

**University of La Verne**  
**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**  
For The Protection of Human Participants in Research

**ADVERTISING FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

Institutional Review Boards (IRB) are responsible for ensuring the equitable selection of research participants (21 CFR 56.111 (a) (3)). In fulfilling this responsibility, the IRB should review the methods that researchers/investigators use to recruit participants. One method of recruiting participants is through advertisements. Advertising for research participants is not in and of itself an objectionable practice. However, when advertising is to be used, the IRB should review the information contained in the advertisement, and the mode of its communication, to determine that the procedure for recruiting participants affords adequate protection.

The IRB reviews have the authority to approve, require modifications in, or disapprove all research activities covered by the IRB regulations (21 CFR 56.109). The IRB reviews all of the research documents and activities that bear directly on the rights and welfare of the participants in the proposed research. The protocol, the consent form, and the researcher's/investigator's brochure have consistently been cited as specific examples of documents that the IRB should review.

Advertisements used to recruit participants should be seen as an extension of the informed consent and participant selection processes. [See 21 CFR 50.20, 21 CFR 50.25, and 21 CFR 56.111 (a) (3).] Institutions should, therefore, require IRB review of such advertisements. IRB review is necessary to ensure that the information is not misleading to participants, especially when a study will involve persons with acute or serve physical or mental illness or persons who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. The IRB is responsible for assuring that appropriate safeguards exist to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects [21 CFR 56.111 (b)].

Generally, any advertisement to recruit subjects should include:

1. The name and address of the clinical researcher/investigator;
2. The purpose of the research and, in summary form, the eligibility criteria that will be used to admit participants into the study;
3. A straightforward and truthful description of the benefits (e.g., payments or free treatment) to the participant from participation in the study; and
4. The location of the research and the person to contact for further information.