

Permission to Conduct Research: *A Policy*  
First-Year Writing Program  
NC State University

The First-Year Writing Program at NC State recognizes the importance of research on the teaching of writing. All researchers, including faculty, staff, and students, on- and off-campus, regardless of funding support, must secure Program permission before soliciting participants and beginning data collection.

### **For Human-Subjects Research**

Researchers who wish to conduct human-subjects research in a First-Year Writing classroom—with instructors, with students, or through collection of texts composed for a First-Year Writing class—must be granted approval to conduct this research from NC State’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). This requirement applies to all human subjects research at the university. Please see the [“Human Subjects \(IRB\) website](#) for details.

Whether researchers are seeking IRB approval for research that is considered for an Exempt Review, Expedited Review, or Full Review, the First-Year Writing Program must approve all human subjects research.

Often, IRB reviewers expect gatekeeper permission to be granted before the IRB application is submitted. Prior to IRB submission, researchers should submit a proposal to conduct program research to the Program Director. In ideal cases, the proposal will be reviewed by the First-Year Writing Program Council. Permission to conduct research is granted by majority vote.

Research proposals should include the following information, much of which will be required as a part of the IRB application:

1. Short descriptions of the following:
  - a. how the research will advance knowledge in the field and/or improve instruction for these or future students and/or instructors;
  - b. how participants will be selected and recruited;
  - c. how the researcher will compensate the participants for their time on the project, if relevant;
  - d. the classes and dates in which the research will be conducted;
  - e. how consent from students and/or instructors will be secured and their confidentiality protected;
  - f. if you are a student (undergraduate or graduate), your supervising faculty member's name; and
  - g. justification outlining potential benefits to the program or its stakeholders (students, instructors, etc.).
2. Once Program permission is granted, researchers should then apply to the NC State IRB for approval to complete the study.

3. Once researchers are granted IRB approval, they may solicit participants and begin data collection.

The First-Year Writing Council typically meets once a month during regular fall and spring semesters. Researchers should plan to allow a minimum of two weeks between submitting their proposals for review and notification from the Director.

We understand that circumstances of timing may not allow for a full Program Council review. In the cases where researchers seek permission outside of regular academic semesters, such as during the summer or between the fall and spring semesters, or in other such circumstances when review may be needed quickly, the Program Director will make the decision.

Proposals may be approved without revisions, approved pending revisions, or rejected.

### **For Research Exempt from IRB Approval**

There are some circumstances where researchers may not need IRB approval to collect data in the First-Year Writing Program: 1) In the case of surveys (and other simple and anonymous instruments) intended solely for curriculum development and 2) by a student as a part of an assignment in a NC State course. In both cases, the researcher must still gain approval from the Program Director before soliciting participants and collecting data. Researchers must submit by email, to the Program Director, the following information:

1. a short description of the research/data collection method(s);
2. a guarantee of the anonymity of the participants;
3. a timeline for research/data collection; and
4. for undergraduate and graduate students: list the supervising faculty member and include that person's email address and phone number.

This process for research approval applies only to students and faculty who wish to conduct research in the First-Year Writing Program, with program faculty, with students in First-Year Writing classes, or on instructional or student-created documents related to the program. Please see [this SPARCs website](#) for a full description of expectations for research conducted as a part of class projects.

Researchers who believe that their research might lead to dissemination—in conference presentations or through publication, for example—must contact the Institutional Review Board to discuss the possibility of gaining retroactive IRB approval and must notify the Program Director. Human-subjects research conducted without IRB approval, even if conducted as a part of regular classroom activities, cannot be shared outside of the classroom or administrative setting.

All researchers must make their research available to the Program Director in the form of a final research report, submitted at the conclusion of data collection. Research reports should include the following elements: an introduction describing the context and purpose for the research; a description of methods; a results section describing response rates and other data features; a discussion of preliminary findings/interpretation of results; and a brief conclusion, including any recommendations for action. If the research results in a report for other stakeholders, grantees, organizations, etc., that report may be submitted instead, granted it contains the same information listed above. Capstones and dissertations may be submitted in full or summarized.

Please forward all questions to the Program Director, [Casie Fedukovich](#).

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