

College of Education Research Guidelines

The College of Education encourages its faculty to conduct research related to the mission of the college and the university. Such research extends our knowledge which, in turn, supports the learning of our candidates. Furthermore, the College of Education affirms that developing knowledgeable and skilled educator-researchers is a goal of both initial and advanced programs. Engaging candidates in research investigations as part of their course work is an essential part of meeting that goal.

Educational research is not to be undertaken without considerable thought and planning on the part of the researchers. A critical step in the planning process is designing a study that answers the researcher's question while also maintaining high ethical standards for research. As stated in the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), "It is of paramount importance that educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs. Educational researchers should be especially careful in working with children and other vulnerable populations."

Investigations conducted by faculty and candidates (hereafter referred to as "researchers") under the auspices of the College of Education must adhere to the following requirements:

- Researchers are required to communicate the purpose and goals of the investigation to participants (and their guardians), and to appropriate representatives of institutions (e.g., the building principal; district officials as appropriate), and to keep them informed of any significant changes in the research program.
- Researchers must secure written permission from the organization or institution (e.g., the building principal) prior to recruiting any participants, conducting any research, or distributing any material.
- Researchers are required to secure written informed consent from participants (and their guardians, if participants are under the age of 18) prior to the initiation of any research. Informed consent includes information regarding:
 - the purposes of the study,
 - the reason why the individual is being asked to participate,
 - what participants are being asked to do in the study,
 - the risks and benefits of participation,
 - the steps taken to minimize risks,
 - the right to decline participation and/or to withdraw from participation, and
 - contact information for the researcher and the course instructor or research supervisor.
- Researchers must maintain confidentiality of both participants and data, taking appropriate steps to ensure that the source of information will not be disclosed without the express permission of the participant.

Candidates conducting research projects as part of the requirements for a course must submit a project proposal to the instructor for approval prior to the start of the project. The proposal must describe the plan for conducting the investigation in an ethical manner, addressing the above requirements.

Classroom teachers conducting action research in their own classrooms should take the appropriate steps to ensure that the following standards are met (based on AERA standards):

- whenever possible, the data are those that could be derived from normal teaching/learning processes;
- confidentiality is maintained;
- the safety and welfare of participants are protected;
- informed consent is obtained when appropriate (for example, when data to be collected are beyond what is derived via normal teaching/learning processes); and
- the use of the information obtained is primarily intended for the benefit of those receiving instruction in that setting.

Researchers should review the research ethic standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) prior to conducting any research.

<http://www.aera.net/about/policy/ethics.htm>

<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>