ELPs and IRB

The Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP) is completed by students in the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership. These activities most often fall under Federal Requirements for Human Subjects Research, often as Exempt Research. <u>The determination of whether or not activities completed to meet degree requirements are research or not is made by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research (HSR), not by the Ed.D. student or the advisor or committee members.</u> For this reason, all ELPs that involve data about persons should be submitted for IRB review and approval.

All Ed.D. students and faculty who serve as advisors must have evidence of current Human Subjects Research training. Training is completed through the CITI Program and additional information about training requirements can be found here. Training is valid for **3 years** and the CITI Program will send automatic reminders before renewal is due.

There are multiple ethical and regulatory issues associated with ELP projects. In addition to IRB-HSR regulations, EdD students should consider (a) protection of educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and (b) the possible supervisory role of the Ed.D. candidate who may be asking individuals under their supervision to engage in research activities for the purpose of their ELP.

Key tenants of any research activity are the voluntary nature of research and the confidentiality of research data. Research participants should be provided with information that informs them of these tenants.

In addition, the risks or possible risks associated with research are important. Most research in education has low risks (defined as minimal risk) associated with it; projects may have risks such as potential emotional distress, discomfort, fatigue, etc. In some cases, however, the research proposed may not fit under an exempt category and may need to be reviewed under expedited or full board review processes. More information about categories of research can be found http://www1.udel.edu/research/preparing/humansub-protocolreview.html

ARTIFACTS FOR ELPs

The artifacts that are proposed for inclusion may or may not require IRB-HSR approval.

Examples of artifacts that do not meet requirements for engagement with human subjects:
- Literature reviews
- Reviews of curriculum materials
- Gathering instructional materials from teachers (e.g., contacting teachers at area high schools for a copy of unit tests, requesting course syllabi) that will be evaluated
- Review or analysis of data that are available in aggregate form (e.g., % of students passing a test, # of teachers with a specific type of certification) from a secondary source (e.g., OECD; http://www.oecd.org/education/database.htm).

Examples of artifacts that do require approval from IRB-HSR but do not require a consent/assent process:
- Primary or secondary analysis of de-identified student achievement or behavioral data
- Observation of typical practices (e.g., classroom observation, observation of meetings) when individually identifiable information will not be collected or recorded

Examples of artifacts that do require approval from IRB-HSR and <u>may</u> require a consent/assent process:
- Interviews or focus groups
- Paper or electronic surveys
- Analysis of identifiable student achievement or behavioral data

Note: Research or evaluation activities involving individuals from vulnerable populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities) or individuals who meet the federal definition of prisoners (including students who are part of the juvenile justice system) have additional requirements and protections.

When is Consent/Assent Required?
The following guidelines are in place for determining when/if consent and/or assent is required for activities that <u>pose minimal risk</u> to the participants.

If the activities are part of the Ed.D. candidate's current job role and responsibility and no additional activities are being conducted, signed informed consent and assent forms are not required. Data should be de-identified and secured. Examples might include:
- Revising how a unit of instruction is being delivered and using existing sources of evaluation (e.g., end of unit test)
- Evaluating whether one of two types of homework activity results in higher rates of completion using existing evaluation procedures
- Providing professional development workshop or experience and asking participants to complete an anonymous evaluation of the experience (e.g., rating scale)
- Analysis of existing class, grade, or school data that the Ed.D. candidate would have access to as part of his/her current role and responsibility

If the activities are not part of the Ed.D. candidates's current job responsibility and no additional activities are being conducted, signed informed consent and assent forms are not required. Examples might include:
- Analysis of existing class, grade, or school data that have been provided by an authorized individual in a de-identified format
- Collection of data that are anonymous (e.g., surveys with no names; exams with no names)

If the proposed research requires activities to be conducted that are within the current roles and responsibility, a waiver of consent and assent may be requested. Example may include:
- Completing of a survey with identifiable information
- Collecting additional achievement or behavioral data about students

- Evaluating the efficacy of an existing/in place intervention that includes identifiable information

If the proposed research requires additional activities to be completed by the participants (e.g., additional time or procedures), signed informed consent and assent forms are required. Examples might include:
- Some students are selected to participate in an after-school intervention and achievement data will be collected
- Some students or teachers are being interviewed or participating in a focus group outside of regular school activities
- When activities in other categories are being audio or video taped
- When research activities may pose some risks for participants, especially when the researcher has a supervisory or other role where participation or findings may influence the relationship (e.g., principal to teacher supervision/evaluation; college instructor to student evaluation)

Use of Course Projects as Artifacts

Some artifacts that were completed during courses may be included in the ELP as artifacts. If these artifacts are activities that would require IRB-HSR review if they were completed outside of course work, permission to use the data as part of the ELP may be sought.

As part of this process, the ELP student should include the following information:

- The course number, title, and semester during which the activity was conducted
- A description of the process used to collect the data, including whether any type assent/consent process was used (formal or informal)
- A description of the data, including whether the data included information that identifies the individuals who provided the data
- A description of the completed analysis and/or additional analysis that are done
- If additional data will be collected using the same procedures (e.g., asking more teachers to complete the survey), a description of those procedures

Confidentiality and Protection of Participant Information

Because of the importance of the context in the ELP, confidentiality of the research site (e.g., school or district name) is not always possible. The protocol form as well as the consent forms and process of obtaining informed consent (if applicable) should explain any limitations regarding confidentiality.

For as long as the research design allows, participant information should be presented in a way that does not disclose personal information (e.g., teacher or student name). A pseudonym or other coding should replace real names; there should be a note or other text indicating that pseudonyms are being reported. Data should be presented and reported in a way that the participant's identity is not disclosed (i.e., someone familiar with the setting would be able to deduce who the participant is).