TITLE:	Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Protection of Human Subjects
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Policy overview

This policy regarding the use of human subjects for educational and research purposes recognizes the responsibility to protect the rights, welfare, and personal privacy of individuals; to ensure a favorable climate for the acquisition of practical skills and the conduct of academically oriented inquiry; and to protect the interests of Whatcom Community College (WCC). In accordance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 45 CFR part 46 subpart A, Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (called the 'Common Rule'), WCC has established an institutional review board (IRB), this policy, and associated procedures (see WCC Procedure 747) governing human subjects research conducted by internal and external investigators at, or in association with, the institution. Human subjects research, whether federally funded or not, must be conducted accordingly. The 'Common Rule' has been widely adopted by many federal agencies and departments, most of which have separately codified regulations (e.g., the National Science Foundation 45 CFR Part 690). The IRB will be chaired by the vice president for instruction. IRB membership will consist of at least five members with varying backgrounds to promote and complete adequate review of research activities conducted by the institution.

Guiding principles

Whether or not human subjects research conducted at, or in association with, the institution is federally funded, the research will be conducted in accord with the following guiding principles:

1. Risks to subjects are minimized by using procedures which are consistent with sound research design and do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk.
2. Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits to subjects, if any, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.
3. Selection of subjects is equitable. In making this assessment the IRB should take into account the purposes of the research and the setting in which the research will be conducted.
4. Informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subject's legally authorized representative.
5. Informed consent will be appropriately documented.
6. The research plan makes adequate provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of participants.
7. There are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of data.

Although federal regulations do not govern research that qualifies for exempt status (as defined in the associated WCC Procedure XXX), such as research involving the use of educational tests in which private information is not individually identifiable, investigators remain responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of their subjects by conducting the research in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The ethical principles of Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice as described in the 1979 Belmont Report written by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research.
2. Other applicable federal and state laws.
3. Institutional policies.
4. Relevant professional standards and codes of conduct as generally accepted in the investigator's academic or professional discipline.