

Guideline:
Expenses and Incentives

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.

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>

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.

Compensation:

1. Compensation may be paid to human research subjects, preferably in the form of vouchers, for the inconvenience of the time taken to participate in a study on the following basis:
 - a) An amount of up to €23 may be paid in respect of any visit or session or discrete task (e.g. completing a questionnaire or attending an interview) that lasts up to two hours;
 - b) An additional payment of no more than €11.50 per hour after that point.
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.

Where it is demonstrated that one of the scientific aims of study is to investigate the effects of incentives on a subject's behaviour, a specified proportion of the compensation (within the total amount permitted in accordance with the previous paragraph) may be made conditional on the subject's performance in the tests undertaken.
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 "payment", "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:

⁵ Irish Council for Bioethics (2005)

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. Where it is demonstrated that one of the scientific aims of study is to investigate the effects of incentives on a subject's behaviour, a specified proportion of the payment (within the total amount permitted in accordance with the next paragraph) may be made conditional on the subject's performance in the tests undertaken.
3. Payment may be made to human subjects for their involvement in a study, subjects to the following limits on the amounts paid:
 - a) no more than €23 for each visit or testing session that lasts less than two hours;
 - b) an additional payment of no more than €11.50 for each hour that any visit or testing session lasts longer than two hours.
4. Payment should not be listed as a benefit for participating in the study in the information leaflet.