Guidelines for Establishing a Research Participation Scheme for Students

The recruitment of students as participants in university research projects is a commonplace occurrence. In some disciplines, credit is given for participation. These Guidelines are provided to assist academic units and staff/research students to address the particular ethical issues, risks and potential educational benefits in using students as research participants. The Guidelines are in effect a set of principles for particular academic units or courses to follow when establishing their own policies and procedures for student involvement as research participants as part of, or ancillary to, their course of study.

1. The educational rationale for using students as research participants needs to be specified. It may include:

- A better understanding of how research generates knowledge.
- Direct experience of a research method(s) from a participant's point of view.
- Increase in content knowledge and exposure to 'cutting edge' research.
- Appreciation of issues in human research ethics.

2. The relationship of the rationale to particular course learning outcomes needs to be specified.

3. There needs to be a clear process for students to consolidate and reflect on the learning gained from participation (e.g. an educational debriefing).

4. Where participation is for credit there needs to be a clear alternative provided which involves no more effort or time than participating in the research.

5. Credit should only be given where there is a clear relationship between participation in research and course objectives/outcomes.

6. Academics should avoid recruiting their own students in class or using class time to complete aspects of the research. Exceptions to this may be when the class itself is the focus of the research or when the research is used for educational purposes within the class.

7. The system for administering student research participation should include:

- A register of eligible research (and processes for registering).
- A register of subjects/courses where student research participation is authorised.
- A process for signing up for research.
- A transparent process for mapping credit against time taken
- A process for the notification of credit.
- Advice to researchers/participants on providing notice of cancellation of appointments.