



One University. One World. Yours.

Name:	Research Ethics Board – Research in the Classroom Policy
Policy Number:	9-1003
Origin:	Research Ethics Board
Approved:	December 14, 2007
Issuing Authority:	University Senate
Responsibility:	Research Ethics Board
Revision Date(s):	n/a
Effective Date:	December 14, 2007
Supersedes:	Researcher Testing Students In Own Class (Dec.13, 2001)

Issue

Since the researcher is in a position of power over the students being tested in his/her own class (e.g., by virtue of being the professor or teaching assistant of the class), are there any restrictions on how the study must be conducted?

In-Class Testing:

The Research Ethics Board (REB) does not have purview over teaching ethics. Therefore, it is an instructor's decision whether or not to allow in-class testing.

In-Class Pedagogical Research:

The REB recognizes the value of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). When the instructor determines that collection of pedagogical information does not interfere with normal class activities and feedback processes, REB approval is often not necessary as long as participant identities are confidential (see Tri-Policy Policy Statement). For example, pedagogical research involving analysis of archival data which does not identify individual students will not normally require REB approval. When the instructor determines that SoTL research will interfere with normal teaching and learning (e.g., videotaping classroom activities), the researcher must request prior approval from the REB, and will generally be bound by the guidelines described below.

In-Class, Non-Pedagogical Testing By The Professor Of Their Own Class:

In general, the REB discourages non-class related research undertaken in the classroom by a professor using his/her own students as participants, except when there is sufficient justification given for testing one's own students, in which case the researcher should follow the guidelines listed below;

- 1) Someone other than the professor of the class should do the testing (e.g., a research assistant who is not in a position of power over the students in the class)

- 2) The professor should not be present in the classroom at any time during the conduct of the study
- 3) The professor should not do the solicitation of student participation
- 4) The professor should be blind with respect to who participates and who does not participate in the testing
- 5) Normal consent and debriefing procedures should be followed
- 6) The research assistant should clearly instruct students in the class that
 - a) the professor will be blind with respect to student participation,
 - b) that participation is completely voluntary and will have no bearing on student marks in the course, and
 - c) they are free to leave without penalty if they do not wish to participate.