

Institutional Review Board Guidelines for Lincoln Memorial University Assessment Activities

Assessment of student performance, evaluation of academic programs and departments, and the examination of various aspects of "student life" have become increasingly important. Many of these activities fall within routine assessment and evaluation plans established by LMU administrators and academic departments. These ongoing efforts include activities such as student surveys about course effectiveness and provide important feedback that informs the future direction of academic programs and curricula. Other assessment and evaluation activities address more personal aspects of student life (e.g., dating behaviors, alcohol and drug use, residence hall living, etc.) and depart from what might be termed "routine" program assessment or evaluation.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is charged with the responsibility of reviewing instructor and student research at LMU. This responsibility extends to some, but not all, assessment activities being conducted on campus. This memo is intended to clarify the types of assessment and departmental evaluations that should be submitted to, and reviewed by, the IRB. Our intention is to help staff make appropriate decisions about the types of assessment activities that are appropriate for IRB review.

Types of Assessment and Evaluation Activities Requiring No IRB Review

All academic units and many administrative departments collect routine data about class or program effectiveness. These type of activities include student course evaluations, student surveys assessing perceptions of an academic program or sequence, and student exit interviews that address only curriculum and program concerns. Some departments and units require (or strongly encourage) students to complete these surveys and evaluations as a condition of admission or graduation. No personal student behaviors are addressed in these assessments. These activities are exempt from IRB review. Instructors and administrators conducting these types of routine or academic evaluation activities do not need to take any action with regard to IRB notification or approval.

Types of Assessment and Evaluation Activities Requiring IRB Review

Assessment activities that address students' personal life (e.g., dating behaviors, drug use, social life, etc.) go beyond routine data collection and may involve some element of risk to subjects and/or investigators. Therefore, these types of assessments fall under IRB review.