

Research and Instruction in Research Methodology

AA108

Last Reviewed: July 2015

Intent

The University of California has a tripartite mission: *research, teaching* and *public service*. UCLA Extension is a teaching arm of the University, although its role as a leader in professional and continuing education is also widely viewed as an expression of UC's *public service* mission. *Research*, the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, is not generally viewed as part of Extension's role, but it can intersect with its *teaching* and *public service* missions.

Extension's teaching portfolio includes courses in which *research methodology* may be taught, even as University policy does not provide for research by Extension students. The principal purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to distinguish instruction in *research methodology* from *research* thereby ensuring compliance. The policy also draws attention to University policy as it applies to research-based public service projects Extension may undertake, and to describe internal review and approval process for such projects.

This policy further identifies those with delegated responsibility for conducting *market research*, affirms the ethical standards by which Extension tests its marketing strategies, and identifies to whom responsibility is delegated for surveying staff, students and instructors reflecting our commitment to the continuous improvement of service.

Definitions

- **Research.** “A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. . . .”¹
- **Human Subject.** “A living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information.”²
- **Consent.** The process by which a prospective research participant is informed about the nature of a study, including but not limited to why it is being undertaken, what he or she will be asked to do, an explanation of participants' rights, and a disclosure of potential risks and benefits either to the participant or to others.

¹ Definition per US *Department of Health and Human Services* regulation [45 CFR 46.102](#).

² *Idem*.

- **Institutional Review Board (IRB).** A board organized to oversee ethical conduct and the safety and welfare of participants in biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects. IRBs operate under authority of the University, the regulations of multiple federal agencies arising from the *National Research Act of 1974*, and principles outlined in the *Belmont Report of 1978*. UCLA's five IRBs meet twice monthly to review proposed research projects and studies which are underway.
- **Instruction in Research Methodology.** "Methods Courses" present theory and techniques about *how* research is conducted in the related field.
- **By-Agreement Instructor.** An instructor at UCLA Extension who has been contracted to teach a class. All Extension instructors proposed to teach credit-bearing classes are subject to academic approval.

Research Methodology: *Classroom Exercises*

UCLA Extension's by-agreement instructors are not eligible or authorized to conduct research or to oversee research conducted by Extension students. Instruction in methodology is permissible.

Interaction. Class-based exercises proposed by Extension *by-agreement instructors* that involve any of the following types of interaction may be presented as practice exercises *to teach proficiency and technique*:

- surveying,
- conducting interviews or focus groups
- observing participants

Under no circumstances will websites be used for the recruitment of participants or the collection of data. Prospective participants in practice exercises will be advised that participation is voluntary, and that if they agree to participate they would be engaged in an activity to help a student learn and practice data collection methods to satisfy a requirement for a class. Prospective participants will be provided with an [Information Sheet](#) describing the class exercise.

Data Analysis. Class-based exercises proposed by Extension *by-agreement instructors* for the analysis of data may not employ databases containing personally identifiable information of real persons. Practice exercises will either use simulated data, or data that is stripped of identifiers and sensitive information.

Approval of the CE must be obtained before any practice exercise can be expressed in a course syllabus or announced in class.

To ensure that classroom exercises designed to teach research methodology do not inadvertently transmute into a prohibited form of research:

- The instructor- of- record will declare in his/her draft syllabus the intent to conduct such an exercise.
- The CE will either approve or not approve of the exercise as a legitimate component of the course based on the course description and its underlying *academic approval*.
- If approved, the syllabus will link to a template *Information Sheet* and *Letter of Introduction*. It will disclose to prospective participants that the activity is for *research-methods practice*;
- If approved, practice instruments and questionnaires proposed by Extension students must be approved by the instructor before presented to prospective participants.

Company-Sponsored Practicums

UCLA Extension may present a credit-bearing practicum as a capstone course in a certificate curriculum, in which a cohort of students is presented with a problem or question by a company about its products, services or business practice. The cohort reviews data presented by the company, and the students present a report in which solutions are proposed. The instructor will grade the students based on the quality of their engagement and other academic criteria defined in the syllabus.

For such projects, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the University (UCLA Extension) and the company will exist before the offering of the course. In addition to its other provisions, the MOU will include declarations and provisions as follows:

- A declaration that the students' work is performed as an educational exercise under the supervision of the instructor for the purpose of earning credit toward an academic certificate; that the students' work-product is not subject to publication; and that the students' work-product may be presented to company representatives who seek to improve their business practice.
- The company will not provide students with data that contains personally identifiable information about its employees, clients, visitors, suppliers or other populations;
- With the approval of the company representative, the students may practice research methods by engaging in data collection that involves interaction, such as interviewing, observing, surveying or use of focus groups drawing from employee, client, visitor, supplier or other populations. Prospective participants will be provided with an approved *Information Sheet* and *Letter of Introduction* about the exercise describing its dual purpose: 1) to provide the students with experience and 2) to provide the company with information for improving business practice. The *Information Sheet* and any interview or survey questions

will be subject to the approval of the instructor and the company representative before volunteer participants are recruited.

- That any supplies and services required by the activity, including any access to the company's proprietary intranet services, will be at company expense and with the permission of the company representative. *No public internet service or University resource may be used for the recruitment of participants in any practice survey or interview activities.*
- Identification of ownership of the intellectual property in materials, reports, and student-work product, which unless specified otherwise, will be owned collectively by the students.
- A declaration that the University does not warrant the utility of the students' work-product, and will therefore not indemnify the company against damage or loss if the company elects to put recommendations from that work into use;
- Other provisions on the advice of University counsel.

The syllabus of the practicum/course will be included as an exhibit of the MOU. To properly inform enrolled and prospective students, the syllabus will include information regarding the intellectual property rights of student- product and other rights and restrictions about their study that is expressed in the MOU.

Instructor Contract

UCLA Extension's *Instructor Guide* serves as a codicil to contracts for its *by-agreement* instructors. The *Guide* will contain the following text to illustrate requirements for exercises in *research methodology*.

Exercises in Research Methodology

In certain credit-bearing courses, practice exercises in *research methodology* may be appropriate. If you propose to include any exercises for your students that involve interaction such as *interviewing*, the formation or use of *focus groups*, *surveying* and the use of *questionnaires*, an *observation exercise*, or the analysis of databases with demographic information, consult with your CE in advance.

- He or she will either approve or not approve the exercise as a legitimate component of the course based on the course description and its underlying *academic approval*.
- If approved, your syllabus will disclose that the activity is intended for *practice*, that there is no intent to publish findings, that data collected will be turned in to you at the end of class then destroyed; and that any data analysis exercises about persons will employ *faux data*, or data stripped of *personally identifiable information*;
- Practice *instruments* and *questionnaires* proposed by your students will be approved by you before presentation to volunteer participants;

- Your syllabus will link to a template *Information Sheet* for use by your students.

Training and Public Service Research

UCLA [Policy 900](#) provides that “A full-time UCLA employee who is a member of the University Extension Specialist series (i.e. Continuing Educator) may serve as Principal Investigator (or Project Director or Project Administrator) on a training and public service project conducted under the purview of University Extension.” Proposals to lead such projects are subject to the review and approval of the *Program Department Director* and *Associate Dean of Academic Programs* with respect to *conflict of commitment*; and to the review and approval of the *Associate Dean of Administration* with respect to continuous compliance with UCLA Contract and Grant policy and practice.

The *Dean of Continuing Education and Extension* has the authority to designate persons in positions other than Continuing Educator as a *Principle Investigator* to administer a contract or grant.

Market Research and Administrative Research

Market and Opinion Research. Extension’s *Executive Director of Marketing* is responsible for proposing, managing and overseeing projects, conducted in-house and by vendors, that measure students’ and prospective students’ interests in and preferences for educational services. Market research at UCLA Extension is conducted in accordance with provisions of the *Code of Standards and Ethics for Market, Opinion and Social Research of CASRO*,³ and the *International Code on Market and Social Research of ICC/ESOMAR*.⁴

Course and Instructor Evaluation. Under the direction of its academic leadership, UCLA Extension routinely asks its students to provide anonymous feedback regarding their learning experience. The data collected are used for quality assurance and quality improvement. Participation in the process is voluntary and anonymous whether conducted online or in person. Compiled results are not shared with instructors until final grades have been posted thus eliminating risk of retaliation. In addition to the standardized evaluation process, the Deans Office may from time to time authorize other studies for the quality improvement of continuing education administration, instruction, and adult/non-traditional learning.

³ The Council of American Survey Research Organizations

⁴ European Society for Opinion and Market Research. The code was developed jointly with ICC, the International Chamber of Commerce.

References and Listing

This policy will be publicly listed. Questions and comments are welcomed by the *Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Office of the Dean, Continuing Education and UCLA Extension*, (310) 825-2362; DeansOffice@uclaextension.edu.

See also:

- University of California [Mission Statement](#) .
- UCLA Policy 900 [Principle Investigator Eligibility](#).
- UCLA Policy 991 [Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#)
- UCLA Policy 996. [Ownership of Creative Work Submitted by Students](#)
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. [The Belmont Report](#), April 1979.
- European Society for Opinion and Market Research; [ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research](#).
- The Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO); [Code of Standards and Ethics for Market, Opinion and Social Research](#).
- [UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program](#)