

DATE: October 14, 2003

TO: Communication Studies Students

FROM: Department of Communication Studies Human Subjects Committee,
Dr. David Zuckerman, Committee Chair

RE: COMS Human Subjects requirements

The purpose of this memo is to apprise you of the COMS Human Subjects Committee (HSC) policies and procedures.

Committee Purpose

This committee exists for two purposes: First, we must review all research proposals submitted by our students to assure compliance with university and federal human subjects policies. Second, we exist to educate our students on those policies and how to best navigate the proposal process.

This committee's activities do not include any oversight of faculty research. Faculty research proposals bypass this committee and go directly to the university's HSC.

Committee Policies and Procedures

Departmental HSC procedure (for students) will be as follows:

- Please fill out 3 copies of the university HSC proposal forms, found on the website of the Research and Sponsored Projects website.
- Additionally, please fill out 3 copies of a departmental "cover sheet." This sheet distills the information into one page and provides spaces for the departmental committee to approve the research or specify reasons for not doing so.
- You must deposit the 3 copies of their paperwork in the Communication Studies Department office no later than 2 weeks prior to the departmental faculty meeting. ["Emergency" cases will be considered at the discretion of the departmental committee members.]
- The 3 copies will be distributed to the departmental HSC members. Committee members will review the proposals independently and discuss them when the committee meets.
- The committee will meet once a month, one to two weeks prior to the university-wide HCS meeting. Proposals will be evaluated on the following four criteria:
 1. Are the protocols adequately explained?
 2. Does the proposal include any "protected classes" of subjects? [See face sheet for definitions.]
 3. Can the project be classified as "exempt" or "no risk" by university wide and federal HSC standards? [See face sheet for definitions.]

4. Does the project pose any risk to you as the researcher?
- Once the committee has considered your proposal, you will receive an email and a written letter (hard copy).

Decision-making Rules

- The committee will approve a proposal if:
 1. The committee can foresee no risks to the subjects or researcher and if no members of “protected classes” are subjects, or if the research qualifies for “exempt” status as outlined by the university. In such cases, the committee will approve the project and keep the proposal on file.
- The committee will return the proposal to the student un-approved if:
 1. The protocols are unclear. In such a case, the committee will return the proposal to the student and ask for further clarification.
- The committee will neither approve nor disapprove a proposal, but rather will forward that proposal to the university-wide IRB for a decision if:
 1. The proposal does not meet the university’s criteria for exempt status, OR;
 2. The proposal poses some risk to the subjects, OR;
 3. The proposal poses some risk to the researcher, OR;
 4. The proposal uses subjects who are members of the “protected classes.”
 - In all such cases, a copy of the proposal will be kept on file in the department, and the proposal will be sent to the university-wide IRB for approval.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 8-6541 or sdzuck@csus.edu.

Department of Communication Studies
Request for Review for the Department of Communication Studies
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

(Submit 3 copies of this form along with 3 copies of the CSUS form called "Appendix A.")

Project Title: _____

Student Researcher: _____

Student's email address: _____

Faculty Sponsor's name: _____

Sponsor's Signature _____

(Faculty signature indicates that your sponsor has read and approved these protocols.)

1. Does this research involve human subjects?

_____ Yes _____ No (If no, STOP. You do not need approval.)

2. Is this for a class? _____ Yes _____ No

▶ If yes, what course? _____
Semester? _____

3. Have you attached copies of the IRB forms, including your consent forms and instrument?

_____ Yes _____ No (If no, STOP. Only complete packets will be considered.)

4. Does this project use members of any **protected class**? (This includes minors, prisoners, pregnant women, fetuses, elderly, patients of hospitals or mental facilities, or any person legally unable to give consent.)

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Is this project **exempt** according to university standards? (Exempt research is in an established course on the effectiveness of instructional techniques; observational research of adults that does not allow individual participants to be identified; a review of pre-existing anonymous records or surveys; an evaluation of a public service program.)

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Does this research pose any physical or psychological harm to the subjects? (Note: Studies that use deception are considered by IRB rules to pose psychological harm.)

_____ Yes _____ No

▶ If yes, please explain _____

6. Does this research pose any physical or psychological harm to the researcher?

_____ Yes _____ No

▶ If yes, please explain _____

Department Human Subjects Committee Use Only

This project is:

_____ Approved _____ Not approved _____ Referred to HSC _____ Approved with the following revisions:

Signature of HSC member: _____ Date: _____

Appendix A
Application Form (Revised 08/2003)

**Request for Review by the CSUS Committee
for the Protection of Human Subjects**

(Submit 11 copies of this form and any attachments to the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects,
River Front Center, Room 215. Please **type** your responses or use a word processor.)

Project Title: _____

Name(s) and affiliation(s) of Researchers: _____

Mailing address (or Department and CSUS mail code): _____

Telephone and e-mail address for researcher

Anticipated starting date

Name of faculty sponsor (for student research)

E-mail address of sponsor

1. Who will participate in this research as subjects (e.g., how many people, from what source, using what criteria for inclusion or exclusion)? How will their participation be recruited (e.g., what inducements, if any, will be offered)?

2. How will informed consent be obtained from the subjects? Attach a copy of the consent form you will use. If a signed written consent will not be obtained, explain what you will do instead and why. (See Appendix B for examples of consent forms and a list of consent form requirements. Also see *Informed Consent* earlier in this manual.)

3. How will the subjects' rights to privacy and safety be protected? (See *Level of Risk* earlier in this manual.)

4. Summarize the study's purpose, design, and procedures. (Do not attach lengthy grant proposals, etc.)

5. Describe the content of any tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc. in the research. Attach copies of the questions. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

6. Describe any physical procedures in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

7. Describe any equipment or instruments and any drugs or pharmaceuticals that will be used in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

8. Taking all aspects of this research into consideration, do you consider the study to be "exempt", "no risk", "minimal risk", or "at risk"? Explain why. (See *Level of Risk* earlier in this manual.)

Signature of Researcher

Date

Signature of Faculty Sponsor
(for student research)

Date

Questions about the application procedures for human subjects approval may be directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects or to any member of the committee. Questions about how to minimize risks should be directed to a committee member. Applicants are encouraged to contact a committee member whose professional field most closely corresponds to that of the researcher. See the *Opportunities* newsletter or www.csus.edu/rsp/HumanSubjects.htm for the current year's due dates when submitting an application.