



ACADEMY *of* ART UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED IN SAN FRANCISCO 1929 BY ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS

**Institutional Review Board**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**2017-2018**

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## **Introduction and Overview**

### ***Objectives and Philosophies***

The purpose of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Review Guidelines at the Academy of Art University (AAU) is to safeguard the physical, social, and emotional well being of human research subjects. Human research subjects are individuals from whom information is obtained by AAU researchers. The information is used as primary research in the preparation of masters' theses, final or independent projects. Methods used to obtain information from human subjects may include surveys and qualitative studies such as interviews, paper inventories or questionnaires, or Internet surveys.

The Institutional Review Board consists of the Executive Vice President for Compliance and Review, the Vice President of Academic Administration, the Director of Graduate Student Services, the Director of Institutional Research and the director of the academic department that is supervising the research.

Three main principles are involved in protecting research subjects:

- 1) *Full disclosure* of all aspects of the research process including how the information will be used and how it will be archived.
- 2) *Confidentiality* of research data. Most research conducted at AAU involves minimal risk. If applications to the IRB contain evidence of full disclosure and confidentiality and are complete, the review process can be accomplished within five (5) business days. It is essential that the application be reviewed and approved (or identify specific areas of rework needed) in a timely manner to facilitate the progress of the research. Applications requiring rework need to be returned promptly and a deadline given to make necessary changes and resubmit the application.
- 3) *Standardization* – Procedures for working with human subjects apply to students. Students in the University who are conducting research using human subjects such as focus groups or interviews will be expected to follow the standardized policies and procedures of the AAU Institutional Review Board.

## **Guidelines**

The Guidelines will serve to standardize the procedures from applying for permission to work with human subjects in graduate and/or other University research through the entire process including how to go about archiving the completed consent forms.

The Procedures are intended to address the following areas:

- *Who* – The guidelines apply to students who are actively engaged in working with human subjects for the purpose of graduate research that intends to capture individual opinions or reactions.
- *What* – The process itself is spelled out in terms of specific steps and corresponding documentation.
- *Why* – The IRB exists to safeguard the physical, social and emotional well-being of individuals who are being asked to participate in academic research projects such as a Master’s Thesis or Project. The IRB also exists to ensure that research is conducted following standardized procedures to ensure that the University’s good name and reputation is preserved.
- *How* – The IRB has instituted procedures (discussed in the next section) that apply to all forms of research. The procedures guide the process from application to archiving of the materials at the end of the research.

## ***Procedures***

### **Step 1:**

The student (“Applicant”) submits one (1) copy of the Application Memo [Exhibit 1] to the IRB for review by email: [irb@academyart.edu](mailto:irb@academyart.edu) including:

- Memo describing the nature of the research and explaining why human subjects are essential to the research. The memo should also include the name and contact information of the department director.
- Copies of surveys, tests, questionnaires and other instruments which will be used to gather information.
- Permission letters from organizations [Exhibit 2] where subjects will be obtained if the organizations are outside of AAU.
- Informed consent(s) or cover letter(s) in IRB format that will be presented to the human research subjects along with any additional information that will be presented to them to provide the level of information that they would need to make an informed choice to participate in the research. Samples can be found at: [http://gradstudents.academyart.edu/institutional\\_review.html](http://gradstudents.academyart.edu/institutional_review.html)

### **Step 2:**

The Institutional Review Board will meet to review the memo and the sample survey instrument and/or other research materials including the materials for human subject review. The Board will advise the applicant via email of whether the materials are

complete, and, if necessary, what additional information or materials are required to complete the application. The primary reviewer will notify applicant of any modifications needed and one copy of the modified surveys, tests, questionnaires and other instruments will be emailed to the IRB at [irb@academyart.edu](mailto:irb@academyart.edu)

**Step 3:**

The IRB will meet to review the contents of all of the materials to ensure that the content is suitable, appropriate for use within a research context and is error-free in terms of spelling and grammar. The IRB will notify the Applicant of results of review within five (5) business days after completed application is received. Any subsequent modifications of the research materials must also be submitted for review and approval.

**Step 4:**

The Applicant will ensure that all of the human subjects in his/her research have reviewed Consent Cover Letters [Exhibit 3] and have signed Consent Forms [Exhibit 4]. The originals of the Consent Forms [Exhibit 4] must be presented at Final Review. The student must keep copies of all of the consent forms. Additionally, file copies of research materials such as surveys, tests or other instruments need to be presented for review by the Final Review Committee.

## **Important Distinctions**

### ***Anonymous vs. Confidential***

It is important that research subjects understand how the results of the test will be disseminated and who will have access to the results. In the cover letter, the researcher must specify if the research results will be anonymous, confidential or neither.

The results are considered ***anonymous*** if the researcher has no way of identifying the research subject's response to a survey or test. Responses are considered ***confidential*** if the researcher can identify the individual who responded to a test or survey, but guarantees that the identity of the research subject will not be revealed to others.

### ***Dual Relationships***

***It is the researcher's obligation to disclose to the IRB if dual relationships exist within the research pool.*** Problems and concerns arise when the researcher's students, clients, or employees are asked to participate in research studies. No explicit or implicit coercion should be used to obtain research subjects. When the researcher has a relationship with the potential subjects there is a danger that the subjects will feel obligated to participate. The researcher should ensure that subjects feel free to not participate. Students, clients, and/or employees of the researcher may be unduly influenced by the expectation that participation or nonparticipation will affect their academic, treatment, or employment status.

***Non-English Speaking Subjects***

If it is anticipated that there would be non-English speaking subjects, the researcher (“Applicant”) needs to include language in the application that would indicate that language issues would be dealt with appropriately.

***Supervising Faculty***

The student’s academic director is the supervising faculty for the purpose of the research.

## **EXHIBITS**

## Exhibit 1



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### SAMPLE APPLICATION MEMO

[Date]

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Academy of Art University  
Graduate School  
79 New Montgomery Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Members of the Committee:

My name is [ ] and I am a graduate student in the [name of department]. I am doing a study on [give the title and a brief description of the topic including target audience]. My Faculty Supervisor is [give name, telephone number and email address.]

As part of my research methodology, I will be using [specify, survey, test or other type of research instrument and how it will be administered and how many will be collected.] Attached please find two (2) copies of the [specify, survey, test or other type of research instrument.] The results of the survey will be confidential. All of the research subjects will receive a cover letter and a “Consent to be a Research Subject” form that they will review and sign. I will make copies of these consent documents and **will forward the originals to the IRB to be archived.**

I will conform to all of the policies and procedures specified in the IRB Policies and Procedures document. Please advise if I can provide you with any additional information. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[AAU ID#]

[School of...]

Graduate Student

Academy of Art University



**Exhibit 2**

**SAMPLE PERMISSION LETTER  
FROM INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT  
(Organizations Sponsoring Research)**

[Date]

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Academy of Art University  
Graduate School  
79 New Montgomery Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the [name of company or organization], I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by [name of graduate student], a student at AAU. We are aware [name of graduate student] that intends to conduct research by administering a written survey to our [employees, clients, volunteers, etc.]

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at [give phone number].

Sincerely,

Name of Executive  
Name of Organization

### Exhibit 3



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## SAMPLE CONSENT COVER LETTER

Mr. John Doe  
123 Sunny Circle  
Anywhere, CA 90000

Dear Mr. Doe:

My name is [ ] and I am a graduate student at the Academy of Art University. I am doing a study on [give the topic]. You are being asked to participate in this research study because [give the reason]. I obtained your name from [ ]. If you agree to be in this study, you will [present how the subject will participate in the research].

It is possible that some of the questions on the survey may make you feel uncomfortable, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, or to stop participation at any time. Although you will not be asked to put your name on the survey, I will know that you were asked to participate in the research because I sent you this letter and survey. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files.

While there will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of [give description of the research area]. There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation in this study.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact [give your name and telephone number and your director or directed study advisor name and phone number].

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.** You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point.

Thank you for your attention. If you agree to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it to me in the enclosed pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

[Name]  
Graduate Student  
Academy of Art University

## **Exhibit 4**

### **Sample Informed Consent Form Academy of Art University Consent to Be a Research Subject**

#### **Purpose and Background**

[Name], a graduate student in the [name of department] at the Academy of Art University is doing a study on [topic of the master's thesis]. The researchers are interested in [intended study area of the research].

#### **Procedures** [Delete any that do not apply to your study]

*If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:*

1. I will complete a short questionnaire giving basic information about [include topics covered by the survey instrument]. Results of the questionnaire will be kept confidential.
2. [And/Or] I will participate in an interview with a research assistant, during which I will be asked about [give topics to be covered in the interview].
3. I will complete the surveys and participate in the interview at [give location where the interview will take place and/or where the research participant will complete the survey]. [If applicable].

#### **Risks and/or Discomforts**

1. It is possible that some of the questions on the survey may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files.

#### **Benefits**

There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. I am participating in this study of my own free will and have not been promised any compensation, benefits or special consideration.

**Costs/Financial Considerations and Financial Compensation**

There will be no financial costs or financial compensation to me as a result of taking part in this study.

**Questions**

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should contact [give the name/phone number of contact person].

**Consent**

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" [which will be prepared by the student as part of the application process] and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.** I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status as a student at AAU.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

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Subject's Signature

Date of Signature

---

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date of Signature

**Exhibit 5**

**Sample Informed Consent Form  
Academy of Art University  
Consent to Be a Research Subject  
Filmed or Audio taped Interviews**

Talent Release Form

For no direct benefit, I do hereby authorize

\_\_\_\_\_, and those acting pursuant to her authority to:

Record my participation and appearance on videotape, audiotape, film photograph or any other medium.

Use my name, likeness, voice and biographical material in connection with these recordings.

Exhibit or distribute such recording in whole or in part without restrictions or limitation for any educational or promotional purpose and those acting pursuant to her authority, deem appropriate.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_