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Mission

The Office of Research Integrity ensures research at Ball State University is in compliance with university policies and with applicable provisions of federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The ORI provides guidance to the BSU Research Community for research issues like:

- Significant Financial Conflict of Interest
- Human Subject Participation
- Use and Care of Animals
- Biosafety
- Radiation Safety
- Lab Safety and Security
- Controlled Substances

The Office of Research Integrity also offers a number of services for students, faculty, and researchers, including:

- Training and education
- Class/group presentations
- One-on-one or small group consultations
- Technical support for researchers
- Online guidance materials
- Online resources

Coming This Fall—Graduate Student Help Line!

Can’t make it to office hours? Is your question too complicated for an email? Starting Fall 2014, the Office of Research Integrity will be launching a Graduate Student Help Line for all of your IRB-related questions. Students will be able to speak with a graduate student or leave a voicemail with questions about their protocols or to set up an appointment to ask questions and get help. The Graduate Student Help Line is the newest addition to our outreach program, which includes the Peer Mentoring, the ORIhelp email, and the Education Gateway on our website.
Social Media in Human Subjects Research: What is Public Space?

It used to be that public space was easily defined: behaviors that took place at a coffee shop, park, or shopping mall were considered fair game for observational research. Today, with new social media sites and apps popping up constantly, the idea of “public space” takes on a new meaning. Are the rants we post on Facebook equivalent to complaining loudly to a restaurant employee? There are a few important factors that go in to making this determination.

Generally speaking, sites and apps that require a login or registration to view content are not available for “public” use. For example, Facebook settings set to “friends only” would not be accessible without consent, but public Facebook posts could potentially be used for research purposes. All posts made on Twitter are considered publicly available.

So what exactly does this mean for researchers? The IRB is working to put out a formal policy on the subject. In the meantime, researchers can follow a few simple guidelines on which the research community has found consensus.

♦ Any interaction or intervention with human subjects, in person or online, requires approval. This includes direct interaction with online identities or manipulation of the subject’s virtual environment.
♦ If researchers are required to log in to a site or app to see information that is posted, it should NOT be considered public and would require consent from the individual who posted it.
♦ Researchers should read, understand, and comply with ALL terms of service and privacy policies of any site or app they choose to use.

Some sites have tight restrictions on using their data for research. Keep an eye out for the IRB’s new policy on publicly-available data and its use in human subjects research. And as always, contact us if you have questions or would like further clarification on our new policies.

Field Safety Guide Book

Teaching and research at Ball State are becoming increasingly important, as is the need for guidance in this area. The Office of Research Integrity has recently put together a guide book for students and faculty involved in field work. The guide includes information on responsibilities of involved parties, general safety guidelines, and safety plans for researchers in the field. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this guide book if you will be involved with field research in any capacity at Ball State.

www.bsu.edu/researchintegrity
Current Events

Boston College has been making headlines for a recent breach in confidentiality. The college’s history department had been interviewing individuals involved in violence in Northern Ireland. After a legal battle, police in Northern Ireland gained access to tapes of the interviews, and some of the individuals who spoke about their involvement in the violence are now facing prosecution for their alleged crimes. The individuals are blaming researchers at Boston College, stating that they were not informed that their interviews could potentially be used in court. This news has a big impact on researchers collecting sensitive information. Research participants voluntarily disclosing personal or sensitive information must be protected by researchers. While confidentiality between researchers and participants is not protected by the law, as the Boston College historians realized, participants being asked to disclose potentially sensitive information must be made aware of all potential risks.

You can access the complete news article here, courtesy of BBC.

Parting Words of Wisdom from the GA’s
Guest Columnists: Katey Quigley and Natalie Bruick, Graduate Assistants

As students, researchers, and graduate assistants working in the Office of Research Integrity, we’ve gained a unique and interesting perspective on what it means to do human subjects research within the university setting. During our assistantships, we have had the opportunity to collaborate with the Institutional Review Board, serve as student members on subcommittees of the IRB, and ask tons of questions about the behind-the-scenes work that is involved in reviewing research protocols. These experiences have not only been valuable to our careers as student researchers, but have also given us a lot to consider as we take the next steps in our careers.

Working in this office has put a face on what protection for human research subjects really means. Because many of the protocols that come through this office involve students, we have been able to provide an “insider perspective” to faculty members of the IRB. We’ve also been able to examine the kind of impact that our research studies can have on students. It’s exciting to think about doing research on sensitive topics, but it’s also important to see participants as people and acknowledge that collecting their information does sometimes involve actual risk.

The most rewarding aspect of working in this office has been outreach for students. As students ourselves, take our word for it—the IRB is not as scary as it might seem! Our focus over the last two years has been on making the Office of Research Integrity accessible to both faculty and student researchers. We have started up our Peer Mentoring Program and added tons of educational materials to our website. Currently we are in the process of developing a Graduate Student HelpLine for quick questions about IRBNet and creating a research proposal. We have worked tirelessly to open up our office as an friendly resource for all research-related questions.

As we near graduation and wrap up our current projects, it’s amazing to look back at our first few weeks in this office and see how far we’ve come. And of course, we would like to especially thank the members of our office—Chris, John, Jen, and Sandy—for their patience, guidance, and Pizza Fridays!
New Additions to our Team

As of the beginning of summer semester, we would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest member of our team, Sandra Currie. Sandra will be working in our office as our new Administrative Coordinator.

As summer comes to an end, we will be saying goodbye to our two graduate assistants, Katey Quigley and Natalie Bruick. Katey has been running the Peer Mentoring Program and has served on the IRB Policy Subcommittee as a student member. Natalie has dutifully attended all IRB meetings and has done much of the behind-the-scenes work on the new IACUC policies. We will miss them both and wish them best of luck in their future endeavors.

Upcoming IRB Meeting Dates and Deadlines

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Office of Research Integrity Staff

Christopher Mangelli, Director
John Mulcahy, Associate Director
Jennifer Weaver, Administrator
Sandra Currie, Administrative Coordinator
Katey Quigley, Graduate Assistant
Natalie Bruick, Graduate Assistant

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