



## **IRB Guidelines on the Use of Social Media in the Recruitment of Subjects**

Investigators sometimes seek to use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) as a means of recruiting subjects for their research. The present guidelines are intended to establish norms for what counts as the acceptable use of social media for such purposes.

York College publishes a document called “Online Social Media Use Guidelines” (<https://sites.google.com/ycp.edu/ltshelp/policies>). Investigators affiliated with the College should follow these guidelines.

Investigators may use their own social media pages. They may not use the College’s main social media pages, as per the policies for posting on those pages.

Investigators submitting applications to the York College IRB seeking to use the web pages of other entities, including those of organizations affiliated with York College, for soliciting research participation should abide by the following standards. Applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but the following will be considered good practice in the review of applications:

- They may only use pages that are governed by policies regarding what counts as an acceptable post, and who may post to those pages. These policies should be publicly available on the page.
- They should receive prior approval of the person who serves as the administrator for that page.
- An email from the page administrator should be sent to [irb@ycp.edu](mailto:irb@ycp.edu) stating the following:
  - The investigator has received approval to post a solicitation for research participation on the page.
  - This solicitation is in keeping with the page’s policies. A link to that policy should be given.
- The solicitation itself should state clearly who is conducting the research and that they are not conducting research as an agent of the College. If the College has a role in the project itself, for example if the research is part of a continuing improvement process of a College department, this may be stated, but the distinction between the College’s goal and the investigator’s research interests should be made clear.
- Major elements important for subjects’ being able to provide informed consent should be stated in the solicitation itself, though informed consent should again be solicited before actual commencement of subject participation.
- The text of the solicitation itself should be included in the application to the IRB.