approved by the IRB may be subject to further appropriate review and approval or disapproval by officials of the College. Those officials may not approve research projects that have been disapproved by the IRB.

## Composition

The Institutional Review Board will have five members: one teaching faculty representative, one counselor representative, one Institutional Effectiveness representative, one student affairs representative and one librarian.

## IRB Authority

Persons who must comply with the Institutional Review Board procedures include:

1. Any person or group who is neither employed by nor a student of the College and who wishes to use College employees, students, records or facilities as part of a research project or study.
2. Any College student or staff member proposing to conduct research that involves the use of human subjects. Federal regulations define *human subject* at 45 CFR 46.102(f) as follows:

*Human subject* means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains

- (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or
- (2) identifiable private information.

## Exemption criteria

Projects are exempt from review if they meet any of the criteria below:

- Research in common educational settings, involving normal or special educational practices, such as
  - research on regular and special education instructional strategies.
  - research on effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, classroom management methods.
- Research involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless:
  - confidentiality cannot be maintained or
  - disclosure could reasonably put participants at risk (of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to financial standing, employability, or reputation).
- Research involving the study of existing data, documents or records if
  - publicly available or
  - information is recorded in such a way as to maintain confidentiality.

- Research conducted as part of the routine functions of the Institutional Effectiveness Office. Its usual purpose is to improve College services, and it is conducted under the supervision of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.
  
- Student research, if
  - a normal part of student's coursework.
  - supervised by a faculty member.
  - primary purpose is to develop student's research skills.
  - presents no more than minimal risk to subjects or the student.
  - does not deal with issues of a sensitive nature.
  - is not academic research expected to result in publication or dissemination.
  
- Research to fulfill requirements for independent study is NOT automatically exempt; review by IRB may be required unless it meets exemption criteria.

### **Approval Process and Review Criteria**

1. The researcher completes the internal Support Form and the appropriate IRB Review Form and submits it to the IRB chair.
  - The Internal Support Form provides evidence of internal college support (i.e., that the research is of interest to the college, is compatible with the mission of Delaware County Community College and does not adversely affect College resources).
  - The Exempt Protocol Form is used when the researcher believes the research is exempt from IRB review.
  - The Expedited Review Form is used when risk to human subjects is minimal.
  - The Full IRB Review Protocol Form is used in all other cases.
  
2. The IRB chair reviews the proposal to determine if it:
  - is complete.
  - contains appropriate signatures indicating internal support (i.e., that the research is of interest, is compatible with the mission of Delaware County Community College and does not adversely affect college resources).
  - addresses human subject protection.
  
3. The IRB chair shares the request with IRB members, who review the proposal according to the following criteria, which include the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):

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- The proposed research is compatible with the Delaware County Community College mission and is education related.
  - The proposed research has a sound rationale and appropriate methodology (research design, sampling, instrumentation, treatment of data, analysis).
  - The proposal meets the requirements of Protection of Human Subjects (45CFR46):
    - i. The consent form provides a clear and non-technical explanation of the research project – sufficient to inform a participant’s decision to participate or not (46.116a1).
    - ii. The consent form describes any foreseeable risks or discomforts, as well as possible benefits to the participant (46.116a 2-3).
    - iii. The consent form informs the participant of the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained (46.116a 5).
    - iv. The consent form identifies a person to contact should questions regarding the research or the participant’s rights arise (46.116a 7).
    - v. The consent form provides a statement that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate or termination of participation will result in no harm to the participant (46.116a 8).

When appropriate, the following should also be included:

- vi. If relevant, the consent form describes any alternative treatments being withheld by the researcher that might be advantageous to the participant (46.116a 4).
  - vii. The consent form explains any compensation to be provided should harm to the participant occur (46.116a 6).
- Acceptability of the potential effects the collection of data and the dissemination and use of results may have on Delaware County Community College students, personnel, operations, and the community.
- Evidence of support of other involved individuals or groups internal or external to Delaware County Community College.
- The results will be disseminated in a way that protects the identity of the participants and, if appropriate, the College. Names of individuals will not be used in the study unless the individuals grant permission in writing. The name of Delaware County Community College will be used only if the Institutional Review Board grants permission.

If the IRB has questions about any aspect of the proposed research, an IRB member will contact the researcher to arrange a meeting with the entire board.

Under certain circumstances the Institutional Review Board will submit the request to the appropriate vice president or the president for approval. This submission will occur if the project:

1. has political or broad community implications for the college.
2. involves board policy.
3. involves all or a significant portion of staff or students.
4. involves established operating procedures and/or board policies.

### **Timeline and Notification of Approval or Disapproval**

Ordinarily the researcher will be notified concerning the status of the request within ten working days after the proposal is received. If possible, approval or denial will be made at that time. If a delay is necessary, an appropriate timeline will be negotiated with the researcher. If a request is denied, the notification will include the reason(s) for the denial. A revised proposal, or revised sections, may be submitted for reconsideration.