

Stakeholder Summary

Guide gives researchers tools to recruit students for research projects

When research projects involve student participation, recruiting students is an important yet challenging part of the process. *Recruiting Students for Research in Postsecondary Education: A Guide*, published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), provides an overview for researchers on how students make decisions about participating in research, standard recruitment strategies and common requirements set by research ethics boards (REBs) at institutions. The authors don't support any one strategy over another but rather encourage researchers to question how their methodological decisions may affect recruitment as well as the outcomes of the project.

When recruiting students for research projects, first check that the data are not already available elsewhere through other sources, such as administrative offices. Researchers may be able to conduct studies using data already collected.

Students make decisions to participate based on the perceived importance of the research, how it relates to their lived experiences and whether they believe their input will be acted upon.

There are a number of ways researchers can attract student interest in a study, including speaking about the research in class, sending targeted emails, signage and posters, and social media. Some research suggests that more direct approaches to recruiting students, such as in class or through targeted emails, are more successful than the more passive methods like posterings.

Researchers should not underestimate the time it takes to recruit participants and should begin thinking about this as early in their study as possible. It's likely that recruitment will be more successful if recruiters avoid the end of term and find time before or after class to discuss the research project.

When asking students to participate, researchers should clearly communicate the study's goals and what will be asked of students. Being clear about the rationale, level of commitment, incentives and ethical considerations can encourage interest and trust. Students complain that researchers are often unrealistic about the amount of time the study will take and commitment levels that are expected of them. The authors recommend compensating students if the study will require significant time and being realistic about the time it will take to complete the study.

It is important to get REB approval to ensure that ethical procedures are followed. Researchers should familiarize themselves with the regulations and procedures of their institutional REB to better understand how their research will impact participants as well as those who choose not to participate.

Recruiting Students for Research in Postsecondary Education: A Guide was written by Darren Cyr, Ruth Childs and Susan Elgie and is a supplement to [Researching Teaching and Student Outcomes in Postsecondary Education: A Guide](#), published in 2012, to provide a reader-friendly introduction to research methods and techniques that encourage evaluation of practices to improve student success.