

Administrative Procedures for Research Involving Liberty University-Affiliated Participants

Policy Information

Issuing Office

The Graduate School

Affected Parties

All students/staff/faculty conducting human subjects research

Policy Language

Liberty University supports and cultivates a climate of research. Liberty's dynamic setting presents unique opportunities that have often proven to be of interest to researchers. The University will examine and approve on a case-by-case basis all studies involving subjects or researchers affiliated with the institution.

This approval process involves both an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of ethical aspects of the study and an administrative review when appropriate. Four considerations are involved in determining the specific review process: (1) IRB-regulated ethical aspects of the proposed project, (2) non-IRB-related ethical aspects, (3) public relations aspects, and (4) relationship of the researcher to LU (LU-affiliated or non-LU affiliated). This administrative approval process shall be as follows:

IRB Guideline for All Research Involving LU

For any proposed research involving human subjects affiliated in any way with LU, the IRB examines ethical aspects in accordance with federal and state guidelines. The IRB chair or coordinator will inform the researcher of the final LU decision, including when proposals involve administrative review (see below).

Internal Research that Raises Ethical or Public Relations Concerns

Procedural Information

Procedures

Studies involving ethical or proprietary concerns and studies submitted by individuals who are not current or past LU students or faculty members are examined and considered by administration officials to determine whether IRB approval is appropriate

Sanctions

None specified

Exceptions

None

In the case of research conducted by an internal (LU-affiliated) researcher, the IRB will address any ethical concerns under its purview. Additionally the IRB will consider concerns that arise over the collection of data for research purposes that might be used by the researcher in a way that could reflect negatively on LU. For any such identified concerns, the IRB chair will forward the proposed study to the university associate research officer (currently the dean of the graduate school) to determine whether administration is willing to approve the proposed investigation. The research officer may consult the research investigator and additional administrative officials in making this determination. When revisions are made administratively, the research officer forwards the revised proposal back to the IRB for a second review. Proposals may also be disapproved on administrative grounds. The IRB chair or coordinator will inform the researcher of the final LU decision.

Internal Research that Does NOT Raise Ethical or Public Relations Concerns

Studies involving only one department - When research proposals from LU-affiliated investigators contain no identified ethical aspects outside of the IRB's review domain, do not contain issues of concern to administration, and involve only one specific academic department, the IRB may forward the study's information to the appropriate school dean (cc'ing the research officer) for administrative approval. The dean may request changes or disapprove the study. The dean will forward any altered proposal back to the IRB chair for re-review and decision dissemination.

Studies involving more than one department - If projects involve more than one academic department, the projects are forwarded to the associate research officer who will then determine the administrative approval process. For example, the vice provost for the graduate school and online programs, the provost, and specific school deans, may all be contacted for an administrative approval determination if necessary. The LU's administration reserves the right to request changes to any research study or to disapprove it. Administration will forward any altered proposal back to the IRB chair for a second review and decision dissemination.

External Research

The associate research officer must approve all research projects proposed by non-LU-related investigators, regardless of whether non-IRB ethical or administrative concerns exist. In the case that human subjects are involved, IRB approval should precede review by the associate research officer. At his discretion, additional administrative officials (for example, the vice provost for the graduate school and online programs, the provost, and specific department deans) may be consulted. As in other studies, the LU's administration reserves the right to request changes to any research proposal or to disapprove it. Administration will forward any altered proposal back to the IRB chair for re-review and decision dissemination.

Policy Rationale

The policy is needed to respond to studies that could present LU in a negative light or create a circumstance where proprietary information could be made available to competitors.

Definition of Glossary Terms

None specified