

Student Masters Projects and Theses:
Procedures for Requesting Review by the
Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology
Human Subjects Committee

Guidelines

If your Masters Project or Thesis will involve the participation of human subjects, then it will need to be reviewed by the Departmental Human Subjects Committee. Please contact the EDS Office for a listing of the current committee members.

To have your Project or Thesis proposal reviewed please follow the steps listed below:

1. Obtain a sponsor and complete a research proposal.
 - a. While the form of the research proposal is determined by consultation with your sponsor, the Human Subjects Committee requires that you complete the Introduction and Methods chapters.
 - b. If you plan to use a questionnaire(s), then the Committee will need to examine the questionnaire(s) and accompanying cover letter(s).
 - c. If your research will require participant consent to participate in the study, then the form(s) used to obtain such consent must also be provided.
2. Complete the "Request for Review by the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology Human Subjects Committee" form and **have it signed by your sponsor**.
3. Submit 3 hard copies of this form and any attachments (e.g., your research proposal, questionnaire, cover letter, consent to participate in a study form, etc.) to the Chairperson's mail box (located just outside of the Department Office, EUR 316). In addition, submit one electronic copy of the form and attachments to the Chairperson's email address.
 - a. The form **MUST** be either typed or completed via the use of a word processor. Handwritten forms will **NOT** be reviewed. You can E-mail the Committee Chairperson for an electronic copy of the form.

After your Project or Thesis has been submitted to the Committee the following actions will take place:

1. Within two weeks of receipt of an acceptable request form, the Committee chairperson will provide you and your sponsor with a human subjects risk review (NOTE: requests received after May 1st may not be completed until the fall semester).
2. **If the committee finds that your research is "exempt" or "no risk,"** then you and your sponsor will be notified by the Committee Chairperson via e-mail (upon request a letter reflecting the Committee's assessment of the proposal can also be provided).
 - a. Once you receive this notification you may begin that portion of your research that involves work with human subjects (of course you may proceed with all other aspects of your research without this Committee's approval).
 - b. Copies of the Committee-approved review forms will also be placed in your sponsor's box.
3. **If the committee does not agree that your research is "exempt" or "no risk,"** then you and your sponsor will be notified via e-mail that the proposed Project or Thesis must be reviewed by the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.
 - a. The student must then submit a *Request for Review* to the University Committee. The protocol must be signed by the faculty sponsor and must include the department's Committee Reviewer Forms and the original Request for Review Form as attachments. These documents should then be forwarded to the Director of Research and Sponsored Projects (John Terence Manns, 916-278-7381 jtmanns@csus.edu). You may not begin that portion of your research that involves work with human subjects until the University Committee approves your research. The Policies and Procedures of the University Committee (including *Request for Review* forms) are available at <http://www.csus.edu/rsp/humsubmanual.PDF>.
 - b. Alternatively, as indicated, the Department Committee may recommend to you how your study might be modified to make it either "exempt" or "no risk."

Sections Relevant to Student Research from the
Policies and Procedures of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
California State University, Sacramento
Updated August 2003

Some departments have their own committees for reviewing research which involves the use of human subjects. Those committees must agree to follow the same standards as used by the CPHS and must operate under policies and procedures which have been approved by the CPHS. When those conditions have been met, the CPHS delegates to the departmental committee the authority to review and approve research in which the investigator is a CSUS student and which involves no risk to participants. Student research which does involve risk must be forwarded to the CPHS for review. Research in which the investigator is a member of the CSUS faculty, staff, or administration, or in which the investigator is not affiliated with CSUS, but will use CSUS facilities or students, must always be submitted directly to the CPHS for review (p. 1)

CSUS students must submit their applications, using their department's approved forms and procedures, to their department's human subjects review committee. Students should consult with their faculty sponsor about the department's procedures. If the research is found to be acceptable and to be exempt or no risk by the department's committee, applying the same criteria as would be used by the CPHS, the research does not need to be reviewed by the CPHS. Some departments with considerable experience in reviewing student research are also permitted to approve research at minimal risk. If the department finds that the research is acceptable, but the level of risk is greater than it is authorized to approve, the student must then submit a *Request for Review* to the university committee. The protocol must be signed by the faculty sponsor and must include evidence of the department's approval for the research as one of its attachments. If there is no department or college-level committee to review the student's research, the student must submit a *Request for Review*, with the faculty sponsor's signature, directly to the university committee. In either case, the research may not begin until approval has been received from the CPHS. Collaborative research, in which students and faculty work together but a faculty member is the primary investigator, must be submitted directly to the CPHS in the same way as other faculty research (p. 3)

Departments in which a significant number of students are engaged in human subjects research (e.g., for master's theses, class research, or special projects) are expected to have a department-level committee to review such research. The department committee must consist of at least three faculty members and must follow established procedures which have been reviewed and approved by the CPHS. In reviewing student research, the department committee must use the same criteria and standards as used by the CPHS. Under these circumstances, the CPHS delegates to the department committee the authority to approve student research which is found to be acceptable and to be either exempt or no risk. Department committees with an established history of careful reviews may also be allowed to approve student research which is minimal risk. Research which is found to have a higher level of risk than the department is authorized to approve, and research for which the department committee's decision is not unanimous or for which a committee member so requests, must be forwarded to the CPHS for review (p. 4)