

**Guidance and Procedures Number: 25**

**Title: Special Subject Populations: Students and Employees**

**Date of Last Revision: March 5, 2009**

## **I. Research Involving UCLA Students**

When investigators propose to recruit students, including undergraduates, graduate students and medical students, from their own classes to participate in research, there is concern that student participation in such research may not be truly voluntary because of a desire on the part of the students to appear cooperative or highly motivated or because participation in research is a course requirement. Various alternatives have been suggested to reduce the possibility of unintended coercion, while still permitting students to participate as subjects in research. These include:

- (1) Posting IRB approved advertisements throughout the university to recruit subjects from a broad base of students;
- (2) Avoiding any personal solicitations of students by faculty, graduate assistants, or fellow students;
- (3) Providing a number of research projects from which to choose, if participating as a subject in research is a course requirement;
- (4) Providing alternative and equal methods for meeting course credit (or extra credit) requirements, such as attending a series of research presentations by faculty, writing a brief paper, conducting one's own research.

The IRBs will assess the potential for coercion or undue influence and consider ways in which the possibility of exploitation can be reduced or eliminated. The IRBs may ask investigators to provide justification for including student volunteers from courses for which they are the instructor. When students are recruited from "human subject pools," the IRB will ensure that: (1) participation in the research is voluntary; (2) consent for participation will be sought only under circumstances that minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence; and (3) genuinely equivalent alternatives to participation are available.

## **II. Research Involving UCLA Employees**

University employees, such as office staff, lab technicians, and post-doctoral fellows, are similar to students in that they are vulnerable to perceived, even if not intended, pressures to appear to supervisors and/or colleagues as cooperative and supportive of their unit's work. Such pressure may manifest itself with regards to both the initial decision to participate and any subsequent decisions to continue or discontinue participation. Participation in research conducted by one's unit may also pose unique confidentiality considerations.

Accordingly, many of the same procedures (described above) to reduce the likelihood of coercion in recruiting student volunteers apply equally to university employees. The UCLA IRB requires investigators to provide justification if they wish to recruit employees from the investigator's own lab or office. The UCLA IRB also requires investigators who wish to recruit employees from his/her own lab or office to outline procedures to be followed to minimize the appearance of coercion or undue influence of the employees. Typically, the UCLA IRB would expect investigators who wish to include employees from the investigator's own lab or office develop recruitment procedures for the research such as posting recruitment flyers on campus, including, but not limited to, the investigator's lab or office.

State law includes specific prohibitions regarding employee participation in stem cell research using human oocytes.<sup>1</sup> See [HRPP Guidance & Procedures #38: Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research](#) for additional details.

**Regulation:**

California Health & Safety Code §125343

**Reference:**

U.S. Office for Human Research Protections' (OHRP, formerly OPRR) *Protecting Human Research Subjects Guidebook (1993)*, Chapter 6, Section J, "Students, Employees and Normal Volunteers". [http://hhs.gov/ohrp/irb/irb\\_chapter6.htm](http://hhs.gov/ohrp/irb/irb_chapter6.htm)

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<sup>1</sup> California Health & Safety Code §125343