Guidelines for Informed Consent

A signed statement of informed consent is necessary for all Category 3 proposals. In general, Category 2 research projects do not need to obtain signatures on informed consent documents unless minors are involved or you will be audio- or videotaping interviews. There is more specific information about working with minors on this page. Informed consent can be presented verbally or in writing, and Proposals are often approved more quickly if researchers use the examples of informed consent as a guide and modify them to fit their project.

The following elements must be included in a statement of informed consent:

A. Statement that the study involves research and why it is being conducted.
B. Statement that the research is being conducted through the College of Brockport.
C. Official name of any institution fully spelled out (e.g., Greater Rochester Collaborative Masters in Social Work Program through SUNY Brockport and Nazareth College).
D. Explanation of the purpose of the research and the expected duration of the participant's involvement (e.g. how long will it take to complete the survey and number of questions).
E. Description of the procedures to be followed and identification of any procedures which are experimental.
F. Description of any benefits to the participant or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.
G. Description of any reasonably foreseeable risks and discomforts to the participant, including loss of time.
H. Statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the participant will be maintained, stored for how long, how destroyed.
I. For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any medical treatment is available if injury occurs; or counseling available for questions that might be sensitive, and if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained.
J. Statement that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.
K. Statement that participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.
L. Name, phone number, and email information of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the participant's rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the participant.

Please note the following additional items that should be included in any consent form if applicable to your project:

M. Studies conducted in classrooms/school settings You must include a statement that participation in the research will not affect participants' grades or class standings.
N. Taping (audio and video) If you are audio- or video taping, you have two options.
   a) If you require participants to consent to the taping in order to participate, you should clearly state this in the consent form in the study description section.
   b) If it is acceptable for participants to refuse taping and still participate, you should include a separate section for taping information at the end of the consent form with a separate signature line for consent to the taping, as well as a description of how you will collect information without taping.
O. **Payment for participation** Include the amount of payment and procedures to be paid. Please note that participants must be paid even if they don't complete the study. If you are paying participants more than $600 annually, please contact the IRB Administrator for specific language that must be included in your consent form.

P. **Referrals** If the study has the potential to arouse questions and concerns in participants (e.g., questions about substance use, gender issues, etc.), you must include an agency and phone number for participants to contact if they feel the need to do so, such as the College Counseling Center.

Q. **Focus Groups** Please include the following statement: “Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in group situations. Other participants in your group will know how you answer questions. While we will discourage anyone from sharing this information outside of the group, we cannot guarantee confidentiality by other group members. We will do our best to keep all of your personal information private and confidential but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.”

If the research cannot practically be completed without some or all of this requirement being waived or altered, please explain why in your proposal and include a debriefing procedure.

**When working with minors:**

If you will be working with minors, you must provide two separate forms: 1) an informed consent for parent/guardians; 2) a statement of assent for minors (17 years of age and younger).

The minors’ form should be in language that is developmentally appropriate. The essential information given to the child must include a description of the procedures and clear indication that their participation is voluntary. If the research is being conducted in schools, it must be clearly stated that this research is not part of the child's regular school program, not being conducted by the school, and that participation—of lack thereof—will not affect the child's grade.

In cases where there is inconsistency between the consent of the parent and the agreement of the child, the following rule will be followed: A "no" from the child overrides a "yes" from the parent, but a "yes" from the child does not override a "no" from the parent.

**When working with a class or group:**

Non-participation in a research project being conducted as part of a class or group must detail alternatives for those in the class not participating in the research, (whether or not minors are involved). For example, if extra credit is being offered for participation, then the researcher must detail how those not participating will have an alternative method of obtaining extra credit. This is to minimize coercion to participate.

Another example would be if an investigator is conducting research in a classroom where s/he will be observing, interviewing and taping the class. Please explain the procedures to be followed for those children in the class whose parents have not given permission, or where the child does not agree to participate in the research.