



UCD

Research Ethics Committee

Research Ethics Policy on Expenses and Incentives

Ratified by the UCD Research Ethics Committee on April 26th 2007

Updated version ratified by the UCD Research Ethics Committee on September 27th 2012

Introduction

Ethical issues arise¹ with the use of Incentives and Rewards as mechanisms to increase subject enrolment, especially when employed in situations where the subject is in a dependency relationship with the researcher, risks are high, the research is degrading or where participants may have an aversion to a study. Having regard to various codes and declarations² guiding the practice of human subject research, policies currently in operation in various academic settings³ and our dedication to ensuring that subjects consent voluntarily to research participation and that they are not coerced or unduly influenced or pressurised into participation but also taking into account emerging new research tools such as the Mechanical Turk⁴, the UCD Human Research Ethics Sub-committee has adopted the following policy for the appropriate use of Expenses, Compensation and Payments for Human Subjects in Research.

General:

Full justification for the need of expenses, compensation or payments should be provided to the Human Research Ethics Sub-committee in the application form.

Expenses:

1. Reimbursement for expenses incurred by a research participant such as train or bus fares may also be paid. Each protocol which includes the participation of human subjects should have procedures in place for the tracking of participants' receipts and reimbursements made to them.
2. Reimbursement of expenses should not be listed as a benefit in the participant information leaflet since while important for some individuals the reimbursement does not derive from the actual study, rather from their participation.

¹ Grant, R. and Sugarman, J. (2004) Ethics in human subjects research: do incentives matter? *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 29 (6), 717-738.

² Declaration of Helsinki (2004), CIOMS (2002), Belmont Report (1979)

³ Harvard University, University of California, University of Pittsburgh, John Hopkins University

⁴ "The roar of the crowd: Crowdsourcing is transforming the science of psychology" the Economist May 25th 2012 <http://www.economist.com/node/21555876>

Compensation:

1. Compensation of not more than €20 or the equivalent in vouchers may be made to human subjects involved in a research study.
2. Compensation should be based on the inconveniences of the study and not the risk involved. These should be scheduled on a per visit basis and not dependent on completion of the study. This will ensure that subjects will not be unduly influenced to complete the study.
3. Compensation of time should not be listed as a benefit in the participant information leaflet.
4. Students participating in research should not be compensated or reimbursed through the provision of course credits or other academic benefits.
5. A lottery system must not operate.
6. No compensation may be made to research participants for the donation of biological material, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Irish Council for Bioethics⁵.
7. The use of the words “inducements” or “reward” should not be used in information leaflets or consent forms, but the terms “expenses” and “compensation” are more suitable.
8. The decision to allow compensation or reimbursement to research subjects for particular studies rests with the Human Research Ethics Sub-committee.

Payment:

1. Should not normally be used in the recruitment process.
2. Will be considered by the HREC committees when there is minimal risk, subjects are anonymous and no identifying information is collected.
3. Payments of no more than €20 may be made to human subjects for involvement in a study.
4. Payment should not be listed as a benefit for participating in the study in the information leaflet.

⁵ Irish Council for Bioethics (2005)