

# **IRB TRAINING IN THE MARKETING RESEARCH CLASSROOM: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Through the years, it has been suggested that marketing students be required to submit their research projects to a university Institutional Review Board (IRB) for proper human subjects review [1] [2]. This process provides many benefits to the students, including: greater sensitivity to the need for ethical treatment of human subjects, the ability to better identify ethical issues, and the protection of subjects from inappropriate treatment [1] [2]. In addition, IRB review can serve to protect the students, their faculty advisors and the university from legal concerns [1] [2]. In fact, Jenson, Mackiewicz and Riley (2003) suggest that all projects – even those that do not utilize outside clients, or focus only on secondary data sources – should receive IRB review in order to verify that a full board review of the planned research is not required [2].

Interestingly, one area that has not been considered with regard to IRB is the training of student researchers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many faculty provide students with no formal training mechanism, relying on available textbook materials or their own lectures to convey needed information. This is supported by Jenson, Mackiewicz and Riley (2003), who suggest that faculty “pledge to teach ethical principles guiding the IRB [2, p.15].” as prelude to submission of projects. This relatively light treatment is in stark contrast to the ethics training that many faculty themselves undergo, obtaining certification through formal training classes or online materials.

This study suggests that students would benefit from a similar formal training process prior to submission of their projects for IRB review. Several methods of providing that training will be discussed, including in-class lecture, take-home worksheets and online training, and the benefits & challenges of each method. In addition, a “primer” will be provided that outlines when and how to incorporate human subjects training into a marketing research curriculum, using classroom evidence from 8 semesters at a large public university in the inter-mountain west.

It is hoped that the results will encourage more faculty to adopt a formal human subjects training process for their marketing courses, and encourage greater awareness for proper treatment of human subjects by students.

## **REFERENCES:**

- [1] Fisher, C.B., and Kuther, T.L. (1997). “Integrating Research Ethics Into the Introductory Psychology Course Curriculum.” *Teaching of Psychology*, 24(3), 172-175.
- [2] Jenson, J.D., Mackiewicz, J. and Riley, K. (2003), “Human Subjects Research by Business Students: Beyond the Red Tape,” *Business Communication Quarterly*, 66(2), 9-22.