

Department	Activity	Topic
Research & Development	Experimental Research	Protection of Research Participants; Ethics

Created by Chandon	Academic Director ISSRC	March 2012
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Protection of Research Participants

Purpose

INSEAD researchers enjoy access to a wide variety of data sources, enabling high quality research. We enjoy this access largely because the people and companies from whom we collect data trust us. This document sets forth explicit guidelines for the protection of individual research participants. The purpose of the policy is to protect not only our research participants but also ourselves as researchers, the school, and our future access to the research participants we will need to continue our work.

Coverage

This policy applies to all INSEAD faculty members, research staff, doctoral students, research fellows, and staff members conducting research. It also applies to all visiting faculty members or faculty members from collaborating institutions conducting research on INSEAD premises. It includes all research¹ with human participants, including INSEAD students and executive education participants².

Principles for Protection of Research Participants

Ethical Review. All research with human participants or the use of personal data, regardless of whether it is conducted online or off-line, requires an ethical review. Failure to submit research with human participants for ethical review, or providing incorrect information during ethical review, will be notified to the Dean of Faculty.

¹ Research is defined as systematic investigation designed to develop or to contribute to generalised knowledge. Interactions with students in the context of a course for pedagogical purposes (e.g., direct questioning, in-class or online polls, observations) are not considered as research here.

² Human participants is defined as a living individual from or about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction, or identifiable private information.

Minimize risk. Participation in research should not reasonably place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, reputation, or physical or psychological well-being. Moreover, participants should not be subjected to unusual stress.

Informed consent. Participation in studies involving factors that may create more than minimal risk (defined later) should be voluntary. Participants should receive an explanation of the nature of the research, the procedures in which they will be asked to participate, any possible benefits or risks with their participation, the steps that will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of their data, and how their data will be used and stored.

When the same type of research is conducted repeatedly with the same participants (e.g., students during the duration of a course), it is not necessary to inform the participants each time a new study is conducted. It is sufficient to inform the participants once (e.g., in the syllabus) about the type of research that will be conducted in the classroom as long as they have the option to opt out with no penalty.

Debriefing. Studies involving factors that may create more than minimal risk (defined later) must include written or oral debriefing. The goal of the debriefing is to explain what the study wanted to show. The debriefing needs to be in a language that the participants can understand and relate to. The debriefing can be communicated either directly to participants after the study, or after the data collection is finished (under the condition that the delay is no longer than four weeks from the date of completion of the study). Furthermore, the debriefing should mention the name and number of a contact person.

Protection of data. Private data should be stored in such a way that they are protected from unauthorized access. Data that are no longer needed should be destroyed. Researchers should prevent linking people's data with any identifying information and should store data without identifiers whenever possible. Researchers must explain to participants how their data will be used and stored.

Information requests. Upon requests from participants, researchers should provide a summary of the research in a reasonable time period after the completion of the research.

Principal Investigator. For any study one Principal Investigator (PI) will be explicitly named. The Principal Investigator is always a faculty member from INSEAD, a faculty from a school with explicit research collaboration with INSEAD (e.g., HEC), or an INSEAD PhD student who has been qualified for PhD candidacy by her or his area. PhD students who have not yet been qualified for PhD candidacy must list a faculty member as PI. The PI is responsible for verifying that everybody involved in the research follows the ethical guidelines.

Participant compensation. The willingness to volunteer to take part in research may be unduly influenced by the expectation of benefits or rewards. Payments made to individuals must be stated explicitly before participating in the study, including the show-up fee that participants will obtain if they are excluded from the study (this only applies for off-line studies). Payment must not be so large as to induce the individuals to risk harm beyond that which they would usually undertake.

Procedure for reporting problems. If there is reason to believe that a participant is suffering or has suffered any harm, anticipated or not, as a result of participation, if new, unanticipated risks become evident, the researchers must suspend the research and contact the ISSRC. The researcher may not resume until approval is given to proceed.

Definition of Minimal Risk

Research conducted at INSEAD should not create more than minimal risk for the participants and the researchers. Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

These are some of the factors that may create more than minimal risk for the participants or the researchers:

Research involving **vulnerable groups** – for example, children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship. Students who are being evaluated by a member of the research team are considered a vulnerable group.

Research involving **sensitive topics** – for example participants' sexual behaviour, their illegal or political behaviour, their experience of violence, their abuse or exploitation, their mental health.

Research involving groups where **permission of a gatekeeper** is normally required for initial access to members – for example research in communities where access to research participants is not possible without the permission of another adult, such as another family member or a community leader.

Research involving **deception** or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out.

Research involving access to records of **personal** or **confidential** information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals

Research which would induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation.

Research involving **intrusive interventions** – for example, the administration of drugs or other substances, vigorous physical exercise, or techniques such as hypnotherapy.