

Classroom Data Gathering

Courses often require students to participate in data gathering activities within, as well as outside of, class. While many of these activities do not require IRB approval, it is important for faculty and students to understand how basic research ethics guide data collection. Below are a few items to consider when data is collected as a part of a course:

1. Teaching students about basic research ethics, including the role of the IRB, the purpose of informed consent, and the importance of confidentiality is fundamental to academic and research integrity.
2. Some classes gather data on students enrolled in the course to help demonstrate theoretical concepts, research methodology, or as a part of a class activity. When gathering data it is essential for faculty to consider the importance of confidentiality.
 - a. If the data collected could be sensitive in nature (i.e., political beliefs; social beliefs; personal experiences) it is important that data is collected in a way that protects the confidentiality of the student. This includes, but is not limited to, not tying demographic data to responses on the questions posed. In small institutions, like Cecil College, it is often easy to identify a student's data by demographic information collected. Faculty should be aware of these concerns and make efforts during data collection to maintain privacy.
 - b. Additionally various types of questions may cause student distress. Asking these questions as a part of a data gathering measure, not just for personal reflection during class, should be carefully considered. For example, questions about prior criminal, sexual, substance use, mental health status, or traumatic experience should be carefully handled. If faculty feel that these questions are necessary, IRB consultation should be sought.
3. Courses may also collect data, via surveys, observation or oral history, on individuals outside of the classroom environment. Some of these activities may qualify for IRB review. A few important considerations are below:
 - a. Faculty should be aware that if data is collected, with the intention to be used outside of Cecil College, IRB approval is required. If data was initially a STEM poster and then presented in the future at an outside conference, IRB approval is also required.
 - b. If students collect data from outside sources, subjects should be aware of informed consent.
 - c. Individual identifying information should be left out of the student report on the data. For example, if a student obtains an oral history from a family member, identifying information should not be included in the report write up. All data should be destroyed after the project is completed.
 - d. Students should be made aware of how the types of information they are collecting could be sensitive in nature and the proper use of confidentiality, as well as data storage.
4. Faculty should be aware that data that is used by students in assignments, and submitted via Blackboard, may be housed and available to other faculty via SafeAssign. It is

important that data is not identifiable.

By signing this document I acknowledge that I have read the above information.

Faculty signature

Date