1.0 POLICY

1.1 Background.

1.1.1 The University of Alabama (UA) values student learning about research, the strategy of learning by doing, and the satisfying research relationships that may develop between students and faculty working together on a research study. However, students are a vulnerable population in a subordinate relationship to a faculty member whose rights must be protected.

1.2 This policy does not apply to students conducting research exercises or small studies within courses as a learning strategy not intended to result in information to be disseminated outside of the course; students participating in research through research subject pools; or to students doing pilot studies for their own thesis or dissertation, or research for honors program credit. (Consult online documents display for other policies, forms, and guidance related to student research.)

1.3 Policy Statement

1.3.1 It is the policy of the University of Alabama that all faculty using students as participants or paid or unpaid assistants in their research shall protect the rights of those students as a vulnerable population. This also applies to faculty who may wish to publish the results of various patient/client assessments performed by students as part of their learning or as community service as research. The power differential in these circumstances is heavily in favor of the faculty.

1.3.2 Faculty using students as paid or unpaid assistants shall provide or require the necessary training in the responsible conduct of research and supervise student work to insure adherence to the approved protocol and the ethical principles of the University of Alabama.

1.3.3 Faculty using students as human research participants shall inform them of the means of submitting questions, suggestions, complaints, and concerns about their experiences provided on the Research Compliance Office Outreach website and of the availability of the Survey for Participants in UA-Sponsored Research available online at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html.
1.3.4 As part of the Human Research Protection Program’s efforts to promote an ethical climate, faculty using students as paid or unpaid assistants are urged to acknowledge student assistants’ significant contributions to the research in an appropriate fashion.

1.3.5 The HRPP shall assist faculty using students as research participants and paid or unpaid research assistants by providing policies, templates, consultation about protocols, and other educational resources.

1.3.6 The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) shall include assessments of students’ experiences as research participants and paid or unpaid research assistants in its procedures and evaluations.

1.4 Objective.

1.4.1 The purposes of this policy are to ensure that the rights of students as human research participants in a faculty member’s research or serving as paid or unpaid research assistants will be adequately protected, and that PIs and the HRPP facilitate faculty and research students in acquiring the necessary knowledge for the responsible conduct of research.

1.4.2 Responsibility.

1.4.3 The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Vice President for Research and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Enabling parties include the Research Compliance Officer, department chairs and faculty investigators, and students.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 Faculty Seeking Course Students as Research Participants

2.1.1 Faculty investigators should avoid personal solicitation of students in their courses as research participants. Possibilities for doing this include asking a faculty colleague to explain the study and obtain informed consents; explaining one’s own study but asking a colleague to obtain informed consents, or referring students to a document, bulletin board, or website that explains the study and provides information about how to give consent.

2.1.2 Regardless of the medium by which studies are explained to prospective student participants, students should be strongly assured that participation or non-participation will have no effect on their course grades or their relationships with the faculty investigator.

2.1.3 If the research is a study of teaching strategies or teaching technology, consider whether the research may qualify for exempt status and request that status with justification in terms of the criteria for exemption from IRB review. If it is likely that the study is eligible for expedited review, request consideration for that status and justify the request.
2.1.4 If a study involves audio taping, videotaping, or taking photos of classroom behavior, explain the nature, use, distribution, storage, and destruction of those images to the students. The consent form should include either a prominent statement that consent for participation in the study includes permission to use audiotapes, videotapes or photographs for the stated purposes, or a separate consent form for the use of images should be provided.

2.1.5 Students should be informed that the HRPP may contact them about their experience as research participants as part of the evaluation of the HRPP/IRB and the quality improvement plan.

2.2 Students Serving As Paid or Unpaid Research Assistants

2.2.1 In the investigator’s IRB protocol, provide:

2.2.1.1 A clear statement of what student assistants will be assigned to do and the needed qualifications for performing these tasks. For example, one could say that students must be majors in the field of study, have completed certain courses or a certain number of hours of study in the field, or have certain professional credentials, say, be registered nurses or licensed dieticians.

2.2.1.2 A statement that and description of how students will be trained for their roles on the study team. This should include completion or maintenance of IRB-required training for investigators, HIPAA training if relevant, and measures in effect to protect access to data and provide privacy and confidentiality to human participants, as well as training in how to perform their particular tasks. Use of educational materials such as assigned readings, resources on the HRPP/IRB website, and visits to other websites are encouraged.

2.2.1.3 A description of how and by whom students will be supervised during the project. This description could include such elements as a weekly review of student work by the PI or a senior staff member, accompanying or videotaping students on home visits, or a weekly staff meeting to discuss progress and problems.

2.2.1.4 A description of how students may contact the investigator about problems, especially if students are working in field settings or with vulnerable populations.

2.2.1.5 A statement that students will be told that the HRPP may contact them about their experiences as research assistants on this study.

2.2.2 With paid student assistants, review the contents of FORM: Certification of Responsibilities of a Graduate Research Assistant and Graduate Teaching Assistant Employed on Grants, Contracts, and Other Sponsored Projects, covering scientific integrity, intellectual property and restrictions on student use of study data.

2.2.2.1 Answer any questions the student has about the meaning of the contract.

2.2.2.2 Have the student sign the contract, give the student a copy, and file a copy in your records.
3.0 REFERENCES

3.1 45 CFR §46.103(b)(4)
3.2 45 CFR §46.103(b)(5)
3.3 21 CFR §56.108(a)
3.4 21 CFR §56.108(b)

4.0 RELATED SECTIONS

4.1 FORM: Certification of Responsibilities of a Graduate Research Assistant and Graduate Teaching Assistant Employed on Grants, Contracts, and Other Sponsored Projects Student contract
4.2 POLICY: Faculty Use of Students as Human Research Participants and Paid or Unpaid Assistants In Their Research
4.3 POLICY: Student Research at the University of Alabama
4.4 POLICY: Protection of Children In Research
4.5 GUIDANCE: Student Researchers and Student Research Participants At UA
4.6 FORM: Survey for Participants In UA-Sponsored Research Studies
4.7 FORM: Report of Complaint or Concern About Research Study