



UWG Institutional Review Board
ORSP Office – 316 Ingram Library
1601 Maple Street
Carrollton, GA 30118
Phone: 678/839-6119 / irb@westga.edu

Guidance on the Use of Drawings or Raffles as Incentives for Participation in Human Subjects Research Studies

The purpose of this document is to explain the process of review and provide guidelines for investigators who wish to use a drawing or raffle as incentives for a research study. An incentive is a form of payment offered to an individual in exchange for time and effort to offset costs of participation. Payment can be in any form, including but not limited to gift cards, check, cash, and course credit/extra credit. Researchers may use raffles or drawings as incentives for research studies. In Georgia, a raffle is defined as “any scheme or procedure whereby one or more prizes are distributed by chance among persons who have paid or promised consideration for a chance to win such prize” ([O.C.G.A. § 16-12-22.1\[b\]\[3\]](#)). These terms include door prizes. The State of Georgia closely regulates the operation of lotteries, raffles, and other games of chance (collectively, “raffles” for purposes of this guidance).

This definition is broad and includes any procedure in which a prize is given away, as long as the participant is required to provide something of value (i.e., “consideration”) in exchange for the chance to win. Consideration can be the purchase of a raffle ticket or the giving of an individual’s time to participate in a research study. In the research context, any person should be able to participate in the raffle, even those persons who are not participating in the research study itself, in order for the raffle to satisfy state laws. This means the general public must be allowed to enter the drawing without being required to participate in the research to enter the drawing. Otherwise, it is a felony in Georgia to conduct a lottery, raffle, or similar game of chance without obtaining a license ([O.C.G.A. § 16-12-22.1](#))

When a raffle may be conducive to a research study, the UWG IRB will review and approve the raffle procedures as part of the protocol review and approval process. The IRB may consult with UWG Legal Counsel regarding the legality of any planned raffle. Note that, because of the requirements of Georgia law, confidentiality of raffle winners cannot be promised by the researcher.

If a researcher wishes to utilize a raffle to encourage participation in research, he/she must adhere to the following provisions and explain the raffle procedures in the IRB application and, as applicable, in the Informed Consent document(s) or Information Sheet(s):

- The research may not include activities that are More than Minimal Risk (i.e., the protocol must be reviewed in the “exempt” or “expedited review” categories).



- The raffle must be open to all individuals, whether they participate in the research or not. The researcher must provide the IRB with a comprehensive plan for how the public will learn of the research study, how the public may participate in the raffle, how the prize will be selected (i.e., date and time of the drawing, person who will conduct the drawing, etc.), how the recipient will be notified, how persons involved in the raffle may ultimately discover who received a prize, and other relevant information pertaining to the raffle.
- All persons who elect to participate in the raffle must have the same chance of winning the prize(s). The researcher must include statements that entry into the raffle is not contingent on participation in the research and that a person may remain eligible for the raffle even if he/she withdraws from a study or does not complete every question.
- Any raffle should only be open to those eighteen (18) years of age and older and who reside within the United States.
- The raffle must be conducted in a manner that does not compromise participant anonymity or confidentiality that is protected by other protocol methodology.
- The researcher must provide the IRB with information concerning the amounts and number of prizes involved in the raffle. Both the amounts and number of prizes must not be coercive or exert an undue influence on participants, and the disparity between subjects should be considered (i.e., it is preferable to have several lower value prizes than one higher prize because the disparity between subjects is reduced).
- The researcher, any co-researchers or research assistants named in the protocol, immediate family members (spouse, parents, siblings, and children) of such persons, and any other persons with a direct interest in the research study must be excluded from participation in the raffle.
- The researcher must maintain records regarding the raffle along with other research-related documents.

Please contact the UWG IRB at irb@westga.edu if you have any questions.