

Grand Valley State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Title: <i>Recruitment, Selection and Payments to Research Participants</i>	
Section: 750.	This policy and procedure supersedes those previously
Approved by HRRC: 09/13/2011 Revised: 09/10/2013 Reviewed: 10/28/2014 Revised by HRRPPC: 04/24/2018 Revised by IRBPPC: 10/20/2023	Approved by RIO/HRPA: 09/23/2011 Revisions Approved: 09/10/2013 Revisions approved by AIO/RIO: 05/23/2018 Revisions approved by AIO/RIO: 11/06/2023
Effective Date: 11/06/2023	
Related documents: <i>120: Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations</i> <i>720: Assessing Risk to Vulnerable Participants</i> <i>730: Collection, Management and Security of Research Information</i> <i>OP-5: Business & Finance Procedure 305 on Payment to Human Participants</i> <i>SLT Policy 6.30: Gift Cards, Gifts and Prizes Policy</i>	

Policy

1. It is IRB policy to evaluate for approval all planned protocol recruitment methods including appropriateness of materials, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and incentive and compensation components.
2. The GVSU commitment to diversity and inclusion includes the expectation that researchers will make reasonable efforts to assure open access to research opportunities. However, efforts to be broadly inclusive and representative *are required* if there is potential direct benefit to those participating in the research. Broad inclusivity is *not required* for research in which direct benefit to participants is not anticipated.
3. All recruitment activities involving an individual located outside the United States must comply with the data protection regulations of the recruitment location. See *IRB Policy 120: Compliance with applicable laws and regulations* for more details.

Procedures

1. Equitable Recruitment and Selection
 - a. For protocols that hold the prospect of a potential benefit or risk of harm to research participants, the IRB is required to evaluate the planned recruitment and selection procedures for fairness. Generally, both the risks and benefits of potentially beneficial research should be shared equitably by those most likely to benefit from the research.
 - b. For studies that do not hold the prospect of potential benefit or risk of harm to participants and for which the principal anticipated benefit is increased general knowledge, these considerations are not required except insofar as relevant for establishing the scientific validity of study results.

1. Participants targeted for enrollment should be appropriate for answering the research question.
2. Any inclusion or exclusion criteria should be intended to minimize potential risks and distribute potential benefits to participants by fair means (e.g. not intentionally excluding underrepresented groups or difficult to include groups for convenience). Persons who are unable to comprehend English must not be excluded from research opportunities solely on that basis if there is the potential for direct benefit to the participants.
3. Recruiting and selection methods, including incentives and compensation components, should be free from the appearance and fact of coercion and undue influence, especially if a prior relationship with the researcher exists (e.g. employer, course instructor, social network, etc.).
4. If vulnerable persons are included in the research, additional protections from risks should be included as appropriate. *See IRB Policy 720: Assessing Risk to Vulnerable Participants.*

2. Advertising Materials

- a. All advertisements planned for the recruiting of research participants in non-exempt protocols must be approved by the IRB prior to use. Any changes made following approval must be re-approved prior to implementation. For exempt protocols, the planned recruitment materials must be submitted as part of the protocol. If any changes are needed to the materials after the official exempt determination has been made by the IRB, researchers are instructed to follow *IRB Policy 1010: Modifications to Approved Protocols* to determine if IRB review is required.
- b. The key features evaluated include the following:
 1. Materials clearly state that *research participation* is being solicited.
 2. Materials do not contain misleading statements. Statements describing potential risks or benefits from participation in research, or from study results, are accurate and are consistent.
 3. Incentives or compensation for participation are not inappropriately emphasized.
 4. Communication materials and processes are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
 5. Reasonable efforts are made to be broadly inclusive such that risks and benefits are appropriately shared among those most likely to benefit from the results of the research.

3. Payments to Research Participants

- a. Payments to research participants are of two types: mild incentives involving nominal value, and compensation that is calculated based on total time, effort, costs and inconvenience involved in participating. The IRB will consider the amount and schedule of incentives and compensation, along with the characteristics of the participant population, in assessing the appearance or fact of undue influence or coercion.
- b. Types of payment
 1. **Incentives** may be cash (checks, money orders, gift cards) or gifts of nominal value (e.g., GVSU merchandise) that are not, in and of themselves, anticipated to influence an individual to participate in the research against his or her best interests. Incentives should be briefly mentioned in any recruiting materials for the study and clearly described in the consent document, if any.
 2. **Compensation** typically is made in the form of cash equivalent gifts (i.e. retail merchant gift cards). In rare circumstances, cash may be used as compensation. Compensation payments must be described in detail in the consent document, including pro-rated payment schedules if the participant withdraws before the completion of the study. Any researcher-initiated changes concerning payments, including changes to the payment schedule, must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
 3. In most cases, compensation payments (if any) should be made at a rate consistent with the time and expectations of the participant's research activities, including travel time.
- c. Payment to research participants must follow all university policies and procedures, including the GVSU Business and Finance Office's [Payments to Human Participants](#) and [SLT Policy 6.30: Gift Cards, Gifts and Prizes Policy](#). In some cases, private personal information may need to be collected from the participant to facilitate the payment. Therefore, assurances to participants of confidentiality of the information provided should be carefully worded.