

## GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All students intending to use human subjects in GTU MA thesis or doctoral dissertation research must follow these guidelines and procedures. The purpose is to ensure an adequate review of the research regarding two central ethical concerns:

- that human subjects are treated in a manner consistent with their dignity and autonomy—specifically that they consent freely and in an informed manner to participation in the research;
- that they are protected from any risks or harms posed by the research.

The research review is **NOT** intended to assess either the value of the thesis/dissertation topic or of the research design.

### STUDENTS MUST RECEIVE APPROVAL OF A FULL REVIEW

#### **A. FULL REVIEW**

The student should submit the following (You **MUST** address each of the items. You may not address the items in exactly the way they are described here, for these are only suggestions. Make sure that your approach for each item makes sense for your research.):

1. **A Research Overview**, explaining the following (BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE):
  - a. The Nature And Purpose Of The Research: e.g. “My dissertation focuses on the relationship between ‘x’ and ‘y’. For my research on this relationship, I plan to interview 40 subjects regarding their perceptions of ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’.”
  - b. The Research Procedures: How will the research be conducted? What will it entail? e.g. “I will interview the subjects in their homes or a place of their own choosing. I intend only one interview per subject; the interview should last about one hour. I will take notes during the interview, I will only tape record the interview with the subject’s permission.”
  - c. Subject Recruitment And Selection: How will you generate a pool of subjects? How will you contact them?
  - d. Specify If You Have Any Relationship To These Subjects: e.g. teacher, pastor.
  - e. Risks And Benefits: State what benefits and what risks you perceive the research posing to the subjects.
  - f. Confidentiality and/or Anonymity: How will you preserve the confidentiality of the data and/or the anonymity of the subject and any factors that might identify a given subject?  
Consider the following questions in your overview:  
*How will data be stored? (The suggested standard is to: 1) store data in a secured/locked manner, and 2) store any key which links the data to the names or identifiers of subjects in a secured/locked manner away from the data)*  
*How long will the data be kept?*  
*How will data be destroyed?*  
*What will happen to the data if something happens to you, preventing you from taking the provisions outlined here?*  
*If appropriate, how will you collect and analyze the data to insure anonymity?*  
*If appropriate, how will you officially report the data to insure anonymity?*

- g. **Copyright Protection:** indicate on the consent form that you retain all intellectual and commercial rights to the interview, though you freely consent to give the subject free access to cite or quote the work for the informant's own purposes.
2. A draft **Consent Form**. The Consent Form should be written in lay person's language, with as little professional jargon as possible, so that a layperson/ subject can understand what participation in the research involves and consent (should they desire) to such participation. Please specify the following:
- The researcher's name and institutional affiliation, as well as the nature and purpose of the research. e.g. "My name is --- and I am a doctoral candidate at the GTU. I invite you to participate in research I am undertaking for my dissertation. I am examining how people think about 'x' in relation to 'y'..."
  - A statement of the procedures the research involves for the subject. e.g. An interview? How long? How many interviews? Where will they be held?
  - A statement of the risks and benefits of participation in the research to the subject.
  - A statement indicating how confidentiality and/or anonymity will be maintained. Include a section on the Consent Form **for subjects to agree or not agree to waive their right to confidentiality and/or anonymity**. Subjects should be informed of their rights, but by their signature on this section of the form make clear that they do not expect nor require confidentiality and/or anonymity.
  - A statement that the subject is free not to answer any specific question, and is free to terminate an interview or withdraw completely from the research at any time.
  - Include how a subject can contact the researcher, e.g. telephone number.
  - The form should end with a statement that the subject voluntarily and with understanding consents to participate, followed by signature and date lines.

The original Consent Form should be printed on GTU Letterhead.

The researcher should keep the Consent Form signed by the subject; a copy of the form should be given to the subject.

- A copy of the **survey instrument or schedule of interview questions** used in the research. If the instrument is not yet completed or the interview is to be open-ended, include some sample questions, indicating the nature of the information/data sought from the subject.
- A **statement from the student's advisor/coordinator** verifying that he/she has read and approves of the protocol being submitted. The advisor/coordinator can simply send a separate email to the Assistant Dean for verification.

### **DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING REVIEW MATERIALS**

Students should submit research material for review to the GTU Assistant Dean according to the following schedule:

**MA:** must submit the protocol and receive approval from the Human Subjects Protocol review committee before the start of field research;

**PhD:** must submit the protocol and receive approval from the Human Subjects Protocol review committee **after** successful completion of the comprehensive examinations and oral qualifying

examination, **before** the student's proposal presentation to the Doctoral Council **and before** the start of field research.

Students should use email to submit their materials. Students should first consult with the Assistant Dean and submit the first draft to her/him for review. The GTU Assistant Dean will work with the student on revisions, then will forward the second draft to members of the Review Committee, and assign one member to oversee the review process. Students may seek the assigned faculty member's advice on the second draft and/or ask questions.

### **COMPLETING THE PROCESS**

The lead faculty member will consult with the Review Committee and determine a result within three weeks of receiving the second draft. He/she will inform the GTU Assistant Dean regarding the status of the research materials. The materials may be approved "as is" or may require changes. Should any changes be stipulated, the thesis/dissertation coordinator will make sure revisions are made and notify the Assistant Dean by email. Finally, if materials are not approved, they will have to be substantially revised and re-submitted to the Committee via the GTU Assistant Dean.

**MA:** A copy of the approval email will be sent to the student, MA thesis coordinator, and Administrative Assistant to the Dean. The student should send the approved protocol and supporting documents to the Assistant Dean to be placed in his/her academic file.

**PhD:** A copy of the approval email will be sent to the student and doctoral dissertation coordinator. The student should include the final human subjects protocol approval email, along with a copy of the approved protocol and supporting documents, with the dissertation proposal materials for Doctoral Council review (and Area review, if the student receives approval in time).