

Payments to Human Research Subjects

Original Implementation: July 21, 2009

Last Revision: July 28, 2015

During the conduct of research studies with human subjects, it is recognized that participants may incur personal costs for which they are entitled to reimbursement. It is also desirable in some instances to provide a reward or recognition to participants for the time and effort they have devoted to participate in a research project.

At the time of application to the Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of the conduct of research studies with human subjects, the principal investigator must present a rationale to establish the appropriate level of compensation for participants in the study.

Any reimbursement or incentive to participants in a research study must not involve coercion or constitute undue inducement or influence an individual's decision to participate in the study.

Subject to university policy, cash, gift cards and gifts such as t-shirts or coffee mugs may be used for compensation and/or personal expenses such as travel and child care costs may be reimbursed. Gifts must be provided to participants at the completion of the relevant activity. Payments by check should be avoided as they require disclosure of personal information to the business office.

Use of Grant Funds – Reimbursements or incentives for participation in a research study must be detailed in the grant application and in the application to the IRB by method and amount. The payments must be approved by the funding agency and the IRB.

Informed Consent - It is critical that participants are informed during the consent process that if, either in one or multiple studies in a given calendar year, the total payments and/or gift values exceed \$100, their social security number and contact information will be provided to the SFA business office in order to comply with Internal Revenue Service regulations. Further, study participants must be informed that if they receive payments that total more than \$599, they will receive a tax form from SFA at the end of the calendar year.

Finally, participants must be told that they can elect not to receive payments to avoid disclosure of this information to the SFA business office.

Documentation – Principal investigators are required to maintain a tracking list or spreadsheet with individual code numbers and payments. If compensation is by gift or gift card, the principal investigator must record the individual's name, social security number, address, and signature at the time of payment. Unless the study guarantees participant anonymity, the principal

investigator must also keep a master list linking code numbers and individual participant names, which must be kept in a password-protected computer file and/or locked filing cabinet. The tracking spreadsheet or other documentation with study and individual code numbers must be retained by the principal investigator for a minimum of seven years after completion of the study or the requirements of the specific grant award, whichever is longer.

Cross Reference: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research: The Belmont Report; 45 C.F.R. § 46; Gifts, Prizes and Awards (3.18).

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Forms: SFA business office and Institutional Review Board forms

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs